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THE

WORKS

OF THE

ENGLISH POETS,

FROM

CHAUCER TO COWPER.

VOL. I.

THE

WORKS

OF THE

ENGLISH POETS,

FROM CHAUCER TO COWPER;

INCLUDING THE

SERIES EDITED,

WITH

PREFACES, BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL,

BY DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON:

AND

THE MOST APPROVED TRANSLATIONS.

THE

ADDITIONAL LIVES

BY ALEXANDER CHALMERS, F.S.A.

IN TWENTY-ONE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

CHAUCER.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. JOHNSON; J. NICHOLS AND SON; R. BALDWIN; F. AND C. RIVINGTON; W. OTRIDGE AND SON; LEIGH AND SOTHEBY; R. FAULDER AND SON; G. NICOL AND SON; T. PAYNE; G. ROBINSON; WILKIE AND ROBINSON; C. DAVIES; T. EGERTON; SCATCHERD AND LETTERMAN; J. WALKER; VERNOR, HOOD, AND SHARPE; R. LEA; J. NUNN; LACKINGTON, ALLEN, AND CO.; J. STOCKDALE; CUTHELL AND MARTIN; CLARKE AND SONS; J. WHITE AND CO.; LONGMAN, HURST, REES, AND ORME; CADELL AND DAVIES; J. BARKER; JOHN RICHARDSON; J. M. RICHARDSON; J. CARPENTER; B. CROSBY; E. JEFFERY; J. MURRAY; W. MILLER; J. AND A. ARCH; BLACK, PARRY, AND KINGSBURY; J. BOOKER; S. BAGSTER; J. HARDING; J. MACKINLAY; J. HATCHARD; R. H. EVANS; MATTHEWS AND LEIGH; J. MAWMAN; J. BOOTH; J. ASPERNE; P. AND W. WYNNE; AND W. GRACE. DEIGHTON AND SON AT CAMBRIDGE, AND WILSON AND SON AT YORK.

1810.

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PREFACE.

THE Preface to a collection like the present, necessarily involves an attempt to apologize for its defects, and from this some degree of egotism is inseparable. Candour, however, will not fail to make liberal allowance for the many difficulties which surround an undertaking of this magnitude: and it is hoped that the excuses which are offered, if not satisfactory, will at least be received as marks of respect. The labour of some years in forming this collection has been exerted with an anxious desire that it may prove worthy of public favour, but at the conclusion of the task, I cannot flatter myself that I have succeeded in forming the best plan, or in executing the plan which I formed.

The fate of the few collections which have been made of this kind readily pointed out that the objections of critics would be directed, either against redundancy, or defect, and it is as likely that I shall be blamed for admitting too many, as for admitting too few, into a work professing to be a BODY OF THE STANDARD ENGLISH POETS. It cannot, however, be unknown to those who have paid any attention to the subject, that the question of too much or too little in these collections, does not depend on the previous consideration of the merit of the poet, so frequently as on the relative rank which he seems destined to hold among his brethren. Some may be admissible in a series, who would make but an indifferent figure by themselves, and it is not improbable that by perpetuating editions in this manner, the fame that has sunk in one revolution of taste may be revived in another.

There are perhaps but two rules by which a collector of English poetry can be guided. He is either to give a series of the BEST poets, or of the most POPULAR, but simple as these rules may appear, they are not without difficulties, for whichever we choose

to rely upon, the other will be found to interfere. In the first instance, the question will be perpetually recurring "who *are* the best poets?" and as this will unavoidably involve all the disputed points in poetical criticism, and all the partialities of individual taste, an editor must pause before he venture on a decision from which the appeals will be numerous and obstinately contested.

On the other hand, he will not find much more security in popularity, which is a criterion of uncertain duration, sometimes depending on circumstances very remote from taste or judgment, and, unless in some few happy instances, a mere fashion. Any bookseller can tell an editor that popularity will frequently elude his grasp, if he waits for the decision of time; that authors, popular within the memory of some of the present generation, are no longer read, and that others who seemed on the brink of oblivion, if not sunk in its abyss, have by some accountable or unaccountable revival, become the standing favourites of the day. It has often been objected to Dr. Johnson's Collection, that it includes authors who have few admirers, and it is an objection which perhaps gains strength by time, but it ought always to be remembered, that the collection was not formed by that illustrious scholar, but by his employers, who thought themselves, what they unquestionably were, the best judges of vendible poetry, and who included very few, if any, works in their series for which there was not, at the time it was formed, a considerable degree of demand.

Aware of the difficulties of adding to that collection without reviving the usual objections, what is now presented to the public could never have been formed, had I imposed on myself the term either of abstract merit, or of popular reception. When applied to, therefore, by the proprietors, and left at liberty, generally, to form a collection of the more ancient poets to precede Dr. Johnson's series, and of the more recent authors to follow it, I conceived that it would be proper to be guided by a mixed rule in admitting the additions from these two classes. Although the question of popularity seemed necessary and decisive in selecting from the vast mass of poetical writers since the publication of Dr. Johnson's volumes, yet in making up a catalogue of the older poets, it was requisite to advert to the only uses which such

catalogue can at all be supposed to answer. Popularity is here so much out of the question, that however venerable some of the names are which occur in this part of the work, it will probably be impossible by any powers of praise or criticism to give them that degree of favour with the public which they once enjoyed.

For these reasons, in selecting from this class, it was the Editor's object to give such a series as might tend, not only to revive genuine and undeservedly neglected poetry, but to illustrate the progress and history of the art from the age of Chaucer to that of Cowley. What has been done so excellently by Mr. Ellis, in SPECIMENS, it was the intention to execute more amply by ENTIRE WORKS, copied from the best editions, and as nearly as possible in a chronological succession[1]: and a plan of this kind, to him who does not attempt to execute it, will appear to have every advantage, and not many difficulties.

On trial, however, it was soon discovered that some limits must be set to such a collection; that it would be in vain to attempt to revive authors whom no person would read, and to fill thousands of pages with discarded prolixities, merely because they characterized the dulness of the age in which they were tolerated. It was also discovered, that the plan of giving entire works would be objectionable in another point of view, and that the licentious language of some of our most eminent poets, whether their own fault or that of their age, must necessarily be omitted. In this dilemma, therefore, a SELECTION has been attempted, with less severity of rule than in the case of the modern poets, and it is presented to the public with the diffidence in which it was made, and with the deference due to superior judgment.

Besides the difficulties which presented themselves from the circumstances just noticed, another embarrassment, of late origin indeed, but almost invincible, was occasioned by the extreme rarity and high price of many of the works which it would have been desirable to reprint. To professed collectors of ancient English poetry it would be superfluous to enter upon any explanation of the causes of this high price, and to others it may be

[1] This has been departed from in a few instances, owing to the difficulty of procuring the copies at the time they were wanted, but the deviations, it is hoped, will be found slight.

sufficient to intimate, that within the last twenty years, a taste for collecting the writings of our old poets has diffused itself so widely as to put them wholly out of the reach of moderate fortunes, as well as to induce those into whose hands they have fallen, to guard them with the most scrupulous anxiety. Even where, as in the present instance, the spirit of the proprietors would not have suffered the high price to keep back what was necessary, it was sometimes found that private sales and barters among the tribe of collectors had almost entirely removed the articles in question from the public market.

But notwithstanding these impediments, I hope I have succeeded in procuring such a number of the rarer authors as is, in a great measure, if not quite, sufficient to preserve somewhat more than an outline of the principal revolutions of our poetical taste and style, and probably more than sufficient to gratify the curiosity of those who do not wish to pursue the study of poetical antiquities in all its branches. By those who have that taste, and who are not only readers, but students of poetry, (a class which seems to be increasing) more ample gratification must be derived from the libraries of the collectors, and from the labours of the Wartons, the Ritsons, the Ellis's, the Parks, the Hazlewoods, and the Brydges'. Nor can I quit this part of my subject without acknowledging the obligations I owe to the writings of these eminent antiquaries and critics, as well as to the personal kindness of some of them, which it was my intention to have acknowledged more particularly had I not been afraid of implicating them in what may be found objectionable. Yet something must be added, which cannot involve this consequence. To Thomas Hill, Esq. I consider myself as highly indebted. This gentleman's very valuable collection of English poetry is open to the inspection and use of every literary inquirer, and his rarest volumes were lent to me with a ready confidence and kindness that demand my sincerest thanks. I have likewise to acknowledge the liberal offers of Sir Egerton Brydges, Richard Heber, Esq. and Mr. Park. The public will hear with gladness, and may with confidence, that Mr. Park is now engaged on a new edition, and continuation, of Warton's History of Poetry; and from his well known taste, and superior accuracy, there can be

no doubt that he will render this work all that the utmost hopes of its original author could have reached. In the biographical part of this collection, I owe much to the contributions and hints of my intelligent and steady friends, Mr. Nichols and Mr. Payne, but I am restrained by an obvious delicacy from expatiating on their kindness.

In forming this collection, it yet remains to be mentioned that Dr. Johnson's Lives are retained, with some additional notes, originally given in the edition of his works, printed in 1806. Few words, however, are necessary in making this intimation. Dr. Johnson's Lives, after all the objections that have been offered, must ever be the foundation of English poetical biography. To substitute any thing in their room would be an attempt, by the ablest, hazardous, and by inferior pens, ridiculous.

With respect to the NEW LIVES, a part of this work for which I am particularly responsible, they are the result of more anxious and painful research than may appear to those who do not examine my authorities. In rectifying preceding accounts, many of which I found erroneous and inconsistent, either from carelessness or partiality, and in procuring original information, in which I hope it will appear that I have not been altogether unsuccessful, it was my object to ascertain those truths, in whatever they might end, which display the real character. And I am sorry it should be necessary to add, that I have not thought it incumbent to represent every man whose works are here admitted as a prodigy of genius or virtue. This practice, it is true, has been lately adopted in collections of biography, as well as in single lives; but I am yet to learn what advantages can be reaped, and what solid interest can be promoted by a practice which violates the principles of truth, destroys public confidence, and defeats every valuable purpose of biography. The imaginary beauties of the biographer are, at least, as absurd as those of the portrait-painter, while they have less excuse, and are attended with far more pernicious consequences. After the lapse of a few years it becomes a matter of inferior importance how a man looked, but it is always important to know how he thought and how he acted. Nor if the practice alluded to proceeds from real feeling, or only an affectation of sympathy and veneration, is it less ob-

jectionable. It is a gross errour in judgment that any man, who deserves to be commemorated, can be the worse for a disclosure of his failings, unless, indeed, he has no virtues to counterbalance them, and even in that rare case, the portrait, if faithfully given, is not without its uses. It would be happy if a closer correspondence could be found between an author and his writings, if genius were always dignified by virtue, and wisdom always recommended by urbanity; but we look in vain for objects of uniform panegyric, and the fair display of the striking contrarieties we find in the human character must ever be preferable to those unnatural sketches in which there is no discrimination, but all is purity and perfection, or in which the most degrading vices are either suppressed by fraud, or vindicated by sophistry. Of all human beings, the sons of imagination require to be led most carefully to correct notions of virtue and happiness, and to be reconciled to a world in which their splendid dreams cannot be realized, and which makes no allowance for irregular desires and extravagant passions.

The CRITICISMS advanced in these lives are as sparing as appeared consistent with the general plan, and are the opinions of one who is aware that reputation is not in his gift. As, however, they are the result of a judgment derived from no partial school, I have only to hope they will not be found destitute of candour, or improperly interfering with the general and acknowledged principles of taste.

A. C.

London, Nov. 1809.

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VOL. III.

SPENSER.

P. 6. line 33, for *it* read *them.*

VOL. V.

ALEXANDER, EARL OF STIRLING.

P. 292. Since writing this life, I have discovered the following information respecting the family and title of the earl of Stirling. The person who assumed that title, and fought on the side of America, in the war 1774-82, and who died in 1783, was no relation of our poet. The title of earl of Stirling has been extinct since 1641, when the poet died. His corpse was deposited in a leaden coffin, in the family aile, in the church of Stirling, above ground, and remained entire till within these thirty years. Being much involved in debt at his death, and his descendants very poor, they never thought of making good their title to that dignity, till a very considerable time thereafter; but the mansion-house or church, which stood upon the banks of the river Devon, near Stirling, in which the records of the family descent were deposited, being swept away by a rapid current of the river after an uncommon fall of rain, rendered it impossible for the nearest akin to the family to make good his claim to the title. Several branches of this family still live[1] at a village called Mainstry, on the above river, about three miles from Stirling, the oldest of which is the fourth in descent from the earl, and is a reputable farmer, and known by all the old people about that part of the country to be the real and nearest descendant of the earl of Stirling.

[1] From a letter inserted in the London Chronicle, Oct. 1776, and signed GENEALOGIST. Beatson says, I know not upon what authority, that the title was not extinct until 1739.

VOL. XIV.

CHURCHILL.

P. 267, line 3 from the bottom, dele the comma after "Churchill's next" &c.

FALCONER.

P. 384, line 7, for *always* read *often.*

BOYSE.

P. 516, line 5 from the bottom, for *project* read *prospect.*

P. 523. Some time before his death he wrote a very penitent letter to the Rev. James Hervey, author of the Meditations, &c. who appears to have endeavoured to impress him with a sense of his situation. See Smollett's British Magazine, vol. v. p. 655.

VOL. XV.

WILLIAM THOMSON.

P. 4. According to Mr. Isaac Reed's MS. obituary, now in my possession, he died in 1765.

LLOYD.

P. 74. His name appeared, in 1761, to a translation of Voltaire's works, with that of Smollett, and in 1763, to a translation of Marmontel's Tales with that of C. Denis.

COOPER.

P. 503, for Thurgaton, read Thurgarton, *bis.*

VOL. XVI.

SMART.

P. 10. Poor Smart's custom of praying in the streets was very common. My friend, Mr. Nichols,

informs me, that he has seen him repeating the Lord's Prayer on his knees at the door of Islington church.

P. 13. Mrs. Smart, his widow, died at Reading, March 16, 1809.

LOVIBOND.

P. 283. Mrs. Lovibond died at Frognal, near Hampstead, Aug. 7, 1770.

ARMSTRONG.

P. 517, line 18, for *between place*, read *place between.*
——— line 19, for *eerving*, read *served.*

VOL. XVIII.

T. WARTON.

P. 77, lines 5 and 6, for *Aristotle*, read *Ariosto.*

The "Guide to the Companion," ascribed to Mr. Warton, I have been since informed on good authority, was the production of Mr. Huddesford.

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THE

WORKS

OF

GEOFFREY CHAUCER.

THE

LIFE OF GEOFFREY CHAUCER.

BY MR. CHALMERS.

THE life of Jeffery, or Geoffrey Chaucer, is involved in much obscurity. The age which succeeded him was not favourable to those researches which could have gratified curiosity by displaying his private history; and if his transactions, as a public character, were more accurately known, they could throw no light on his merit as a poet and a scholar, with which alone we are now concerned. A formal life of Chaucer, as Mr. Tyrwhitt has observed, must now be a very meagre narration, if composed only of facts; and, we may add, a very useless detail, if stuffed with the comments and conjectures by which some of his biographers have endeavoured to supply the want of them. The editor of the Biographia Britannica has collected a very considerable body of evidence on the subject; but a great part of it is of a very suspicious kind, and the whole hangs together so loosely, even when rectified by Mr. Tyrwhitt's more judicious remarks, that too much caution cannot be observed in any attempt to separate matters of fact from those of conjecture.

Of his birth and family nothing has been decided. It has been contended on the one hand, that he was of noble origin; on the other, that he descended from persons in trade. Even the meaning of his name in French, *chaucier*, a *shoemaker*, has been brought in evidence of a low origin, while the mention of the name Chaucer, in several records, from the time of William the Conqueror to that of Edward I. has been thought sufficient to prove the contrary. Leland says he was *nobili loco natus;* but Speght, one of his early biographers, informs us that, "in the opinion of some heralds, he descended not of any great house, which they gather by his arms;" and Mr. Tyrwhitt is inclined to believe the heralds rather than Leland. Speght, however, goes further, and makes his father a vintner, who died in 1348, and left his property to the church of St. Mary Aldermary, where he was buried. This is confirmed by Stowe, who says, "Richard Chaucer, vintner, gave to that church his tenement *and tavern*, with the appurtenance, in the Royal-streete the corner of Kerion-lane, and was there buried, 1348." But neither Stowe nor Speght afford any proof that this Richard Chaucer was the father of our poet.

With respect to the place of his birth, we cannot produce better authority than his own. In his Testament of Love, he calls himself a Londoner, and speaks of the city of London as the place of his "kindly engendrure." In spite of this evidence, however, Leland, who is more than usually incorrect in his account of Chaucer, reports him to have been born in Oxfordshire or Berkshire. The time of his birth is, by general consent, fixed in the second year of Edward III, 1328, and the foundation of this decision seems to have originally been an inscription on his tomb, signifying that he died in 1400 at the age of seventy-two. Collier fixes his death in 1440; but he is so generally accurate, that this may be supposed an errour of the press. Phillips is more unpardonable; for, contrary to all evidence, he instances the reigns of Henry IV, V, and VI, as those in which Chaucer flourished.

His biographers have provided him with education both at Oxford and Cambridge, a circumstance which we know occurred in the history of other scholars of that period, and is not therefore improbable. But in his Court of Love, which was composed when he was about eighteen, he speaks of himself under the name of Philogenet of Cambridge, clerk. Mr. Tyrwhitt, while he does not think this a decisive proof that he was really educated at Cambridge, is willing to admit it as a strong argument that he was not educated at Oxford. Wood, in his Annals (Vol. I. Book I, 484) gives a report, or rather tradition, that "when Wickliff was guardian or warden of Canterbury college, he had to his pupil the famous poet called Jeffry Chaucer (father of Thomas Chaucer of Ewelme in Oxfordshire, Esq.) who, following the steps of his master, reflected much upon the corruptions of the clergy." This is something like evidence, if it could be depended on: at least it is preferable to the conjecture of Leland, who supposes Chaucer to have been educated at Oxford merely because he had before supposed that he was born either in Oxfordshire or Berkshire. Those who contend for Cambridge, as the place of his education, fix upon Solere's hall, which he has described in his story of the Miller of Trompington, but *Solere's hall* is merely a corruption of *Soler hall*, i. e. a hall with an open gallery, or *solere* window[1]. The advocates for Oxford are inclined to place him in Merton college, because his contemporaries Strode and Occleve were of that college. It is equally a matter of conjecture that he was first educated at Cambridge, and afterwards at Oxford.

Wherever he studied, we have sufficient proofs of his capacity and proficiency. He appears to have acquired a very great proportion of the learning of his age, and became a master of its philosophy, poetry, and such languages as formed the intercourse between men of learning. Leland says he was "*acutus dialecticus, dulcis rhetor, lepidus poeta, gravis philosophus, ingeniosus mathematicus, denique sanctus theologus.*" It is equally probable that he courted the Muses in those early days, in which he is said to have been encouraged by Gower, although there are some grounds for supposing that his acquaintance with Gower was of a later date.

After leaving the university, we are told that he travelled through France and the Netherlands; but the commencement and conclusion of these travels are not specified. On his return, he is said to have entered himself of the Middle Temple, with a view to study the municipal law; but even this fact depends chiefly on a record, without a date, which, Speght informs us, a Mr. Buckley had seen, where Geffrey Chaucer was fined

[1] Mr. Warton thinks that Solere-Hall was Aula Solarii, the hall with the upper story, at that time a sufficient circumstance to distinguish and denominate one of the academical hospitia. Hist. of Poetry, vol. i. p. 432, note *n*. *C*.

"two shillings for beating a Franciscane frier in Fleet Street." Leland speaks of his frequenting the law colleges after his travels in France, and perhaps before. Mr. Tyrwhitt doubts these travels in France, and has indeed satisfactorily proved that Leland's account of Chaucer is full of inconsistencies. Leland is certainly inconsistent as to dates; but from the evidence Chaucer gave in a case of chivalry [2], we have full proof of one journey in France, although the precise period cannot be fixed.

Whatever time these supposed employments might have occupied, we discover, at length, with tolerable certainty, that Chaucer betook himself to the life of a courtier, and probably with all the accomplishments suited to his advancement in the court of a monarch, who was magnificent in his establishment, and munificent in his patronage of learning and gallantry. At what period of life he obtained a situation here is uncertain. The writer of the life prefixed to Urry's edition supposes he was not more than thirty, because his first employment was in quality of the king's page; but the first authentic memorial, respecting Chaucer at court, is the patent in Rymer, 41 Edward III. by which that king grants him an annuity of twenty marks [3], by the title of *Valettus noster* [4], "our yeoman," and this occurred when Chaucer was in his thirty-ninth year. Several mistakes have arisen respecting these grants, from his biographers not understanding the meaning of the titles given to our poet. Speght mentions a grant from king Edward four years later than the above, in which Chaucer is styled *valettus hospitii*, which he translates *grome of the pallace;* sinking our author, Mr. Tyrwhitt observes, as much too low, as his biographer in Urry's edition had raised him too high, by translating the same words *gentleman of the king's privy chamber.* Valet or yeoman was, according to the same acute scholiast, the intermediate rank between *squier* and *grome.*

It would be of more consequence to be able to determine what particular merits were rewarded by this royal bounty. Mr. Tyrwhitt can find no proof, and no ground for supposing that it was bestowed on Chaucer for his poetical talents, although it is almost certain that he had distinguished himself, as a poet, before this time. The Assemblee of Foules, the Complaint of the Blacke Knight, and the translation of the Roman de la Rose, were all composed before 1367, the era which we are now considering. What strengthens Mr. Tyrwhitt's opinion of the king's indifference to Chaucer's poetry, is his appointing him, a few years after, to the office of comptroller of the custom of wool, with an injunction that "the said Geffrey write with his own hand his rolls touching the said office in his own proper person, and not by his substitute." The inferences, however, which Mr. Tyrwhitt draws from this fact, viz. "that his majesty was either totally insensible of our author's poetical talents, or at least had no mind to encourage him in the cultivation or exercise of them," savours rather too much of the conjectural spirit which he professes to avoid. He allows that, notwithstanding what he calls "the petrifying quality, with which these custom-house accounts might be expected to operate upon Chaucer's genius," he probably wrote his House of Fame while he was in that office. Still less candid to the memory of Edward, will these inferences appear, if we apply modern notions of patronage to the subject; for in what manner could the king

[2] Life prefixed to Urry's Edit. sig. d. *C.*

[3] About two hundred pounds of our money. *C.*

[4] Mr. Ellis observes that this office, "by whatever name we translate it, might be held even by persons of the highest rank, because the only science then in request among the nobility was that of etiquette, the knowledge of which was acquired, together with the habits of chivalry, by passing in gradation through the several menial offices about the court." Ellis's Specimens, vol. i. p. 202.

more honourably encourage the genius of a poet, than by a civil employment which rendered him easy in his circumstances, and free from the suspicious obligations of a pension or sinecure?

Chaucer's biographers have given some particulars of his life before the office just mentioned was conferred upon him. He is said to have been in constant attendance on his majesty, and when the court was at Woodstock, resided at a square stone house near the park gate, which long retained the name of Chaucer's house; and many of the rural descriptions in his works have been traced to Woodstock park, the favourite scene of his walks and studies. But besides his immediate office near the royal person, he very early attached himself to the service of the celebrated John of Gaunt, duke of Lancaster, and from this connection his public life is to be dated.

The author of the life prefixed to Urry's edition observes that the duke's "ambition requiring all the assistance of learned men, to give it a plausible appearance, induced him to do Chaucer many good offices, in order to engage him in his interest." But although the assistance of learned men to an ambitious statesman is very well understood in modern times, it is somewhat difficult to conceive what advantage could be derived from such assistance before the invention of printing. It is more probable that the duke had a relish for the talents and taste of Chaucer, and became his patron upon the most liberal grounds, although Chaucer might afterwards repay his favours by exposing the conduct of the clergy, who were particularly obnoxious to the duke by their monopoly of power.

One effect of this connection was the marriage of our poet, by which he became eventually related to his illustrious patron. John of Gaunt's duchess, Blanche, entertained in her service one Catharine Rouet, daughter of sir Payne or Pagan Rouet, a native of Hainault, and Guion king at arms for that country. This lady was afterwards married to sir Hugh Swinford, a knight of Lincoln, who died soon after his marriage, and on his decease his lady returned to the duke's family, and was appointed governess of his children. While in this capacity she yielded to the duke's solicitations, and became his mistress. She had a sister, Philippa, who is stated to have been a great favourite with the duke and duchess, and by them, as a mark of their high esteem, recommended to Chaucer for a wife. He accordingly married her about the year 1360, when he was in his thirty-second year, and this step appears to have increased his interest with his patron, who took every opportunity to promote him at court. Besides the instances already given, we are told that he was made shield-bearer to the king, a title at that time of great honour, the shield-bearer being always next the king's person, and generally, upon signal victories, rewarded with military honours. But here again his biographers have mistaken the meaning of the courtly titles of those days. In the 46 Edward III, 1372, the king appointed him envoy, with two others, to Genoa, by the title of *scutifer noster*, "our squier." *Scutifer* and *armiger*, according to Mr. Tyrwhitt, are synonymous terms with the French *escurier;* but Chaucer's biographers, thinking the title of *squier* too vulgar, changed it to shield-bearer, as if Chaucer had the special office of carrying the king's shield. With respect to the nature of this embassy to Genoa, biography and history are alike silent, and from that silence, the editor of the Canterbury tales is inclined to doubt whether it ever took place, or whether he had that opportunity of visiting Petrarch, an event which his biographers refer to the same period.

But although history is silent as to the object of Chaucer's embassy, his biographers have endeavoured to supply the defect, by conjecturing that it might be for the purpose

of hiring ships for the king's navy. They find that in those days, though we frequently made great naval armaments, we had but very few ships of our own, and were therefore obliged to hire them from the free states either of Germany or Italy. Having thus discovered an object for Chaucer's embassy, they represent it as being so successful, that the king bestowed new marks of favour upon him; and it is certain, whatever might be the cause, that at the distance of two years, namely in the forty-eighth year of that reign, 1374, he had a grant for life of a pitcher of wine daily; and in the same year a grant, which has already been mentioned, during pleasure, of the offices of comptroller of the custom of wools, and comptroller of the *parva custuma vinorum, &c.* in the port of London. This office, we are told, he filled with great integrity, as well as advantage, his conduct not being in the least tainted with any of those connivings or frauds which had become frequent in the customs, and were detected towards the latter end of Edward's reign.

About a year after this, the king granted to him the wardship of sir Edmund Staplegate's heir, for which he received £104, and in the next year some forfeited wool to the value of £71. 4*s*. 6*d*[5]. These, and his other pecuniary advantages, are said to have raised his income to a thousand pounds *per annum*, a prodigious sum at that time, but quite incredible. Whatever his income was, however, he informs us in the Testament of Love, it enabled him to live with dignity and hospitality. In the last year of king Edward III, 1377, he was sent to France, with sir Guichard Dangle, and Richard Stan, or Sturry, to treat of a marriage between the prince of Wales, Richard, and a daughter of the French king. Such is Froissart's account; but the English historians Hollingshed and Barnes inform us, that the principal object of his mission was to complain of some infringement of the truce concluded with the French, and that although they were not very successful in their remonstrance, it produced some overtures towards the said marriage, and this ended in a new treaty.

Whichever of these accounts is the true one, it appears that this was the last political employment which Chaucer filled, although he did not cease to take an interest in the measures of his patron, the duke of Lancaster. On the accession of Richard II. in 1377, his annuity of twenty marks was confirmed, and another annuity of twenty marks granted to him in lieu of the daily pitcher of wine. He was also confirmed in his office of comptroller.

When Richard II. succeeded his grandfather, he was but eleven years of age, and his uncle the duke of Lancaster was consequently entrusted with the chief share in the administration of public affairs. One of his first measures was to solemnize the young king's coronation with great pomp, previously to which a court of claims was established to settle the demands of those who pretended to have a right to assist at the ceremony. Among these Chaucer claimed, in right of his ward, who was possessed of the manor of Billington in Kent; and this was held of the crown, by the service of presenting to the king three maple cups on the day of his coronation; but this claim was contested, and if it had not, is remote enough from the kind of information which it would be desirable to obtain respecting Chaucer. All we know certainly of this period is, that the duke of Lancaster still preserved his friendship for our poet, and probably was the means of the grants just noticed having been renewed on the accession of the young king.

Soon after this, however, Chaucer's biographers concur in the fact that he experienced

[5] The sums have been calculated to amount to £3500. of our money. See Ellis, vol. i. p. 204.

a very serious reverse in his affairs, which in the second year of Richard II. were in such disorder, that he was obliged to have recourse to the king's protection in order to screen him from the importunities of his creditors. But as to the cause of this embarrassment, we find no agreement among those who have attempted a narrative of his life. Some think his distresses were temporary, and some that they were artificial. Among the latter, the writer of his life in the Biographia Britannia, hazards a supposition which is at least ingenious. He is of opinion that Chaucer about this time found out a rich match for his son Thomas, namely Maud, the second daughter of sir John Burghershe, and in order to obtain this match he was obliged to bring his son somewhat upon a level with her, by settling all his landed estates upon him: and that this duty might occasion those demands which put him under the necessity of obtaining the king's protection. The conclusion of the matter, according to this conjecture, must be, that Chaucer entailed his estates upon his son, and found means to put off his creditors, a measure not very honourable. But we are still in the dark as to the nature of those debts, or the existence of his landed property, and it is even doubtful whether this Thomas Chaucer was his son[6]. We know certainly of no son but Lewis, who was born in 1381, twenty-one years after his marriage, if the date of his marriage, before given, be correct.

It appears from the historians of Richard II. that the duke of Lancaster, about the third or fourth year of that monarch's reign, began to decline in political influence, if not in popularity, owing to the encouragement he had given to the celebrated reformer Wickliffe, whom he supported against the clergy, to whose power in state affairs he had long looked with a jealous eye. Chaucer's works show evidently that he concurred with the duke in his opinion of the clergy, and have procured him to be ranked among the few who paved the way for the reformation. Yet when the insurrection of Wat Tyler was imputed to the principles of the Wicklevites, the duke, it is said, withdrew his countenance from them, and disclaimed their tenets. Chaucer is likewise reported to have altered his sentiments; but the fact, in neither case, is satisfactorily confirmed. The duke of Lancaster condemned the doctrines of those followers of Wickliff only, who had excited public disturbances; and Chaucer was so far from abandoning his former notions[7], that, in 1384, he exerted his utmost interest in favour of John Comberton, commonly called John of Northampton, when about to be re-chosen mayor of London. Comberton was a reformer on Wickliff's principles, and so obnoxious on that account to the clergy, that they stirred up a commotion on his re-election, which the

[6] "After reading, in the circumstantial accounts of Chaucer's biographers, that he was married in 1360 to Philippa Rouet, by whom he had issue Thomas Chaucer and other children, we are surprised to learn that it is doubtful whether Thomas Chaucer was his son; that the earliest known evidence of his marriage is a record of 1381, in which he receives a half-year's payment of an annuity of ten marks, granted by Edward III. to his wife as one of the maids of honour *(domicellae)* lately in the service of queen Philippa; that the name of Philippa Rouet does not occur in the list of these maids of honour, but that Chaucer's wife may possibly have been Philippa Pykard; that, notwithstanding this, his said wife was certainly sister to Catharine Rouet, who married a sir John Swynford, and was the favourite mistress, and ultimately the wife, of the duke of Lancaster; and that Chaucer himself mentions no son but Lewis, whom he states to have been born in 1381, a date which seems to agree with the record above mentioned, and to place the date of his marriage in 1380." Ellis's Specimens, vol. i. p. 206.

[7] His biographers say he died a member of the church of Rome. Fox claims him as a reformer. Acts and Monuments, vol. ii. p. 42, edit. 1684. Dr. Warton (Essay on Pope) observes that Chaucer, as well as Dante, asserted that the church of Rome was Antichrist, a notion Bossuet has taken much pains to refute. *C.*

king was obliged to quell by force. The consequence was, that some lives were lost, Comberton was imprisoned, and strict search was made after Chaucer, who contrived to escape first to Hainault, then to France, and finally to Zealand. The date of his flight has not been ascertained; but it was no doubt upon this occasion that he lost his place in the customs.

While in Zealand, he maintained some of his countrymen, who had fled thither upon the same account, by sharing the money he brought with him, an act of liberality which soon exhausted his stock. In the meantime, the partizans of his cause, whom he left at home, contrived to make their peace, not only without endeavouring to procure a pardon for him, but without aiding him in his exile, where he became greatly distressed for want of pecuniary supplies. Such ingratitude, we may suppose, gave him more uneasiness than the consequences of it; but it did not lessen his courage, as he soon ventured to return to England. On this he was discovered, and committed to the Tower, where, after being treated with great rigour, he was promised his pardon if he would disclose all he knew, and put it in the power of government to restore the peace of the city. His former resolution appears now to have forsaken him, or, perhaps, indignation at the ungrateful conduct of his associates induced him to think disclosure a matter of indifference. It is certain that he complied with the terms offered; but we are not told what was the amount of his confession, or what the consequences of it were to others, or who they were whom he informed against. We know only that he obtained his liberty, and that an oppressive share of blame and obloquy followed. To alleviate his regret for this treatment, and partly to vindicate his conduct, he now wrote the Testament of Love; and although this piece, from want of dates, and obscurity of style, is not sufficient to form a very satisfactory biographical document, it at least furnishes the preceding account of his exile and return.

The decline of the duke of Lancaster's interest contributed not a little to aggravate the distresses of our author, and determined him to take leave of the court and its intrigues, and retire in pursuit of that happiness which his years and habits of reflection demanded. With this view, it was necessary to dispose of those pensions which had been bestowed upon him in the former reign, and which, notwithstanding his espousing a cause not very acceptable to the sovereign, had been continued to him in the present. Accordingly, in May 1388, he obtained his majesty's license to surrender his two grants of twenty marks each, in favour of one John Scalby. After this he retired to his favourite Woodstock, and, according to Speght, employed a part of his time in revising and correcting his writings, and enjoying the calm pleasures of rural contemplation. It is thought that the composition of his Canterbury Tales was begun about this time, 1389, when he was in the sixty-first year of his age, and when, contrary to the usual progress of mind, his powers seem to have been in their fullest vigour[8].

It was not long after this period that the duke of Lancaster resumed his influence at court; but whether Chaucer was enabled to profit by this reverse, or whether he had seen too much of political revolutions to induce him to quit his retreat, his biographers are doubtful. It appears, however, probable that the duke of Lancaster had it still as much in his will as in his power to befriend him, and it might be owing to his grace's influence

[8] Chaucer's fame rests chiefly on his Canterbury Tales, and Dryden's on his Fables, both written towards the decline of life. Dryden was seventy, and Chaucer before he finished what we have of his Tales, was probably not much less. *C.*

that, in 1389, we find him clerk of the works at Westminster, and in the following year at Windsor and other palaces; but Mr. Tyrwhitt doubts whether these offices were sufficient to indemnify him for the loss of his place in the customs. In the Testament of Love, he complains of "being berafte out of dignitie of office, in which he made a gatheringe of worldly godes;" and in another place he speaks of himself as "once glorious in worldly welefulnesse, and having such godes in welthe as maken men riche." All this implies a very considerable reverse of fortune, although Speght's tradition of his having been possessed of "lands and revenues to the yearly value almost of a thousand pounds," remains utterly incredible.

But the king's favour did not end with the offices just mentioned. In the 17th year of his reign, 1394, he granted to Chaucer a new annuity of twenty pounds; in 1398, his protection for two years; and, in 1399, a pipe of wine annually. From the succeeding sovereign Henry IV. he obtained, in the year last mentioned, a confirmation of his two grants of £20 and of the pipe of wine, and at the same time an additional grant of an annuity of forty marks. Notwithstanding this dependent state of his affairs, some of his biographers represent him as possessed of Dunnington castle in Berkshire, which he must have purchased at the time he received the above annuity of twenty pounds, for up to that date (1394) it was in the possession of sir Richard Abberbury. Mr. Tyrwhitt remarks that the tradition which Evelyn notices in his Sylva of an oak in Dunnington park called *Chaucer's oak*, may be sufficiently accounted for, without supposing that it was planted by Chaucer himself, as the castle was undoubtedly in the hands of Thomas Chaucer for many years.

During his retirement in 1391, he wrote his learned treatise on the Astrolabe, for the use of his son Lewis, who was then ten years old, and this is the only circumstance respecting his family which we have on his own, or any authority that deserves credit. Leland, Bale, and Wood, place this son under the tuition of his father's friend Nicholas Strode (whom, however, they call Ralph) of Merton college Oxford; but if Wood could trace Strode no further than the year 1370, it is impossible he could have been the tutor of Chaucer's son in 1391.

The accounts we have of Chaucer's latter days are extremely inconsistent. His biographers bring him from Woodstock to Dunnington castle, and from that to London, to solicit a continuation of his annuities, in which he found such difficulties as probably hastened his end. Wood, in his Annals, informs us that although he did not repent at the last of his reflections on the clergy, "yet of that he wrote of love and baudery it grieved him much on his death-bed: for one that lived shortly after his time, maketh report[9], that when he saw death approaching, he did often cry out, 'Woe is me, woe is me, that I cannot recall and annull those things which I have written of the base and filthy love of men towards women: but alas they are now continued from man to man, and I cannot do what I desire." To this may be added, that the affecting lines "Gode Counsaile of Chaucer," are said to have been made by him when on his death-bed, and in great anguish.

It seems generally agreed that he died Oct. 25, 1400, and was buried in Westminster Abbey, in the great south cross-aile. The monument to his memory was erected above a century and a half after his decease by Nicholas Brigham, a gentleman of Oxford, a poet and a warm admirer of our author. It stands at the north end of a magnificent

[9] Th. Gascoigne in 2 parte Dictionar. Theolog. p. 377. MS. "Fuit idem Chawserus pater Thomæ Chawseri Armigeri qui Thomas sepult. in Nuhelm juxta Oxoniam.

recess, formed by four obtuse foliaged arches, and is a plain altar, with three quatrefoils, and the same number of shields. The inscription, and figures on the back, are almost obliterated [10].

Although Chaucer has been generally hailed as the founder of English poetry and literature, the extent of the obligations which English poetry and literature owe to him has not been decidedly ascertained. The improvement he introduced in language and versification has been called in question, not only by modern but by ancient critics. The chief faults attributed to him, are the mixture of French in all his works, and his ignorance of the laws of versification.

A formal discussion of these points is not intended in the present sketch; but some notice of them becomes necessary, and the student of Chaucer need not be told that very little of this kind can be attempted without following the track of the judicious Tyrwhitt.

With respect to the mixture of French words and phrases in Chaucer's writings, it must be observed that the French language was prevalent in this country several centuries before his time. Even previously to the Conquest, the Normans had made it a fashion to speak French in the English court, and from thence it would naturally be adopted by the people; but after the Conquest this became the case in a much greater proportion [11]. It was a matter of policy in the conqueror to introduce his own language, and it would soon become a matter of interest in the people to acquire it. We uniformly find that where new settlers appear, even without the superiority of conquerors, the aborigines find it convenient to learn their language. The history of king William's conquest and policy, shows that his language must soon extend over a kingdom which he had parcelled out among his chiefs as the reward of their valour and attachment. One step which he took must above all others have contributed to naturalize the French language. He supplied all vacancies in the ecclesiastical establishment with Norman clergy; and if, with all this influence, the French language did not universally prevail, it must at least have interfered in a very considerable degree with the use of the native tongue. At schools, French and Latin were taught together in the reign of Edward III. and it was usual to make the scholars construe their Latin lessons into French, a practice which must have greatly retarded the progress of the native tongue towards refinement. Some check, indeed, appears to have been given to this in the reign of the same sovereign; but the proceedings in parliament, and the statues, continued to be promulgated in French for a far longer period.

These circumstances have been advanced to prove that Chaucer ought not to be blamed for introducing words and phrases, with which his countrymen were familiar long before his time, and which they probably considered as elegancies. If Chaucer was taught at school, as other youths were, it is plain that he must have learned French while he was learning his mother-tongue, and was taught to give a preference to the former by making it the vehicle of translation.

The language, therefore, in use in Chaucer's days, among the upper classes, and by all that would be thought learned, was a Norman-Saxon dialect, introduced by the influx and influence of a court of foreigners, and spread wherever that influence extended. Journies to France were also common, for the purposes of improvement in such accomplishments as were then fashionable; and this kind of intercourse, which is always in

[10] Malcolm's Londinium, vol. i. p. 149. *C.*

[11] But see Mr. Ellis's chap. ii. of the Introduction to his Specimens, vol. i. p. 38. *C.*

favour of the country visited, would perhaps tend to introduce a still greater proportion of French phraseology. But still the foundation was laid at home, in the prevailing modes of education.

With respect to the progress of this mixture, and the effects of the accessions which in the course of nearly three centuries the English language received from Normandy, the reader is referred to Mr. Tyrwhitt's very elaborate essay on the language and versification of Chaucer, prefixed to his edition of the Canterbury Tales. It appears, upon the whole, that "the language of our ancestors was complete in all its parts, and had served them for the purposes of discourse, and even of composition in various kinds, long before they had any intimate acquaintance with their French neighbours." They had therefore "no call from necessity, and consequently no sufficient inducement, to alter its original and radical constitutions, or even its customary forms." And accordingly, notwithstanding the prevalence of the French from the causes already assigned, it is proved by Mr. Tyrwhitt, that "in all the essential parts of speech, the characteristical features of the Saxon idiom were always preserved: and the crowds of French words, which from time to time were imported, were themselves made subject, either immediately, or by degrees, to the laws of that same idiom."

As to what English poetry owes to Chaucer, Dr. Johnson has pronounced him "the first of our versifiers who wrote poetically;" and Mr. Warton has proved, "that in elevation and elegance, in harmony and perspicuity of versification, he surpasses his predecessors in an infinite proportion: that his genius was universal, and adapted to themes of unbounded variety; that his merit was not less in painting familiar manners with humour and propriety, than in moving the passions, and in representing the beautiful or the grand objects of nature with grace and sublimity. In a word, that he appeared with all the lustre and dignity of a true poet, in an age which compelled him to struggle with a barbarous language, and a national want of taste: and when to write verses at all, was regarded as a singular qualification [12]."

The Saxons had a species of writing which they called poetry, but it did not consist of regular verses, nor was it embellished by rhyme. The Normans it is generally thought were the first who introduced rhyme or metre, copied from the Latin rythmical verses, a bastard species, which belongs to the declining period of the Latin language. To reduce the history of versification from the earliest periods is impossible, for want of specimens. Two very trifling ones only are extant before the time of Henry II. namely, a few lines in the Saxon Chronicle upon the death of William the Conqueror, and a short canticle, which, according to Matthew Paris, the blessed Virgin was pleased to dictate to Godric, an hermit near Durham. In the time of Henry II. Layamon, a priest, translated chiefly from the French of Wace, a fabulous history of the Britons, entitled *Le Brut*, which Wace himself, about the year 1155, had translated from the Latin of Geffry of Monmouth. In this there are a number of short verses, of unequal lengths, but exhibiting something like rhyme. But so common was it to write, whatever was written, in French or Latin, that another century must be passed over before we come to another specimen of English poetry, if we except the Ormulum [13], and a moral piece upon old age [14], &c. noticed by Mr. Tyrwhitt, and which he conjectures to have been written earlier than the reign of Henry II.

[12] Hist. of Poetry, vol. i. p. 457.

[13] A paraphrase on the Gospel histories, written by one Orme or Ormin. *C.*

[14] A specimen of this is given in Dr. Johnson's Introduction to his Dictionary. *C.*

Between the latter end of the reign of Henry III. and the time of Chaucer, the names of many English rhymers have been recovered, and many more anonymous writers, or rather translators, of romances flourished about this period; but they neither invented nor imported any improvements in the art of versification. Their labours, however, are not to be undervalued. Mr. Warton has very justly remarked, that "the revival of learning in most countries appears to have first owed its rise to translation. At rude periods the modes of original thinking are unknown, and the arts of original composition have not yet been studied. The writers, therefore, of such periods are chiefly and very usefully, employed in imparting the ideas of other languages into their own." But as many of these metrical romances were to be accompanied by music, they were less calculated for reading than recitation.

These authors, whatever their merit, were the only English poets, if the name may be used, when Chaucer appeared; and the only circumstances under which he found the poetry of his native tongue, were, that rhyme was established very generally; that the metres in use were principally the long Iambic, consisting of not more than fifteen, nor less than fourteen syllables, and broken by a cæsura at the eighth syllable; the Alexandrine metre consisting of not more than thirteen syllables, nor less than twelve, with a cæsura at the sixth: the octosyllable metre; and the stanza of six verses, of which the first, second, fourth, and fifth, were in complete octosyllable metre; and the third and last catelectic, i. e. wanting a syllable or even two.

Such were the precedents which a new poet might be expected to follow. But Chaucer composed nothing in the first or second of these four metres. In the fourth he wrote only the Rime of Sir Thopas, which being intended to ridicule the vulgar romances, seems to have been purposely written in their favourite metre. In the third, or octosyllable metre[15], he wrote several of his compositions, particularly an imperfect translation of the Roman de la Rose, the House of Fame, the Dethe of the Duchesse Blanche, and his Dreme, all which are so superior to the versification of his contemporaries and predecessors, as to establish his pre-eminence, and prove that the reformer of English poetry had at length appeared.

But the most considerable part of his works entitle him to the honour of an inventor. They are written in the heroic metre, and there is no evidence of any English poet having used it before him. He is not indeed to be considered as the inventor in the most extensive sense, as the heroic metre had been cultivated by Dante, Petrach, and Boccace; but he was the first to introduce it into his native language, in which it has been employed by every poet of eminence to the present day.

The age of Chaucer had little of what we now understand by refinement. The public shows and amusements were splendid and sumptuous, they had all somewhat of a dramatic air: at their tournaments and carousals, the principal personages acted parts, with some connection of story, borrowed from the events, and conducted according to the events and manners of chivalry. But the national manners and habits were barbarous, unless where the restraint of religion repressed public licentiousness; and, with respect to taste, the spectacles in which the higher orders indulged, were such as would not now be tolerated, perhaps, even at a fair. What influence they had on public decency, it is difficult to ascertain. In Chaucer's time there was indeed no *public*, because there was

[15] So called by Mr. Tyrwhitt, (whose opinions are chiefly followed on this subject) from what he apprehends to have been its original form, in which although it often consists of nine and sometimes of ten syllables, the eighth is always the last accented syllable. *C.*

little or nothing of that communication of sentiment and feeling which we owe to the invention of printing.

In such an age it is the highest praise of Chaucer, that he stood alone, the first poet who improved the art by melody, fancy, and sentiment, and the first writer, whether we consider the quantity, quality, or variety of his productions. It is supposed that many of his writings are lost. What remain, however, and have been authenticated with tolerable certainty, must have formed the occupation of a considerable part of his life, and been the result of copious reading and reflection. Even his translations are mixed with so great a portion of original matter, as, it may be presumed, required time and study, and those happy hours of inspiration which are not always within command. The principal obstruction to the pleasure we should otherwise derive from Chaucer's works, is that profusion of allegory which pervades them, particularly the Romaunt of the Rose, the Court of Love, Flower and Leaf, and the House of Fame. Pope, in the first edition of his Temple of Fame, prefixed a note in defence of allegorical poetry, the propriety of which cannot be questioned, but which is qualified with an exception which applies directly to Chaucer. "The incidents by which allegory is conveyed, should never be spun too long, or too much clogged with trivial circumstances, or little particularities." But this is exactly the case with Chaucer, whose allegories are spun beyond all bounds, and clogged with many trivial and unappropriate circumstances.

For upwards of seventy years after the death of Chaucer, his works remained in manuscript. Mr. Tyrwhitt enumerates twenty-six manuscripts which he had an opportunity of consulting in the various public and private libraries of London, Oxford, Cambridge, &c. but of all these he is inclined to give credit to only five. Caxton, the first English printer, selected Chaucer's Canterbury Tales, as one of the earliest productions of his press, but happened to copy a very incorrect manuscript. This first edition is supposed by Mr. Ames to have been printed in 1475 or 1476. There are only two complete copies extant, one in his Majesty's library, and another in that of Merton college, both without preface or advertisement. About six years after, Caxton printed a second edition, and in his preface apologized for the errors of the former. No perfect copy of this edition is known. Ames mentions an edition "collected by William Caxton, and printed by Wynken de Worde, 1495, folio," but the existence of this is doubtful. Pynson printed two editions, the first, it is conjectured, in 1491, and the second in 1526, which was the first in which a collection of some other pieces of Chaucer was added to the Canterbury Tales. Ames notices editions in 1520 and 1522, but had not seen them, nor are they now known.

In 1532, an edition was printed by Thomas Godfrey, and edited by Mr. Thynne, which Mr. Tyrwhitt informs us was considered, notwithstanding its many imperfections, as the standard edition, and was copied, not only by the booksellers, in their several editions of 1542, 1546, 1555, and 1561, but also by Mr. Speght in 1597 and 1602. Speght's edition was reprinted in 1687, and in 1721 appeared Mr. Urry's, who, while he professed to compare a great many manuscripts, took such liberties with his author's text as to render this by far the worst edition ever published.

There is an interleaved copy of Urry's edition in the British Museum, presented by Mr. William Thomas, a brother of Dr. J. Thomas[16] who furnished the preface, and the

[16] Rector of Presteigne in Radnorshire. A large paper copy of this edition, with the same MSS. notes as that in the Museum, and a presentation copy from Dr. Thomas, was lately purchased by the present writer. *C.*

Glossary, and upon whom the charge of publishing devolved after Mr. Urry's death. This copy has many manuscript notes, and corrections. From one of them we learn that the life of Chaucer was very incorrectly drawn up by Mr. Dart, and corrected and enlarged by Mr. William Thomas; and from another, that bishop Atterbury prompted Urry to this undertaking, but "did by no means judge rightly of Mr. Urry's talents in this case, who though in many respects a most worthy person, was not qualified for a work of this nature." Dr. Thomas undertook to publish it, at the request of bishop Smalridge. In the Harleian collection is a copy of an agreement between William Brome, executor to Urry, the dean and chapter of Christ Church, and Bernard Lintot the bookseller. By this it appears that it was Urry's intention to apply part of the profits towards building Peckwater Quadrangle. Lintot was to print a thousand copies on small paper at £1. 10*s*. and two hundred and fifty on large paper at £2. 10*s*. It does not appear that this speculation succeeded. Yet the edition, from its having been printed in the Roman letter, the copiousness of the glossary, and the ornaments, &c. continued to be the only one consulted, until the publication of the Canterbury Tales by Mr. Tyrwhitt in 1775. This very acute critic was the first who endeavoured to restore a pure text by the collation of MSS. a labour of vast extent, but which must be undertaken even to greater extent, before the other works of Chaucer can be published in a manner worthy of their author. In the present edition, in which a more regular arrangement has been attempted, Mr. Tyrwhitt's text has been followed for the Canterbury Tales; and for the remainder of his works, the black letter editions, which, with all their faults, are more to be depended on than Urry's.

Mr. Warton laments that Chaucer has been so frequently considered as an old, rather than a good poet, and recommends the study of his works. Mr. Tyrwhitt, since this advice was given, has undoubtedly introduced Chaucer to a nearer intimacy with the learned public, but it is not probable that he can ever be restored to popularity. His language will still remain an unsurmountable obstacle with that numerous class of readers to whom poets must look for universal reputation. Poetry is the art of pleasing; but pleasure, as generally understood, admits of very little that deserves the name of study.

THE

CANTERBURY TALES.

POEMS

OF

GEOFFREY CHAUCER.

THE

CANTERBURY TALES.

THE PROLOGUE.

v. 1—62.

WHANNE that April with his shoures sote
The droughte of March hath perced to the rote,
And bathed every veine in swiche licour,
Of whiche vertue engendred is the flour;
Whan Zephirus eke with his sote brethe
Enspired hath in every holt and hethe
The tendre croppes, and the yonge Sonne
Hath in the Ram his halfe cours yronne,
And smale foules maken melodie,
That slepen alle night with open eye,
So priketh hem nature in hir corages;
Than longen folk to gon on pilgrimages,
And palmeres for to seken strange strondes,
To serve halwes couth in sondry londes;
And specially, from every shires ende
Of Englelond, to Canterbury they wende,
The holy blisful martyr for to seke,
That hem hath holpen, whan that they were seke.
Befelle, that, in that seson on a day,
In Southwerk at the Tabard as I lay,
Redy to wenden on my pilgrimage
To Canterbury with devoute corage,
At night was come into that hostelrie
Wel nine and twenty in a compagnie
Of sondry folk, by aventure yfalle
In felawship, and pilgrimes were they alle,
That toward Canterbury wolden ride.
The chambres and the stables weren wide,
And wel we weren esed atte beste.
And shortly, whan the Sonne was gone to reste,
So hadde I spoken with hem everich on,
That I was of hir felawship anon,
And made forword erly for to rise,
To take oure way ther as I you devise.
But natheles, while I have time and space,
Or that I forther in this tale pace,
Me thinketh it accordant to reson,
To tellen you alle the condition
Of ech of hem, so as it semed me,
And whiche they weren, and of what degre;
And eke in what araie that they were inne:
And at a knight than wol I firste beginne.

A KNIGHT ther was, and that a worthy man,
That fro the time that he firste began
To riden out, he loved chevalrie,
Trouthe and honour, fredom and curtesie.
Ful worthy was he in his lordes werre,
And thereto hadde he ridden, no man ferre,
As wel in Cristendom as in Hethenesse,
And ever honoured for his worthinesse.
At Alisandre he was whan it was wonne.
Ful often time he hadde the bord begonne
Aboven alle nations in Pruce.
In Lettowe hadde he reysed and in Ruce,
No cristen man so ofte of his degre.
In Gernade at the seige eke hadde he be
Of Algesir, and ridden in Belmarie.
At Leyes was he, and at Satalie,
Whan they were wonne; and in the Grete see
At many a noble armee hadde he be.
At mortal batailles hadde he ben fiftene,
And foughten for our faith at Tramissene

In listes thries, and ay slain his fo.
This ilke worthy knight hadde ben also
Somtime with the lord of Palatie,
Agen another hethen in Turkie:
And evermore he hadde a sovereine pris.
And though that he was worthy he was wise,
And of his port as meke as is a mayde.
He never yet no vilanie ne sayde
In alle his lif, unto no manere wight.
He was a veray parfit gentil knight.
But for to tellen you of his araie,
His hors was good, but he ne was not gaie.
Of fustian he wered a gipon,
Alle besmotred with his habergeon,
For he was late ycome fro his viage,
And wente for to don his pilgrimage

With him ther was his sone a young SQUIER,
A lover, and a lusty bacheler,
With lockes crull as they were laide in presse.
Of twenty yere of age he was I gesse.
Of his stature he was of even lengthe,
And wonderly deliver, and grete of strengthe.
And he hadde be somtime in chevachie,
In Flaundres, in Artois, and in Picardie,
And borne him wel, as of so litel space,
In hope to stonden in his ladies grace.
Embrouded was he, as it were a mede
Alle ful of freshe floures, white and rede.
Singing he was, or floyting alle the day,
He was as freshe, as is the moneth of May.
Short was his goune, with sleves long and wide.
Wel coude he sitte on hors, and fayre ride,
He coude songes make, and wel endite,
Juste and eke dance, and wel pourtraie and write.
So hote he loved, that by nightertale
He slep no more than doth the nightingale.
Curteis he was, lowly, and servisable,
And carf before his fader at the table.

A YEMAN hadde he, and servantes no mo
At that time, for him luste to ride so;
And he was cladde in cote and hode of grene.
A shefe of peacock arwes bright and kene
Under his belt he bare ful thriftily.
Wel coude he dresse his takel yemanly:
His arwes drouped not with fetheres lowe;
And in his hond he bare a mighty bowe.
A not-hed hadde he, with a broune visage.
Of wood-craft coude he wel alle the usage.
Upon his arme he bare a gaie bracer,
And by his side a sword and a bokeler,
And on that other side a gaie daggere,
Harneised wel, and sharpe as point of spere:
A Cristofre on his brest of silver shene.
An horne he bare, the baudrik was of grene.
A forster was he sothely as I gesse.

Ther was also a nonne, a PRIORESSE,
That of hire smiling was ful simple and coy;
Hire gretest othe n'as but by seint Eloy;
And she was cleped madame Eglentine.
Ful wel she sange the service devine
Entuned in hire nose ful swetely;
And Frenche she spake ful fayre and fetisly,
After the scole of Stratford atte bowe,
For Frenche of Paris was to hire unknowe.
At mete was she wel ytaughte withalle;
She lette no morsel from hire lippes falle,
Ne wette hire fingres in hire sauce depe.
Wel coude she carie a morsel, and wel kepe,
That no drope ne fell upon hire brest.
In curtesie was sette ful moche hire lest.
Hire over lippe wiped she so clene,
That in hire cuppe was no ferthing sene
Of grese, whan she dronken hadde hire draught.
Ful semely after hire mete she raught.
And sikerly she was of grete disport,
And ful plesant, and amiable of port,
And peined hire to contrefeten chere
Of court, and ben estatelich of manere,
And to ben holden digne of reverence.
But for to speken of hire conscience,
She was so charitable and so pitous,
She wolde wepe if that she saw a mous
Caughte in a trappe, if it were ded or bledde.
Of smale houndes hadde she, that she fedde
With rosted flesh, and milk, and wastel brede.
But sore wept she if on of hem were dede,
Or if men smote it with a yerde smert:
And all was conscience and tendre herte.
Ful semely hire wimple ypinched was;
Hire nose tretis; hire eyen grey as glas;
Hire mouth ful smale, and therto soft and red;
But sikerly she hadde a fayre forehed.
It was almost a spanne brode I trowe;
For hardily she was not undergrowe.
Ful fetise was hire cloke, as I was ware.
Of smale corall aboute hire arm she bare
A pair of bedes, gauded all with grene;
And theron heng a broche of gold ful shene,
On whiche was first ywriten a crouned A,
And after, *Amor vincit omnia.*
Another NONNE also with hire hadde she,
That was hire chapelleine, and PREESTES thre.

A MONK there was, a fayre for the maistrie,
An out-rider, that loved venerie;
A manly man, to ben an abbot able.
Ful many a deinte hors hadde he in stable:
And whan he rode, men mighte his bridel here,
Gingeling in a whistling wind as clere,
And eke as loude, as doth the chapell belle,
Ther as this lord was keper of the celle.
The reule of seint Maure and of seint Beneit,
Because that it was olde and somdele streit,
This ilke monk lette olde thinges pace,
And held after the newe world the trace.
He yave not of the text a pulled hen,
That saith, that hunters ben not holy men;
Ne that a monk, whan he is rekkeles,
Is lik̄ to a fish that is waterles;
This is to say, a monk out of his cloistre.
This ilke text held he not worth an oistre.
And I say his opinion was good.
What shulde he studie, and make himselven wood,
Upon a book in cloistre alway to pore,
Or swinken with his hondes, and laboure,
As Austin bit? how shal the world be served?
Let Austin have his swink to him reserved.
Therfore he was a prickasoure a right:
Greihoundes he hadde as swift as foul of flight:
Of pricking and of hunting for the hare
Was all his lust, for no cost wolde he spare.
I saw his sleves purfiled at the hond
With gris, and that the finest of the lond.
And for to fasten his hood under his chinne,
He hadde of gold ywroughta curious pinne:

A love-knotte in the greter end ther was.
His hed was balled, and shone as any glas,
And eke his face, as it hadde ben anoint.
He was a lord ful fat and in good point.
His eyen stepe, and rolling in his hed,
That stemed as a forneis of a led.
His botes souple, his hors in gret estat,
Now certainly he was a fayre prelat.
He was not pale as a forpined gost.
A fat swan loved he best of any rost.
His palfrey was as broune as is a bery.

A Frere there was, a wanton and a mery,
A limitour, a ful solempne man.
In all the ordres foure is non that can
So moche of daliance and fayre langage.
He hadde ymade ful many a mariage
Of yonge wimmen, at his owen cost.
Until his order he was a noble post.
Ful wel beloved, and familier was he
With frankeleins over all in his contree,
And eke with worthy wimmen of the toun:
For he had power of confession,
As saide himselfe, more than a curat,
For of his ordre he was licenciat.
Ful swetely herde he confession,
And plesant was his absolution.
He was an esy man to give penance,
Ther as he wiste to han a good pitance:
For unto a poure ordre for to give
Is signe that a man is wel yshrive.
For if he gave, he dorste make avant,
He wiste that a man was repentant.
For many a man so hard is of his herte,
He may not wepe although him sore smerte.
Therfore in stede of weping and prayeres,
Men mote give silver to the poure freres.
His tippet was ay farsed ful of knives,
And pinnes, for to given fayre wives.
And certainly he had a mery note.
Wel coude he singe and plaien on a rote.
Of yeddinges he bare utterly the pris.
His nekke was white as is the flour de lis.
Thereto he strong was as a champioun,
And knew wel the tavernes in every toun,
And every hosteler and gay tapstere,
Better than a lazer or a beggere,
For unto swiche a worthy man as he
Accordeth nought, as by his faculte,
To haven with sike lazars acquaintance.
It is not honest, it may not avance,
As for to delen with no swiche pouraille,
But all with riche, and sellers of vitaille.
And over all, ther as profit shuld arise,
Curteis he was, and lowly of servise.
Ther n'as no man no wher so vertuous.
He was the beste begger in all his hous:
And gave a certaine ferme for the grant,
Non of his bretheren came in his haunt.
For though a widewe hadde but a shoo,
(So plesant was his *In principio*)
Yet wold he have a ferthing or he went.
His pourchas was wel better than his rent.
And rage he coude as it hadde ben a whelp,
In lovedayes, ther coude he mochel help.
For ther was he nat like a cloisterere,
With thredbare cope, as is a poure scolere,
But he was like a maister or a pope.
Of double worsted was his semicope,
That round was as a belle out of the presse.
Somwhat he lisped for his wantonnesse,
To make his English swete upon his tonge;
And in his harping, whan that he hadde songe,
His eyen twinkeled in his hed aright,
As don the sterres in a frosty night.
This worthy limitour was cleped Huberd.

A Marchant was ther with a forked berd,
In mottelee, and highe on hors he sat,
And on his hed a Flaundrish bever hat.
His botes clapsed fayre and fetisly.
His resons spake he ful solempnely,
Souning alway the encrese of his winning.
He wold the see were kept for any thing
Betwixen Middleburgh and Orewell.
Wel coud he in eschanges sheldes selle.
This worthy man ful wel his wit besette;
There wiste no wight that he was in dette,
So stedefastly didde he his governance,
With his bargeines, and with his chevisance.
Forsothe he was a worthy man withalle,
But soth to sayn, I n'ot how men him calle.

A Clerk ther was of Oxenforde also,
That unto logike hadde long ygo.
As lene was his hors as is a rake,
And he was not right fat, I undertake;
But loked holwe, and therto soberly.
Ful thredbare was his overest courtepy,
For he hadde geten him yet no benefice,
Ne was nought worldly to have an office.
For him was lever han at his beddes hed
A twenty bokes, clothed in black or red,
Of Aristotle, and his philosophie,
Than robes riche, or fidel, or sautrie.
But all be that he was a philosophre,
Yet hadde he but litel gold in cofre,
But all that he might of his frendes hente,
On bokes and on lerning he it spente,
And besily gan for the soules praie
Of hem, that yave him wherwith to scolaie.
Of studie toke he moste cure and hede.
Not a word spake he more than was nede;
And that was said in forme and reverence,
And short and quike, and ful of high sentence.
Souning in moral vertue was his speche,
And gladly wolde he lerne, and gladly teche.

A Sergeant of the Lawe ware and wise,
That often hadde yben at the paruis,
Ther was also, ful riche of excellence.
Discrete he was, and of gret reverence:
He semed swiche, his wordes were so wise,
Justice he was ful often in assise,
By patent, and by pleine commissioun;
For his science, and for his high renoun,
Of fees and robes had he many on.
So grete a pourchasour was nowher non.
All was fee simple to him in effect,
His pourchasing might not ben in suspect,
No wher so besy a man as he ther n'as,
And yet he semed besier than he was.
In termes hadde he cas and domes alle,
That fro the time of king Will. weren falle.
Therto he coude endite, and make a thing,
Ther coude no wight pinche at his writing.
And every statute coude he plaine by rote.
He rode but homely in a medlee cote,
Girt with a seint of silk, with barres smale,
Of his array tell I no lenger tale.

A Frankelein was in this compagnie;
White was his berd, as is the dayesie.
Of his complexion he was sanguin.
Wel loved he by the morwe a sop in win.
To liven in delit was ever his wone,
For he was Epicures owen sone,
That held opinion, that plein delit
Was verrily felicite parfite.
An housholder, and that a grete was he;
Seint Julian he was in his contree.
His brede, his ale, was alway after on;
A bettor covyned man was no wher non.
Withouten bake mete never was his hous,
Of fish and flesh, and that so plenteous,
It snewed in his hous of mete and drinke,
Of alle deintees that men coud of thinke,
After the sondry sesons of the yere,
So changed he his mete and his soupere.
Ful many a fat partrich hadde he in mewe,
And many a breme, and many a luce in stewe.
Wo was his coke, but if his sauce were
Poinant and sharpe, and ready all his gere.
His table dormant in his halle alway
Stode redy covered alle the longe day.
At sessions ther was he lord and sire.
Ful often time he was knight of the shire.
An anelace and a gipciere all of silk,
Heng at his girdel, white as morwe milk.
A shereve hadde he ben, and a countour.
Was no wher swiche a worthy vavasour.

An Haberdasher, and a Carpenter,
A Webbe, a Deyer, and a Tapiser,
Were alle yclothed in o livere,
Of a solempne and grete fraternite.
Ful freshe and newe hir gere ypiked was.
Hir knives were ychaped not with bras,
But all with silver wrought ful clene and wel,
Hir girdeles and hir pouches every del.
Wel semed eche of hem a fayre burgeis,
To sitten in a gild halle, on the deis.
Everich, for the wisdom that he can,
Was shapelich for to ben an aldermain.
For catel hadden they ynough and rent,
And eke hir wives wolde it wel assent:
And elles certainly they were to blame.
It is ful fayre to ben ycleped madame,
And for to gon to vigiles all before,
And have a mantel reallich ybore.

A Coke they hadden with hem for the nones,
To boile the chikenes and the marie bones,
And poudre marchant, tart and galingale.
Wel coude he knowe a draught of London ale.
He coude roste, and sethe, and broile, and frie,
Maken mortrewes, and wel bake a pie.
But gret harm was it, as it thoughte me,
That on his shinne a mormal hadde he.
For blanc manger that made he with the best.

A Shipman was ther, woned fer by west:
For ought I wote, he was of Dertemouth.
He rode upon a rouncie, as he couthe,
All in a goune of falding to the knee.
A dagger hanging by a las hadde hee
About his nekke under his arm adoun.
The hote sommer hadde made his hewe al broun.
And certainly he was a good felaw.
Ful many a draught of win he hadde draw
From Burdeux ward, while that the chapman slepe.
Of nice conscience toke he no kepe.
If that he faught, and hadde the higher hand,
By water he sent hem home to every land.
But of his craft to recken wel his tides,
His stremes and his strandes him besides,
His herberwe, his mone, and his lodemanage,
Ther was non swiche, from Hull unto Cartage.
Hardy he was, and wise, I undertake:
With many a tempest hadde his berd be shake.
He knew wel alle the havens, as they were,
Fro Gotland, to the Cape de finistere,
And every creke in Bretagne and in Spaine:
His barge ycleped was the Magdelaine.

With us ther was a Doctour of Phisike,
In all this world ne was ther non him like
To speke of phisike, and of surgerie:
For he was grounded in astronomie.
He kept his patient a ful gret del
In houres by his magike naturel.
Wel coude he fortunen the ascendent
Of his images for his patient.
He knew the cause of every maladie,
Were it of cold, or hote, or moist, or drie,
And wher engendred, and of what humour,
He was a veray parfite practisour.
The cause yknowe, and of his arm the rote,
Anon he gave to the sike man his bote.
Ful redy hadde he his apothecaries
To send him dragges, and his lettuaries,
For eche of hem made other for to winne:
Hir frendship n'as not newe to beginne.
Wel knew he the old Esculapius,
And Dioscorides, and eke Rufus;
Old Hippocras, Hali, and Gallien;
Serapion, Rasis, and Avicen;
Averrois, Damascene, and Constantin;
Bernard, and Gatisden, and Gilbertin.
Of his diete mesurable was he,
For it was of no great superfluitee,
But of gret nourishing, and digestible.
His studie was but litel on the Bible.
In sanguin and in perse he clad was alle
Lined with taffata, and with sendalle.
And yet he was but esy of dispence:
He kepte that he wan in the pestilence.
For gold in phisike is a cordial;
Therfore he loved gold in special.

A good Wif was ther of beside Bathe,
But she was som del defe, and that was scathe.
Of cloth making she hadde swiche an haunt,
She passed hem of Ipres, and of Gaunt.
In all the parish wif ne was there non,
That to the offring before hire shulde gon,
And if ther did, certain so wroth was she,
That she was out of alle charitee.
Hire coverchiefs weren ful fine of ground;
I dorste swere, they weyeden a pound;
That on the Sonday were upon hire hede.
Hire hosen weren of fine scarlet rede,
Ful streite yteyed, and shoon ful moist and newe.
Bold was hire face, and fayre and rede of hew.
She was a worthy woman all hire live,
Housbondes at the chirche dore had she had five,
Withouten other compagnie in youthe.
But therof nedeth not to speke as nouthe.

And thries hadde she ben at Jerusaleme.
She hadde passed many a strange streme.
At Rome she hadde ben, and at Boloine,
In Galice at Seint James, and at Coloine.
She coude moche of wandring by the way.
Gat-tothed was she, sothly for to say.
Upon an ambler esily she sat,
Ywimpled wel, and on hire hede an hat,
As brode as is a bokeler, or a targe.
A fote-mantel about hire hippes large,
And on hire fete a pair of sporres sharpe.
In felawship wel coude she laughe and carpe
Of remedies of love she knew perchance,
For of that arte she coude the olde dance.

A good man ther was of religioun,
That was a poure PERSONE of a toun:
But riche he was of holy thought and werk.
He was also a lerned man, a clerk,
That Cristes gospel trewely wolde preche.
His parishens devoutly wolde he teche.
Benigne he was, and wonder diligent,
And in adversite ful patient:
And swiche he was ypreved often sithes.
Ful loth were him to cursen for his tithes,
But rather wolde he yeven out of doute,
Unto his poure parishens aboute,
Of his offring, and eke of his substance.
He coude in litel thing have suffisance.
Wide was his parish, and houses fer asonder,
But he ne left nought for no rain ne thonder,
In sikenesse and in mischief to visite
The ferrest in his parish, moche and lite,
Upon his fete, and in his hand a staf.
This noble ensample to his shepe he yaf,
That first he wrought, and afterward he taught.
Out of the gospel he the wordes caught,
And this figure he added yet therto,
That if gold ruste, what shuld iren do?
For if a preest be foule, on whom we trust,
No wonder is a lewed man to rust:
And shame it is, if that a preest take kepe,
To see a shitten shepherd, and clene shepe:
Wel ought a preest ensample for to yeve,
By his clenenesse, how his shepe shulde live.
He sette not his benefice to hire,
And lette his shepe acombred in the mire,
And ran unto London, unto Seint Poules,
To seken him a chanterie for soules,
Or with a brotherhede to be withold:
But dwelt at home, and kepte wel his fold,
So that the wolf ne made it not miscarie.
He was a shepherd, and no mercenarie.
And though he holy were, and vertuous,
He was to sinful men not dispitous,
Ne of his speche dangerous ne digne,
But in his teaching discrete and benigne.
To drawen folk to Heven, with fairenesse,
By good ensample, was his besinesse:
But it were any persone obstinat,
What so he were of highe, or low estat,
Him wolde he snibben sharply for the nones.
A better preest I trowe that no wher non is.
He waited after no pompe ne reverence,
Ne maked him no spiced conscience,
But Cristes lore, and his apostles twelve,
He taught, but first he folwed it himselve.

With him ther was a PLOWMAN, was his brother,
That hadde ylaid of dong ful many a fother,
A trewe swinker, and a good was he,
Living in pees, and parfite charitee.
God loved he beste with alle his herte
At alle times, were it gain or smerte,
And than his neighebour right as himselve
He wolde thresh, and therto dike, and delve,
For Cristes sake, for every poure wight,
Withouten hire, if it lay in his might.
His tithes paied he ful fayre and wel
Both of his propre swinke, and his catel.
In a tabard he rode upon a mere.
Ther was also a reve, and a millere,
A sompnour, and a pardoner also,
A manciple, and myself, ther n'ere no mo.

The MILLER was a stout carl for the nones,
Ful bigge he was of braun, and eke of bones;
That proved wel, for over all ther he came,
At wrastling he wold bere away the ram.
He was short shuldered, brode, a thikke gnarre,
Ther nas no dore, that he n'olde heve of barre,
Or breke it at a renning with his hede.
His berd as any sowe or fox was rede,
And therto brode, as though it were a spade.
Upon the cop right of his nose he hade
A wert, and theron stode a tufte of heres,
Rede as the bristles of a sowes eres.
His nose-thirles blacke were and wide.
A sword and bokeler bare he by his side.
His mouth as wide was as a forneis.
He was a jangler, and a goliardeis,
And that was most of sinne, and harlotries.
Wel coude he stelen corne, and tollen thries.
And yet he had a thomb of gold parde.
A white cote and a blew hode wered he.
A baggepipe wel coude he blowe and soune,
A therwithall he brought us out of toune.

A gentil MANCIPLE was there of a temple,
Of which achatours mighten take ensemple
For to ben wise in bying of vitaille.
For whether that he paide, or toke by taille,
Algate he waited so in his achate,
That he was ay before in good estate.
Now is not that of God a ful fayre grace,
That swiche a lewed manhes wit shal pace
The wisdom of an hepe of lered men?
Of maisters had he mo than thries ten,
That were of lawe expert and curious:
Of which ther was a dosein in that hous,
Worthy to ben stewardes of rent and lond
Of any lord that is in Englelond,
To maken him live by his propre good,
In honour detteles, but if he were wood,
Or live as scarsly, as him list desire;
And able for to helpen all a shire
In any cas that mighte fallen or happe;
And yet this manciple sette hir aller cappe.

The REVE was a slendre colerike man,
His berd was shave as neighe as ever he can.
His here was by his eres round yshorne.
His top was docked like a preest beforne.
Ful longe were his legges, and ful lene,
Ylike a staff, ther was no calf ysene.
Wel coude he kepe a garner and a binne:
There was non auditour coude on him winne.
Wel wiste he by the drought, and by the rain,
The yelding of his seed, and of his grain,

His lordes shepe, his nete, and his deirie,
His swine, his hors, his store, and his pultrie,
Were holly in this reves gouerning,
And by his covenant yave he rekening,
Sin that his lord was twenty yere of age;
Ther coude no man bring him in arerage;
Ther n'as baillif, ne herde, ne other hine,
That he ne knew his sleight and his covine:
They were adradde of him, as of the deth.
His wonning was ful fayre upon an heth,
With grene trees yshadewed was his place.
He coude better than his lord pourchase.
Ful rich he was ystored privily.
His lord wel coude he plesen subtilly,
To yeve and lene him of his owen good,
And have a thank, and yet a cote and hood.
In youth he lerned hadde a good mistere:
He was a wel good wright, a carpentere.
This reve sate upon a right good stot,
That was all pomelee grey, and highte Scot.
A long surcote of perse upon he hade,
And by his side he bare a rusty blade.
Of Norfolk was this reve, of which I tell,
Beside a toun, men clepen Baldeswell.
Tucked he was, as is a frere, aboute,
And ever he rode the hinderest of the route.

A Somenour was ther with us in that place,
That hadde a fire-red cherubinnes face,
For sauseflem he was, with eyen narwe.
As hote he was, and likerous as a sparwe,
With scalled browes blake, and pilled berd:
Of his visage children were sore aferd.
Ther n'as quiksilver, litarge, ne brimston,
Boras, ceruse, ne oile of tartre non,
Ne ointment that wolde clense or bite,
That him might helpen of his whelkes white,
Ne of the knobbes sitting on his chekes.
Wel loved he garlike, onions, and lekes,
And for to drinke strong win as rede as blood.
Than wolde he speke, and crie as he were wood.
And whan that he wel dronken had the win,
Than wold he speken no word but Latin.
A fewe termes coude he, two or three,
That he had lerned out of som decree;
No wonder is, he herd it all the day.
And eke ye knowen wel, how that a jay
Can clepen watte, as wel as can the pope.
But who so wolde in other thing him grope,
Than hadde he spent all his philosophie,
Ay, *Questio quid juris*, wolde he crie.
He was a gentil harlot and a kind;
A better felaw shulde a man not find.
He wolde suffre for a quart of wine,
A good felaw to have his concubine
A twelve month, and excuse him at the full.
Ful prively a finch eke coude he pull.
And if he found owhere a good felawe,
He wolde techen him to have non awe
In swiche a cas of the archedekenes curse;
But if a maunes soule were in his purse;
For in his purse he shulde ypunished be.
Purse is the archedekens helle, said he.
But wel I wote, he lied right in dede:
Of cursing ought eche gilty man him drede.
For curse wol sle right as assoiling saveth,
And also ware him of a *significavit*.
In danger hadde he at his owen gise
The yonge girles of the diocise,
And knew hir conseil, and was of hir rede.
A gerlond hadde he sette upon his hede,
As gret as it were for an alestake:
A bokeler hadde he made him of a cake.

With him ther rode a gentil Pardonere
Of Rouncevall, his frend and his compere,
That streit was comen from the court of Rome.
Ful loude he sang, Come hither, love, to me.
This somnour bare to him a stiff burdoun,
Was never trompe of half so gret a soun.
This pardoner had here as yelwe as wax,
But smoth it heng, as doth a strike of flax:
By unces heng his lokkes that he hadde,
And therwith he his shulders overspradde.
Ful thinne it lay, by culpons on and on,
But hode, for jolite, ne wered he non,
For it was trussed up in his wallet.
Him thought he rode al of the newe get,
Dishevele, sauf his cappe, he rode all bare.
Swiche glaring eyen hadde he, as an hare.
A vernicle hadde he sewed upon his cappe.
His wallet lay beforne him in his lappe,
Bret-ful of pardon come from Rome al hote.
A vois he hadde, as smale as hath a gote.
No berd hadde he, ne never non shulde have,
As smothe it was as it were newe shave;
I trowe he were a gelding or a mare.
But of his craft, fro Berwike unto Ware,
Ne was ther swiche an other pardonere.
For in his male he hadde a pilwebere,
Which, as he saide, was oure ladies veil:
He saide, he hadde a gobbet of the seyl
Thatte seint Peter had, whan that he went
Upon the see, till Jesu Crist him hent.
He had a crois of laton ful of stones,
And in a glas he hadde pigges bones.
But with these relikes, whanne that he fond
A poure persone dwelling up on lond,
Upon a day he gat him more moneie
Than that the persone gat in monethes tweie.
And thus with fained flatterring and japes,
He made the persone, and the peple, his apes.
But trewely to tellen atte last,
He was in church a noble ecclesiast.
Wel coude he rede a lesson or a storie,
But alderbest he sang an offertorie:
For wel he wiste, whan that song was songe,
He muste preche, and wel afile his tonge,
To winne silver, as he right wel coude:
Therfore he sang the merier and loude.

Now have I told you shortly in a clause,
Th' estat, th' araie, the nombre, and eke the cause
Why that assembled was this compagnie
In Southwerk at this gentil hostelrie,
That highte the Tabard, faste by the Belle.
But now is time to you for to telle,
How that we baren us that ilke night,
Whan we were in that hostelrie alight.
And after wol I telle of our viage,
And all the remenant of our pilgrimage.
But firste I praie you of your curtesie,
That ye ne arette it not my vilanie,
Though that I plainly speke in this matere,
To tellen you hir wordes and hir chere;
Ne though I speke hir wordes properly.
For this ye knowen al so wel as I,
Who so shall telle a tale after a man,
He moste reherse, as neighe as ever he can,

Everich word, if it be in his charge,
All speke he never so rudely and so large;
Or elles he moste tellen his tale untrewe,
Or feinen thinges, or finden wordes newe.
He may not spare, although he were his brother.
He moste as wel sayn o word, as an other.
Crist spake himself ful brode in holy writ,
And wel he wote no vilanie is it.
Eke Plato sayeth, who so can him rede,
The wordes moste ben cosin to the dede.
Also I praie you to forgive it me,
All have I not sette folk in hir degree,
Here in this tale, as that they shulden stonde.
My wit is short, ye may wel understonde.

Gret chere made our hoste everich on,
And to the souper sette he us anon:
And served us with vitaille of the beste.
Strong was the win, and wel to drinke us leste.
A semely man our hoste was with alle
For to han ben a marshal in an halle.
A large man he was with eyen stepe,
A fairer burgeis is ther non in Chepe:
Bold of his speche, and wise and wel ytaught,
And of manhood him lacked righte naught.
Eke therto was he right a mery man,
And after souper plaien he began,
And spake of mirthe amonges other thinges,
Whan that we hadden made our rekeninges;
And saide thus; "Now, lordinges, trewely
Ye ben to me welcome right hertily:
For by my trouthe, if that I shal not lie,
I saw nat this yere swiche a compagnie
At ones in this herberwe, as is now.
Fayne wolde I do you mirthe, and I wiste how.
And of a mirthe I am right now bethought,
To don you ese, and it shall coste you nought.
Ye gon to Canterbury; God you spede,
The blisful martyr quite you your mede;
And wel I wot, as ye gon by the way,
Ye shapen you to talken and to play:
For trewely comfort ne mirthe is non,
To riden by the way dumbe as the ston:
And therfore wold I maken you disport,
As I said erst, and don you some comfort.
And if you liketh alle by on assent
Now for to stonden at my jugement:
And for to werchen as I shal you say
To-morwe, whan ye riden on the way,
Now by my faders soule that is ded,
But ye be mery, smiteth of my hed.
Hold up your hondes withouten more speche."
Our conseil was not longe for to seche:
Us thought it was not worth to make it wise,
And granted him withouten more avise,
And bad him say his verdit, as him leste.
"Lordinges," (quod he) "now herkeneth for the beste;
But take it nat, I pray you, in disdain;
This is the point, to speke it plat and plain,
That eche of you to shorten with youre way,
In this viage, shal tellen tales tway,
To Canterbury ward, I mene it so,
And homeward he shall tellen other two,
Of aventures that whilom han befalle.
And which of you that bereth him best of alle,
That is to sayn, that telleth in this cas
Tales of best sentence and most solas,
Shal have a souper at youre aller cost
Here in this place sitting by this post,
Whan that ye comen agen from Canterbury.
And for to maken you the more mery,
I wol myselven gladly with you ride,
Right at min owen cost, and be your gide.
And who that wol my jugement withsay,
Shal pay for alle we spenden by the way.
And if ye vouchesauf that it be so,
Telle me anon withouten wordes mo,
And I wol erly shapen me therfore."
This thing was granted, and our othes swore
With ful glad herte, and praiden him also,
That he wolde vouchesauf for to don so,
And that he wolde ben our governour,
And of our tales juge and reportour,
And sette a souper at a certain pris;
And we wol reuled ben at his devise,
In highe and lowe: and thus by on assent,
We ben accorded to his jugement.
And therupon the win was fette anon.
We dronken, and to reste wenten eche on,
Withouten any lenger tarying.
A-morwe whan the day began to spring,
Up rose our hoste, and was our aller cok,
And gaderd us togeder in a flok,
And forth we riden a litel more than pas,
Unto the watering of Seint Thomas:
And ther our hoste began his hors arest,
And saide; "Lordes, herkeneth if you lest.
Ye wete your forword, and I it record.
If even-song and morwe-song accord,
Let se now who shal telle the first tale.
As ever mote I drinken win or ale,
Who so is rebel to my jugement,
Shal pay for alle that by the way is spent.
Now draweth cutte, or that ye forther twinne;
He which that hath the shortest shal beginne.
"Sire knight," (quod he) "my maister and my lord,
Now draweth cutte, for that is min accord.
Cometh nere," (quod he) "my lady prioresse,
And ye, sire clerk, let be your shamefastnesse,
Ne studieth nought, lay hand to, every man."
Anon to drawen every wight began,
And shortly for to tellen as it was,
Were it by aventure, or sort, or cas,
The sothe is this, the cutte felle on the knight,
Of which ful blith and glad was every wight;
And tell he must his tale as was reson,
But forword, and by composition,
As ye han herd; what nedeth wordes mo?
And whan this good man saw that it was so,
As he that wise was and obedient
To kepe his forword by his free assent,
He saide; "Sithen I shal begin this game,
What? welcome be the cutte a goddes name.
Now let us ride, and herkeneth what I say."
And with that word we riden forth our way;
And he began with right a mery chere
His tale anon, and saide as ye shul here.

THE KNIGHTES TALE.

Whilom, as olde stories tellen us,
Ther was a duk that highte Theseus.
Of Athenes he was lord and governour,
And in his time swiche a conquerour,
That greter was ther non under the Sonne.
Ful many a riche contree had he wonne,

What with his wisdom and his chevalrie,
He conquerd all the regne of Feminie,
That whilom was ycleped Scythia;
And wedded the freshe quene Ipolita,
And brought hire home with him to his contree
With mochel glorie and grete solempnitee,
And eke hire yonge suster Emelie.
And thus with victorie and with melodie
Let I this worthy duk to Athenes ride,
And all his host, in armes him beside.
And certes, if it n'ere to long to here,
I wolde have told you fully the manere,
How wonnen was the regne of Feminie,
By Theseus, and by his chevalrie;
And of the grete bataille for the nones
Betwix Athenes and the Amasones;
And how asseged was Ipolita
The faire hardy quene of Scythia;
And of the feste, that was at hire wedding,
And of the temple at hire home coming.
But all this thing I moste as now forbere.
I have, God wot, a large feld to ere;
And weke ben the oxen in my plow.
The remenant of my tale is long ynow.
I wil not letten eke non of this route.
Let every felaw telle his tale aboute,
And let se now who shal the souper winne.
Ther as I left, I wil agen beginne.
This duk, of whom I made mentioun,
Whan he was comen almost to the toun,
In all his wele and in his moste pride,
He was ware, as he cast his eye aside,
Wher that ther kneled in the highe wey
A compagnie of ladies, twey and twey,
Eche after other, clad in clothes blake:
But swiche a crie and swiche a wo they make,
That in this world n'is creature living,
That ever herd swiche another waimenting.
And of this crie ne wolde they never stenten,
Till they the reines of his bridel henten.
"What folk be ye that at min home coming
Perturben so my feste with crying?"
Quod Theseus; "have ye so grete envie
Of min honour, that thus complaine and crie?
Or who hath you misboden, or offended?
Do telle me, if that it may be amended;
And why ye be thus clothed all in blake?"
The oldest lady of hem all than spake,
Whan she had swouned, with a dedly chere,
That it was reuthe for to seen and here.
She sayde; "Lord, to whom Fortune hath yeven
Victorie, and as a conquerour to liven,
Nought greveth us your glorie and your honour;
But we beseke you of mercie and socour.
Have mercie on our woe and our distresse.
Some drope of pitie thurgh thy gentillesse,
Upon us wretched wimmen let now falle.
For certes, lord, ther n'is non of us alle,
That she n' hath ben a duchesse or a quene;
Now be we caitives, as it is wel sene:
Thanked be Fortune, and hire false whele,
That non estat ensureth to be wele,
And certes, lord, to abiden your presence
Here in this temple of the goddesse Clemence
We han ben waiting all this fourtenight:
Now helpe us, lord, sin it lieth in thy might.
"I wretched wight, that wepe and waile thus,
Was whilom wif to king Capaneus,
That starfe at Thebes, cursed be that day:
And alle we that ben in this aray,
And maken all this lamentation,
We losten alle our husbondes at that toun,
While that the seige therabouten lay.
And yet now the olde Creon, wala wa!
That lord is now of Thebes the citee,
Fulfilled of ire and of iniquitee,
He for despit, and for his tyrannie,
To don the ded bodies a vilanie,
Of all our lordes, which that ben yslawe,
Hath all the bodies on an hepe ydrawe,
And will not suffren hem by non assent
Neyther to ben yberied, ne ybrent,
But maketh houndes ete hem in despite."
And with that word, withouten more respite
They fallen groff, and crien pitously;
"Have on us wretched wimmen som mercy,
And let our sorwe sinken in thin herte."
This gentil duk doun from his courser sterte
With herte pitous whan he herd hem speke.
Him thoughte that his herte wolde all to-breke,
Whan he saw hem so pitous and so mate,
That whilom weren of so gret estate.
And in his armes he hem all up hente,
And hem comforted in ful good entente,
And swore his oth, as he was trewe knight,
He wolde don so ferforthly his might
Upon the tyrant Creon hem to wreke,
That all the peple of Grece shulde speke,
How Creon was of Theseus yserved,
As he that hath his deth ful wel deserved.
And right anon withouten more abode
His banner he displaide, and forth he rode
To Thebes ward, and all his host beside:
No nere Athenes n' olde he go ne ride,
Ne take his ese fully half a day;
But onward on his way that night he lay:
And sent anon Ipolita the quene,
And Emelie hire yonge sister shene
Unto the toun of Athenes for to dwell:
And forth he rit; ther n' is no more to tell.
The red statue of Mars with spere and targe
So shineth in his white banner large,
That all the feldes gliteren up and doun:
And by his banner borne is his penon
Of gold ful riche, in which ther was ybete
The Minotaure which that he slew in Crete.
Thus rit this duk, thus rit this conquerour,
And in his host of chevalrie the flour,
Til that he came to Thebes, and alight
Fayre in a feld, ther as he thought to fight.
But shortly for to speken of this thing,
With Creon, which that was of Thebes king,
He fought, and slew him manly as a knight
In plaine bataille, and put his folk to flight:
And by assault he wan the citee after,
And rent adoun bothe wall, and sparre, and rafter;
And to the ladies he restored again
The bodies of hir housbondes that were slain,
To don the obsequies, as was tho the gise.
But it were all to long for to devise
The grete clamour, and the waimenting,
Whiche that the ladies made at the brenning
Of the bodies, and the grete honour,
That Theseus, the noble conquerour,
Doth to the ladies, whan they from him wente:
But shortly for to telle is min entente.
Whan that this worthy duk, this Theseus,
Hath Creon slaine, and wonnen Thebes thus,
Still in the feld he toke all night his reste,
And did with all the contree as him leste.

To ransake in the tas of bodies dede,
Hem for to stripe of harneis and of wede,
The pillours dide hir besinesse and cure,
After the bataille and discomfiture.
And so befell, that in the tas they found,
Thurgh girt with many a grevous blody wound,
Two yonge knightes ligging by and by,
Bothe in on armes, wrought ful richely:
Of whiche two, Arcita highte that on,
And he that other highte Palamon.
Not fully quik, ne fully ded they were,
But by hir cote-armure, and by hir gere,
The heraudes knew hem wel in special,
As tho that weren of the blod real
Of Thebes, and of sustren two yborne.
Out of the tas the pillours han hem torne,
And han hem caried soft unto the tente
Of Theseus, and he ful sone hem sente
To Athenes, for to dwellen in prison
Perpetuel, he n'olde no raunson.
And whan this worthy duk had thus ydon,
He toke his host, and home he rit anon,
With laurer crouned as a conquerour;
And ther he liveth in joye and in honour
Terme of his lif; what nedeth wordes mo?
And in a tour, in anguish and in wo,
Dwellen this Palamon and eke Arcite,
For evermo, ther may no gold hem quite.
Thus passeth yere by yere, and day by day,
Till it felle ones in a morwe of May
That Emelie, that fayrer was to sene
Than is the lilie upon his stalke grene,
And fresher than the May with floures newe,
(For with the rose colour strof hire hewe;
I n'ot which was the finer of hem two)
Er it was day, as she was wont to do,
She was arisen, and all redy dight;
For May wol have no slogardie a-night.
The seson priketh every gentil herte,
And maketh him out of his slepe to sterte,
And sayth, "Arise, and do thin observance."
This maketh Emelie han remembrance
To don honour to May, and for to rise.
Yclothed was she freshe for to devise.
Hire yelwe here was broided in a tresse,
Behind hire back, a yerde long I gesse.
And in the gardin at the Sonne uprist
She walketh up and doun wher as hire list.
She gathereth floures, partie white and red,
To make a sotel gerlond for hire hed,
And as an angel hevenlich she song.
The grete tour, that was so thikke and strong,
Which of the castel was the chef dongeon,
(Wher as these knightes weren in prison,
Of which I tolde you, and tellen shal)
Was even joinant to the gardin wall,
Ther as this Emelie had hire playing.
Bright was the Sonne, and clere that morwening,
And Palamon, this woful prisoner,
As was his wone, by leve of his gayler
Was risen, and romed in a chambre on high,
In which he all the noble citee sigh,
And eke the gardin, ful of branches grene,
Ther as this freshe Emelia the shene
Was in hire walk, and romed up and doun.
This sorweful prisoner, this Palamon
Goth in his chambre roming to and fro,
And to himselfe complaining of his wo:
That he was borne, ful oft he sayd, alas!
And so befell, by aventure or cas,
That thurgh a window thikke of many a barre
Of yren gret, and square as any sparre,
He cast his eyen upon Emelia,
And therwithal he blent and cried, A!
As though he stongen were unto the herte.
And with that crie Arcite anon up sterte,
And saide, "Cosin min, what eyleth thee,
That art so pale and dedly for to see?
Why cridest thou? who hath thee don offence?
For goddes love, take all in patience
Our prison, for it may non other be.
Fortune hath yeven us this adversite.
Som wikke aspect or disposition
Of Saturne, by som constellation,
Hath yeven us this, although we had it sworn,
So stood the heven whan that we were born,
We moste endure: this is the short and plain."
This Palamon answerde, and sayde again;
"Cosin, forsoth of this opinion
Thou hast a vaine imagination.
This prison caused me not for to crie.
But I was hurt right now thurghout min eye
Into min herte, that wol my bane be.
The faymesse of a lady that I se
Yond in the gardin roming to and fro,
Is cause of all my crying and my wo.
I n'ot whe'r she be woman or goddesse.
But Venus is it, soothly, as I gesse."
And therwithall on knees adoun he fill,
And sayde: "Venus, if it be your will
You in this gardin thus to transfigure,
Beforn me sorweful wretched creature,
Out of this prison helpe that we may scape.
And if so be our destinee be shape
By eterne word to dien in prison,
Of our lignage have som compassion,
That is so low ybrought by tyrannie."
And with that word Arcita gan espie
Wher as this lady romed to and fro.
And with that sight hire beautee hurt him so,
That if that Palamon were wounded sore,
Arcite is hurt as moche as he, or more.
And with a sigh he sayde pitously:
"The freshe beautee sleth me sodenly
Of hire that rometh in the yonder place.
And but I have hire mercie and hire grace,
That I may seen hire at the leste way,
I n'am but ded; ther n'is no more to say."
This Palamon, whan he these wordes herd,
Dispitously he loked, and answerd:
"Whether sayest thou this in ernest or in play?"
"Nay," quod Arcite, "in ernest by my fay.
God helpe me so, me lust full yvel pley."
This Palamon gan knit his browes twey.
"It were," quod he, "to thee no gret honour
For to be false, ne for to be traytour
To me, that am thy cosin and thy brother
Ysworne ful depe, and eche of us to other,
That never for to dien in the peine,
Til that the deth departen shal us tweine,
Neyther of us in love to hindre other,
Ne in non other cas, my leve brother;
But that thou shuldest trewely forther me
In every cas, as I shuld forther thee.
This was thin oth, and min also certain;
I wot it wel, thou darst it not withsain.
Thus art thou of my conseil out of doute.
And now thou woldest falsly ben aboute
To love my lady, whom I love and serve,
And ever shal, til that min herte sterve.

" Now certes, false Arcite, thou shalt not so.
I loved hire firste, and tolde thee my wo
As to my conseil, and my brother sworne
To forther me, as I have told beforne.
For which thou art ybounden as a knight
To helpen me, if it lie in thy might,
Or elles art thou false, I dare wel sain."
This Arcita full proudly spake again.
" Thou shalt," quod he, " be rather false than I.
And thou art false, I tell thee utterly.
For *par amour* I loved hire first or thou.
What wolt thou sayn? thou wisted nat right now
Whether she were a woman or a goddesse.
Thin is affection of holinesse,
And min is love, as to a creature:
For which I tolde thee min aventure
As to my cosin, and my brother sworne.
" I pose, that thou lovedest hire beforne:
Wost thou not wel the olde clerkes sawe,
That who shall give a lover any lawe?
Love is a greter lawe by my pan,
Then may be yeven of any erthly man:
And therfore positif lawe, and swiche decree
Is broken all day for love in eche degree.
A man moste nedes love maugre his heed:
He may not fleen it, though he shuld be ded,
All be she maid, or widewe, or elles wif.
" And eke it is not likely all thy lif
To stonden in hire grace, no more shal I:
For wel thou wost thyselven verailly,
That thou and I be damned to prison
Perpetuel, us gaineth no raunson.
" We strive, as did the houndes for the bone,
They fought all day, and yet hir part was none.
Ther came a kyte, while that they were so wrothe,
And bare away the bone betwix hem bothe.
And therfore at the kinges court, my brother,
Eche man for himself, ther is non other.
Love, if thee lust; for I love, and ay shal:
And sothly, leve brother, this is al.
Here in this prison mosten we endure,
And everich of us take his aventure."
Gret was the strif, and long betwix hem twey,
If that I hadde leiser for to sey:
But to th' effect. It happed on a day,
(To tell it you as shortly as I may)
A worthy duk that highte Perithous,
That felaw was to this duk Theseus
Sin thilke day that they were children lite,
Was come to Athenes, his felaw to visite,
And for to play, as he was wont to do,
For in this world he loved no man so:
And he loved him as tendrely again.
So wel they loved, as olde bokes sain,
That whan that on was ded, sothly to telle,
His fe aw wente and sought him doun in Helle:
But of that storie list me not to write.
Duk Perithous loved wel Arcite,
And had him knowe at Thebes yere by yere:
And finally, at request and praiere
Of Perithous, withouten any raunson
Duk Theseus him let out of prison,
Freely to gon, wher that him list over all,
In swiche a gise, as I you tellen shall.
This was the forword, plainly for to endite,
Betwixen Theseus and him Arcite:
That if so were, that Arcite were yfound
Ever in his lif, by day or night, o stound
In any contree of this Theseus,
And he were caught, it was accorded thus,
That with a swerd he shulde lese his hed;
Ther was non other remedie ne rede.
But taketh his leve, and homeward he him spedde;
Let him beware, his nekke lieth to wedde.
How gret a sorwe suffereth now Arcite?
The deth he feleth thurgh his herte smite;
He wepeth, waileth, crieth pitously;
To sleen himself he waiteth prively.
He said; " Alas the day that I was borne!
Now is my prison werse than beforne:
Now is me shape eternally to dwelle
Not only in purgatorie, but in Helle.
Alas! that ever I knew Perithous.
For elles had I dwelt with Theseus
Yfetered in his prison evermo.
Than had I ben in blisse, and not in wo.
Only the sight of hire, whom that I serve,
Though that I never hire grace may deserve,
Wold have sufficed right ynough for me.
" O dere cosin Palamon," quod he,
" Thin is the victorie of this aventure.
Ful blisful in prison maiest thou endure:
In prison? certes nay, but in paradise.
Wel hath Fortune yturned thee the dise,
That hast the sight of hire, and I th' absence.
For possible is, sin thou hast hire presence,
And art a knight, a worthy and an able,
That by som cas, sin Fortune is changeable,
Thou maiest to thy desir somtime atteine.
But I that am exiled, and barreine
Of alle grace, and in so gret despaire,
That ther n'is erthe, water, fire, ne aire,
Ne creature, that of hem maked is,
That may *me hele, or don comfort in this*,
Wel ought I sterve in wanhope and distresse.
Farewel my lif, my lust, and my gladnesse.
" Alas, why plainen men so in commune
Of purveyance of God, or of Fortune,
That yeveth hem ful oft in many a gise
Wel better than they can hemself devise?
Som man desireth for to have richesse,
That cause is of his murdre or gret siknesse.
And som man wold out of his prison fayn,
That in his house is of his meinie slain.
Infinite harmes ben in this matere.
We wote not what thing that we praien here.
We faren as he that dronke is as a mous.
A dronken man wot wel he hath an hous,
But he ne wot which is the right way thider,
And to a dronken man the way is slider,
And certes in this world so faren we.
" We seken fast after felicite,
But we go wrong ful often trewely.
Thus we may sayen alle, and namely I,
That wende, and had a gret opinion,
That if I might eseapen fro prison
Than had I ben in joye and parfite hele,
Ther now I am exiled fro my wele.
Sin that I may not seen you, Emelie,
I n'am but ded; ther n'is no remedie."
Upon that other side Palamon,
Whan that he wist Arcita was agon,
Swiche sorwe he maketh, that the grete tour
Resouned of his yelling and clamour.
The pure fetters on his shinnes grete
Were of his bitter salte teres wete.
" Alas!" quod he, " Arcita, cosin min,
Of all our strif, God wot, the frute is thin.
Thou walkest now in Thebes at thy large,
And of my wo thou yevest litel charge.

Thou maist, sith thou hast wisdom and manhede,
Assemblen all the folk of our kinrede,
And make a werre so sharpe on this contree,
That by som aventure, or som tretee,
Thou maist have hire to lady and to wif,
For whom that I must nedes lese my lif.
For as by way of possibilitee,
Sith thou art at thy large of prison free,
And art a lord, gret is thin avantage,
More than is min, that sterve here in a cage.
For I may wepe and waile, while that I live,
With all the wo that prison may me yeve,
And eke with peine that love me yeveth also,
That doubleth all my tourment and my wo."
Therwith the fire of jalousie up sterte
Within his brest, and hent him by the herte
So wondly, that he like was to behold
The box-tree, or the ashen ded and cold.
Than said he; "O cruel goddes, that governe
This world with binding of your word eterne,
And writen in the table of athamant
Your parlement and your eterne grant,
What is mankind more unto you yhold
Than is the shepe, that rouketh in the fold?
For slain is man, right as another beest,
And dwelleth eke in prison, and arrest,
And hath siknesse, and gret adversite,
And oftentimes gilteles, parde.
"What governance is in this prescience,
That gilteles turmenteth innocence?
And yet encreseth this all my penance,
That man is bounden to his observance
For Goddes sake to leten of his will,
Ther as a beest may all his lust fulfill.
And whan a beest is ded, he hath no peine;
But man after his deth mote wepe and pleine,
Though in this world he have care and wo:
Withouten doute it maye stonden so.
"The answer of this lete I to divines,
But wel I wote, that in this world gret pine is,
Alas! I see a serpent or a thefe,
That many a trewe man hath do meschefe,
Gon at his large, and wher him lust may turn.
But I moste ben in prison thurgh Saturn,
And eke thurgh Juno, jalous and eke wood,
That hath wel neye destruied all the blood
Of Thebes, with his waste walles wide.
And Venus sleeth me on that other side
For jalousie, and fere of him Arcite."
Now wot I stent of Palamon a lite,
And leten him in his prison still dwelle,
And of Arcita forth I wol you telle.
The sommer passeth, and the nightes long
Encresen double wise the peines strong
Both of the lover, and of the prisoner.
I n'ot which hath the wofuller mistere.
For shortly for to say, this Palamon
Perpetuelly is damned to prison,
In chaines and in fetters to ben ded;
And Arcite is exiled on his hed
For evermore as out of that contree,
Ne never more he shal his lady see.
You lovers axe I now this question,
Who hath the werse, Arcite or Palamon?
That on may se his lady day by day,
But in prison moste he dwellen alway.
That other wher him lust may ride or go,
But sen his lady shal he never mo.
Now demeth as you liste, ye that can,
For I wol tell you forth as I began.

Whan that Arcite to Thebes comen was,
Ful oft a day he swelt and said Alas,
For sen his lady shal he never mo.
And shortly to concluden all his wo,
So mochel sorwe hadde never creature,
That is or shal be, while the world may dure.
His slepe, his mete, his drinke is him byraft,
That lene he wex, and drie as is a shaft.
His eyen holwe, and grisly to beholde;
His hewe falwe, and pale as ashen cold,
And solitary he was, and ever alone,
And wailing all the night, making his mone.
And if he herde song or instrument,
Than wold he wepe, he mighte not be stent.
So feble were his spirites, and so low,
And changed so, that no man coude know
His speche ne his vois, though men it herd.
And in his gere, for all the world he ferd
Nought only like the lovers maladie
Of Ereos, but rather ylike manie,
Engendred of humours melancolike,
Beforne his hed in his celle fantastike.
And shortly turned was all up so doun
Both habit and eke dispositioun
Of him, this woful lover dan Arcite.
What should I all day of his wo endite?
Whan he endured had a yere or two
This cruel torment, and this peine and wo,
At Thebes, in his contree, as I said,
Upon a night in slepe as he him laid,
Him thought how that the winged god Mercury
Beforne him stood, and bad him to be mery.
His slepy yerde in hond he bare upright;
An hat he wered upon his heres bright.
Arraied was this god (as he toke kepe)
As he was whan that Argus toke his slepe;
And said him thus: "To Athenes shalt thou wende;
Ther is thee shapen of thy wo an ende."
And with that word Arcite awoke and stert.
"Now trewely how sore that ever me smert,"
Quod he, "to Athenes right now wol I fare.
Ne for no drede of deth shal I not spare
To se my lady, that I love and serve;
In hire presence I rekke not to sterve."
And with that word he caught a gret mirrour,
And saw that changed was all his colour,
And saw his visage all in another kind.
And right anon it ran him in his mind,
That sith his face was so disfigured
Of maladie the which he had endured,
He mighte wel, if that he bare him lowe,
Live in Athenes evermore unknowe,
And sen his lady wel nigh day by day.
And right anon he changed his aray,
And clad him as a poure labourer.
And all alone, save only a squier,
That knew his privitee and all his cas,
Which was disguised pourely as he was,
To Athenes is he gon the nexte way.
And to the court he went upon a day,
And at the gate he proffered his service,
To drugge and draw, what so men wold devise.
And shortly of this matere for to sayn,
He fell in office with a chamberlain,
The which that dwelling was with Emelie.
For he was wise, and coude sone espie
Of every servant, which that served hire.
Wel coude he hewen wood, and water bere,
For he was yonge and mighty for the nones,
And therto he was strong and big of bones

To don that any wight can him devise.
A yere or two he was in this service,
Page of the chambre of Emelie the bright;
And Philostrate he sayde that he hight.
But half so wel beloved a man as he,
Ne was ther never in court of his degre.
He was so gentil of conditioun,
That thurghout all the court was his renoun.
They sayden that it were a charite
That Theseus wold enhaunsen his degre,
And putten him in worshipful service,
Ther as he might his vertues exercise.
And thus within a while his name is spronge
Both of his dedes, and of his good tonge,
That Theseus hath taken him so ner
That of his chambre he made him a squier,
And gave him gold to mainteine his degre;
And eke men brought him out of his contre
Fro yere to yere ful prively his rent.
But honestly and sleighly he it spent,
That no man wondred how that he it hadde.
And thre yere in this wise his lif he ladde,
And bare him so in pes and eke in werre,
Ther n'as no man that Theseus hath derre.
And in this blisse let I now Arcite,
And speke I wol of Palamon a lite.
In derkenesse and horrible and strong prison
This seven yere hath sitten Palamon,
Forpined, what for love and for distresse.
Who feleth double sorwe and hevinesse
But Palamon? that love distraineth so,
That wood out of his wit he goth for wo,
And eke therto he is a prisonere
Perpetuell, not only for a yere.
Who coude rime in English proprely
His martirdom? forsoth it am not I,
Therfore I passe as lightly as I may.
It fell that in the seventh yere in May
The thridde night, (as olde bokes sayn,
That all this storie tellen more plain)
Were it by aventure or destince,
(As, whan a thing is shapen, it shal be,)
That sone after the midnight Palamon,
By helping of a frend, brake his prison,
And fleeth the cite faste as he may go,
For he had yeven drinke his gayler so
Of a clarre, made of a certain wine,
With narcotikes and opie of Thebes fine,
That all the night though that men wold him shake,
The gailer slept, he mighte not awake.
And thus he fleeth as faste as ever he may.
The night was short, and faste by the day,
That nedes cost he moste himselven hide.
And to a grove faste ther beside
With dredful foot than stalketh Palamon.
For shortly this was his opinion,
That in that grove he wold him hide all day,
And in the night than wold he take his way
To Thebes ward, his frendes for to preie
On Theseus to helpen him werreie.
And shortly, eyther he wold lese his lif,
Or winnen Emelie unto his wif.
This is the effect, and his entente plein.
Now wol I turnen to Arcite agein,
That litel wist how neighe was his care,
Til that Fortune had brought him in the snare.
The besy larke, the messager of day,
Saleweth in hire song the morwe gray;
And firy Phebus riseth up so bright,
That all the orient laugheth of the sight
And with his stremes drieth in the greves
The silver dropes, hanging on the leves,
And Arcite, that is in the court real
With Theseus the squier principal,
Is risen, and loketh on the mery day.
And for to don his observance to May,
Remembring on the point of his desire,
He on his courser, sterting as the fire,
Is ridden to the feldes him to pley,
Out of the court, were it a mile or twey.
And to the grove of which that I you told,
By aventure his way he gan to hold,
To maken him a gerlond of the greves,
Were it of woodbind or of hauthorn leves,
And loud he song agen the sonne shene.
"O Maye, with all thy floures and thy grene,
Right welcome be thou, faire freshe May,
I hope that I some grene here getten may."
And from his courser, with a lusty herte
Into the grove ful hastily he sterte,
And in a path he romed up and doun,
Ther as by aventure this Palamon
Was in a bush, that no man might him se,
For sore afered of his deth was he.
Nothing ne knew he that it was Arcite.
God wot he wold have trowed it ful lite.
But soth is said, gon sithen are many yeres,
That feld hath eyen, and the wood hath eres.
It is ful faire a man to bere him even,
For al day meten men at unset steven.
Ful litel wote Arcite of his felaw,
That was so neigh to herken of his saw,
For in the bush he sitteth now ful still.
Whan that Arcite had romed all his fill,
And songen all the roundel lustily,
Into a studie he fell sodenly,
As don these lovers in hir queinte geres,
Now in the crop, and now doun in the breres,
Now up, now doun, as boket in a well.
Right as the Friday, sothly for to tell,
Now shineth it, and now it raineth fast,
Right so can gery Venus overcast
The hertes of hire folk, right as hire day
Is gerfull, right so changeth she aray.
Selde is the Friday all the weke ylike.
Whan Arcite hadde ysonge, he gan to sike,
And set him doun withouten any more:
"Alas!" quod he, "the day that I was bore!
How longe, Juno, thurgh thy crueltee
Wilt thou werreien Thebes the citee?
Alas! ybrought is to confusion
The blood real of Cadme and Amphion:
Of Cadmus, which that was the firste man,
That Thebes built, or firste the toun began,
And of the citee firste was crouned king.
Of his linage am I, and his ofspring
By veray line, as of the stok real:
And now I am so caitif and so thral,
That he that is my mortal enemy,
I serve him as his squier pourely.
And yet doth Juno me wel more shame,
For I dare not beknowe min owen name,
But ther as I was wont to highte Arcite,
Now highte I Philostrat, not worth a mite.
Alas! thou fell Mars, alas! thou Juno,
Thus hath your ire our linage all fordo,
Save only me, and wretched Palamon,
That Theseus martireth in prison.
And over all this, to slen me utterly,
Love hath his firy dart so brenningly

Ystiked thurgh my trewe careful hert,
That shapen was my deth erst than my shert.
Ye slen me with your eyen, Emelie;
Ye ben the cause wherfore that I die.
Of all the remenant of min other care
Ne set I not the mountance of a tare,
So that I coud don ought to your plesance."
And with that word he fell doun in a traunce
A longe time; and afterward up sterte
This Palamon, that thought thurghout his herte
He felt a colde swerd sodenly glide:
For ire he quoke, no lenger wolde he hide.
And whan that he had herd Arcites tale,
As he were wood, with face ded and pale,
He sterte him up out of the bushes thikke,
And sayde: "False Arcite, false traitour wicke,
Now art thou hent, that lovest my lady so,
For whom that I have all this peine and wo,
And art my blood, and to my conseil sworn,
As I ful oft have told thee herebeforn,
And hast bejaped here duk Theseus,
And falsely changed hast thy name thus;
I wol be ded, or elles thou shalt die.
Thou shalt not love my lady Emelie,
But I wol love hire only and no mo.
For I am Palamon thy mortal fo.
And though that I no wepen have in this place,
But out of prison am astert by grace,
I drede nought, that eyther thou shalt die,
Or thou ne shalt nat loven Emelie.
Chese which thou wolt, for thou shalt not asterte."
This Arcite tho, with ful dispitous herte,
Whan he him knew, and had his tale herd,
As fers as a leon, pulled out a swerd,
And sayde thus; "By God that sitteth above,
N'ere it that thou art sike, and wood for love,
And eke that thou no wepen hast in this place,
Thou shuldest never out of this grove pace,
That thou ne shuldest dien of min hond.
For I defie the suretee and the bond,
Which that thou saist that I have made to thee.
What? veray foo!, thinke wel that love is free,
And I wol love hire maugre all thy might.
But, for thou art a worthy gentil knight,
And wilnest to darraine hire by bataille,
Have here my trouth, to-morwe I will not faille,
Withouten weting of any other wight,
That here I wol be founden as a knight,
And bringen harneis right ynough for thee;
And chese the beste, and leve the werste for me.
And mete and drinke this night wol I bring
Ynough for thee, and clothes for thy bedding.
And if so be that thou my lady win,
And slee me in this wode, ther I am in,
Thou maist wel have thy lady as for me."
This Palamon answered, "I grant it thee."
And thus they ben departed til a-morwe,
Whan eche of hem hath laid his faith to borwe.
O Cupide, out of alle charitee!
O regne, that wolt no felaw have with thee!
Ful soth is sayde, that love ne lordship
Wol nat, his thankes, have no felawship.
Wel finden that Arcite and Palamon.
Arcite is ridden anon unto the toun,
And on the morwe, or it were day light,
Ful prively two harneis hath he dight,
Both suffisant and mete to darreine
The bataille in the feld betwix hem tweine.
And on his hors, alone as he was borne,
He carieth all this harneis him beforne;
And in the grove, at time and place ysette,
This Arcite and this Palamon ben mette.
Tho changen gan the colour of hir face.
Right as the hunter in the regne of Trace
That stondeth at a gappe with a spere,
Whan hunted is the lion or the bere,
And hereth him come rushing in the greves,
And breking bothe the boughes and the leves,
And thinketh, here cometh my mortal enemy,
Withouten faille, he must be ded or I;
For eyther I mote slen him at the gappe;
Or he mote slen me, if that me mishappe:
So ferden they, in changing of hir hewe,
As fer as eyther of hem other knewe.
Ther n'as no good day, ne no saluing.
But streit withouten wordes rehersing,
Everich of hem halpe to armen other,
As frendly, as he were his owen brother.
And after that, with sharpe speres strong
They foineden eche at other wonder long.
Thou mightest wenen, that this Palamon
In his fighting were as a wood leon,
And as a cruel tigre was Arcite:
As wilde bores gan they togeder smite,
That frothen white as fome for ire wood.
Up to the ancle foughte they in hir blood.
And in this wise I let hem fighting dwelle,
And forth I wol of Theseus you telle.
The Destinee, ministre general,
That executeth in the world over al
The purveiance, that God hath sen beforne;
So strong it is, that though the world had sworne
The contrary of a thing by ya or nay,
Yet somtime it shall fallen on a day
That falleth nat efte in a thousand yere.
For certainly our appetites here,
Be it of werre, or pees, or hate, or love,
All is this ruled by the sight above.
This mene I now by mighty Theseus,
That for to hunten is so desirous,
And namely at the grete hart in May,
That in his bed ther daweth him no day,
That he n'is clad, and redy for to ride
With hunte and horne, and houndes him beside.
For in his hunting hath he swiche delite,
That it is all his joye and appetite
To ben himself the grete hartes bane,
For after Mars he serveth now Diane.
Clere was the day, as I have told or this,
And Theseus, with alle joye and blis,
With his Ipolita, the fayre quene,
And Emelie, yclothed all in grene,
On hunting ben they ridden really.
And to the grove, that stood ther faste by,
In which ther was an hart as men him told,
Duk Theseus the streite way hath hold.
And to the launde he rideth him ful right,
Ther was the hart ywont to have his flight,
And over a brooke, and so forth on his wey.
This duke wol have a cours at him or twey
With houndes, swiche as him lust to commaunde.
And when this duk was comen to the launde,
Under the sonne he loked, and anon
He was ware of Arcite and Palamon,
That foughten breme, as it were bolles two.
The brighte swerdes wenten to and fro
So hidously, that with the leste stroke
It semed that it wolde felle an oke.
But what they weren, nothing he ne wote.
This duke his courser with his sporres smote,

And at a stert he was betwix hem two,
And pulled out a swerd and cried, "Ho!
No more, up peine of lesing of your hed.
By mighty Mars, he shal anon be ded,
That smiteth any stroke, that I may sen.
But telleth me what mistere men ye ben,
That ben so hardy for to fighten here
Withouten any juge, other officere,
As though it were in listes really."
This Palamon answered hastily,
And saide: "Sire, what nedeth wordes mo?
We have the deth deserved bothe two.
Two woful wretches ben we, two caitives,
That ben accombred of our owen lives,
And as thou art a rightful lord and juge,
Ne yeve us neyther mercie ne refuge.
And sle me first, for seinte charitee.
But sle my felaw eke as wel as me.
Or sle him first; for, though thou know it lite,
This is thy mortal fo, this is Arcite,
That fro thy lond is banished on his hed,
For which he hath deserved to be ded.
For this is he that came unto thy gate
And sayde, that he highte Philostrate.
Thus hath he japed thee ful many a yere,
And thou hast maked him thy chief squiere,
And this is he, that loveth Emelie.
"For sith the day is come that I shal die
I make plainly my confession,
That I am thilke woful Palamon,
That hath thy prison broken wilfully.
I am thy mortal fo, and it am I
That loveth so hot Emelie the bright,
That I wold dien present in hire sight.
Therfore I axe deth and my jewise.
But sle my felaw in the same wise,
For both we have deserved to be slain."
This worthy duk answerd anon again,
And sayd, "This is a short conclusion.
Your owen mouth, by your confession
Hath damned you, and I wol it recorde.
It nedeth not to peine you with the corde.
Ye shul be ded by mighty Mars the rede."
The quene anon for veray womanhede
Gan for to wepe, and so did Emelie,
And all the ladies in the compagnie.
Gret pite was it, as it thought hem alle,
That ever swiche a chance shulde befalle.
For gentil men they were of gret estat,
And nothing but for love was this debat.
And sawe hir blody woundes wide and sore;
And alle criden bothe lesse and more,
"Have mercie, Lord, upon us wimmen alle."
And on hir hare knees adoun they falle,
And wold have kist his feet ther as he stood,
Till at the last, aslaked was his mood;
(For pitee renneth sone in gentil herte)
And though he first for ire quoke and sterte,
He hath considered shortly in a clause
The trespas of hem both, and eke the cause:
And although that his ire hir gilt accused,
Yet in his reson he hem both excused;
As thus; he thoughte wel that every man
Wol helpe himself in love if that he can,
And eke deliver himself out of prison.
And eke his herte had compassion
Of wimmen, for they wepten ever in on:
And in his gentil herte he thoughte anon,
And soft unto himself he sayed: "Fie
Upon a lord that wol have no mercie,
But be a leon both in word and dede,
To hem that ben in repentance and drede,
As wel as to a proud dispitous man.
That wol mainteinen that he first began.
That lord hath litel of discretion,
That in swiche cas can no division:
But weigheth pride and humblesse after on."
And shortly, whan his ire is thus agon,
He gan to loken up with eyen light,
And spake these same wordes all on hight.
"The god of love, a! *benedicite*,
How mighty and how grete a lord is he?
Again his might ther gainen non obstacles,
He may be cleped a God for his miracles.
For he can maken at his owen gise
Of everich herte, as that him list devise.
Lo here this Arcite, and this Palamon,
That quitely weren out of my prison,
And might have lived in Thebes really,
And weten I am hir mortal enemy,
And that hir deth lith in my might also,
And yet hath love, maugre hir eyen two,
Ybrought hem hither bothe for to die.
Now loketh, is not this an heigh folie?
Who maye ben a fool, but if he love?
Behold for Goddes sake that sitteth above,
Se how they blede! be they not wel araied?
Thus hath hir lord, the god of love, hem paied
Hir wages, and hir fees for hir service.
And yet they wenen for to be ful wise,
That serven love, for ought that may befalle.
And yet is this the beste game of alle,
That she, for whom they have this jolite,
Can hem therfore as mochel thank as me.
She wot no more of alle this hote fare,
By God, than wot a cuckow or an hare.
But all mote ben assaied hote or cold;
A man mote ben a fool other yonge or old;
I wot it by myself ful yore agon:
For in my time a servant was I on.
And therfore sith I know of love's peine,
And wot how sore it can a man destreine,
As he that oft hath ben caught in his las,
I you foryeve all holly this trespas,
At request of the quene that kneleth here,
And eke of Emelie, my suster dere.
And ye shul bothe anon unto me swere,
That never mo ye shul my contree dere,
Ne maken werre upon me night ne day,
But ben my frendes in alle that ye may.
I you foryeve this trespas every del."
And they him sware his axing fayr and wel,
And him of lordship and of mercie praid,
And he hem granted grace, and thus he said:
"To speke of real linage and richesse,
Though that she were a quene or a princesse,
Eche of you bothe is worthy douteles
To wedden whan time is, but natheles
I speke as for my suster Emelie,
For whom ye have this strif and jalousie,
Ye wot yourself, she may not wedden two
At ones, though ye fighten evermo:
But on of you, al be him loth or lefe,
He mot gon pipen in an ivy lefe:
This is to say, she may not have you bothe,
Al be ye never so jalous, ne so wrothe.
And forthy I you put in this degree,
That eche of you shall have his destinee,
As him is shape, and herkneth in what wise;
Lo here your ende of that I shal devise.

" My will is this for plat conclusion
Withouten any replication,
If that your liketh, take it for the beste,
That everich of you shal gon wher him leste
Freely withouten raunsón or dangere;
And this day fifty wekes, ferre ne nere,
Everich of you shal bring an hundred knightes,
Armed for listes up at alle rightes
Alle redy to darrein hire by bataille.
And this behete I you withouten faille
Upon my trouth, and as I am a knight,
That whether of you bothe hath that might,
This is to sayn, that whether he or thou
May with his hundred, as I spake of now,
Sle his contrary, or out of listes drive,
Him shall I yeven Emelie to wive,
To whom that fortune yeveth so fayr a grace.
" The listes shal I maken in this place,
And God so wisly on my soule rewe,
As I shal even juge ben, and trewe.
Ye shal non other ende with me maken
That on of you ne shal be ded or taken.
And if you thinketh this is wel ysaid,
Saith your avis, and holdeth you apaid.
This is your ende, and your conclusion."
Who loketh lightly now but Palamon?
Who springeth up for joye but Arcite?
Who coud it tell, or who coud it endite,
The joye that is maked in the place
Whan Theseus hath don so fayre a grace?
But down on knees went every manere wight,
And thanked him with all hir hertes might,
And namely these Thebanes often sith.
And thus with good hope and with herte blith
Thy taken hir leve, and homeward gan they ride
To Thebes, with his olde walles wide.
I trowe men wolde deme it negligence,
If I foryette to tellen the dispence
Of Theseus, that got so besily
To maken up the listes really,
That swiche a noble theatre as it was,
I dare wel sayn, in all this world ther n'as.
The circuite a mile was aboute,
Walled of stone, and diched all withoute.
Round was the shape, in manere of a compas
Ful of degress, the hight of sixty pas,
That whan a man was set on o degree
He letted not his felaw for to see.
Estward ther stood a gate of marbel white,
Westward right swiche another in th' opposite.
And shortly to concluden, swiche a place
Was never in erthe, in so litel a space,
For in the lond ther n'as no craftes man,
That geometric, or arsmetrike can,
Ne portreiour, ne kerver of images,
That Theseus ne yaf him mete and wages
The theatre for to maken and devise.
And for to don his rite and sacrifice,
He estward hath upon the gate above,
In worship of Venus goddesse of love,
Don make an auter and an oratorie;
And westward in the minde and in memorie
Of Mars he maked hath right swiche another,
That coste largely of gold a fother.
And northward, in a touret on the wall,
Of alabastre white and red corall
An oratorie riche for to see,
In worship of Diane of chastitee,
Hath Theseus don wrought in noble wise.
But yet had I foryetten to devise
The noble kerving, and the portreitures,
The shape, the countenance of the figures
That weren in these oratories three.
First in the temple of Venus maist thou see
Wrought on the wall, ful pitous to beholde,
The broken slepes, and the sikes colde,
The sacred teres, and the waimentinges,
The firy strokes of the desirinqes,
That Loves servants in this lif enduren;
The othes, that hir covenants assuren.
Plesance and hope, desire, foolhardinesse,
Beaute and youthe, baudrie and richesse,
Charmes and force, lesinges and flaterie,
Dispence, besinesse, and jalousie,
That wered of yelwe goldes a gerlond,
And hadde a cuckow sitting on hire hond,
Festes, instruments, and caroles and dances,
Lust and array, and all the circumstances
Of love, which that I reken and reken shall,
By ordre weren peinted on the wall,
And mo than I can make of mentiou.
For sothly all the mount of Citheron,
Ther Venus hath hire principal dwelling,
Was shewed on the wall in purtreying,
With all the gardin, and the lustinesse.
Nought was foryetten the porter idelnesse,
Ne Narcissus the fayre of yore agon,
Ne yet the folie of king Salomon,
Ne yet the grete strengthe of Hercules,
Th' enchantment of Medea and Circes,
Ne of Turnus the hardy fiers corage,
The riche Cresus caitif in servage.
Thus may ye seen, that wisdom ne richesse,
Beaute ne sleighte, strengthe ne hardinesse,
Ne may with Venus holden champartie,
For as hire liste the world may she gie.
Lo, all these folk so caught were in hire las
Til they for wo ful often said Alas.
Sufficeth here ensamples on or two,
And yet I coude reken a thousand mo.
The statue of Venus glorious for to see
Was naked fleting in the large see.
And fro the navel doun all covered was
With wawes grene, and bright as any glas.
A citole in hire right hond hadde she,
And on hire hed, ful semely for to see,
A rose gerloud fressh, and wel smelling,
Above hire hed hire doves fleckering.
Before hire stood hire sone Cupido,
Upon his shoulders winges had he two;
And blind he was, as it is often sene;
A bow he bare and arwes bright and kene.
Why shulde I not as wel eke tell you all
The portreiture, that was upon the wall
Within the temple of mighty Mars the rede?
All peinted was the wall in length and brede
Like to the estres of the grisly place,
That highte the gret temple of Mars in Trace,
In thilke colde and frosty region,
Ther as Mars hath his sovereine mansion.
First on the wall was peinted a forest,
In which ther wonneth neyther man ne best,
With knotty knarry barrein trées old
Of stubbes sharpe and hidous to behold;
In which ther ran a romble and a swough,
As though a storme shuld bresten every bough:
And downward from an hill under a bent,
Ther stood the temple of Mars armipotent,
Wrought all of burned stele, of which th' entree
Was longe and streite, and gastly for to see.

And therout came a rage and swiche a vise,
That it made all the gates for to rise.
The northern light in at the dore shone,
For window on the wall ne was ther none,
Thurgh which men mighten any light discerne.
The dore was all of athamant eterne,
Yclenched overthwart and endelong
With yren tough, and for to make it strong,
Every piler the temple to sustene
Was tonne-gret, of yren bright and shene.
Ther saw I first the derke imagining
Of felonie, and alle the compassing:
The cruel ire, red as any glede,
The pikepurse, and eke the pale drede;
The smiler with the knif under the cloke,
The shepen brenning with the blake smoke;
The treson of the mordring in the bedde,
The open werre, with woundes all bebledde;
Conteke with blody knif, and sharp manace:
All full of chirking was that sory place.
The sleer of himself yet saw I there,
His herte-blood hath bathed all his here:
The naile ydriven in the shode on hight,
The colde deth, with mouth gaping upright,
Amiddes of the temple sate mischance,
With discomfort and sory countenance.
Yet saw I woodnesse laughing in his rage.
Armed complaint, outhees, and fiers outrage;
The carraine in the bush, with throte ycorven,
A thousand slain, and not of qualme ystorven;
The tirant, with the prey by force yraft;
The toun destroied, ther was nothing laft.
Yet saw I brent the shippes hoppesteres,
The hunte ystrangled with the wilde beres:
The sow freting the child right in the cradel;
The coke yscalled, for all his long ladel.
Nought was forycte by th' infortune of Marte
The carter overridden with his carte;
Under the wheel ful low he lay adoun.
Ther were also of Martes division,
Th' armerer, and the bowyer, and the smith,
That forgeth sharpe swerdes on his stith.
And all above depeinted in a tour
Saw I conquest, sitting in gret honour,
With thilke sharpe swerd over his hed
Yhanging by a subtil twined thred.
Depeinted was the slaughter of Julius,
Of gret Nero, and of Antonius:
All be that thilke time they were unborne,
Yet was hir deth depeinted therbeforne,
By manacing of Mars, right by figure,
So was it shewed in that purtreiture
As is depeinted in the cercles above,
Who shal be slaine or elles ded for love.
Sufficeth on ensample in stories olde,
I may not reken hem alle, though I wolde.
The statue of Mars upon a carte stood
Armed, and loked grim as he were wood,
And over his hed ther shinen two figures
Of sterres, that ben cleped in scriptures,
That on Puella, that other Rubeus.
This god of armes was araied thus:
A wolf ther stood beforne him at his fete
With eyen red, and of a man he ete:
With subtil pensil peinted was this storie,
In redouting of Mars and of his glorie.
Now to the temple of Diane the chaste
As shortly as I can I wol me haste,
To tellen you of the descriptioun,
Depeinted by the walles up and doun,
Of hunting and of shamefast chastitee.
Ther saw I how woful Calistope,
When that Diane agreved was with here,
Was turned from a woman til a bere,
And after was she made the lodesterre:
Thus was it peinted, I can say no ferre;
Hire sone is eke a sterre as men may see.
Ther saw I Dane yturned til a tree,
I mene not hire the goddesse Diane,
But Peneus daughter, which that highte Dane.
Ther saw I Atteon an hart ymaked,
For vengeance that he saw Diane all naked:
I saw how that his houndes have him caught,
And freten him, for that they knew him naught.
Yet peinted was a litel forthermore,
How Athalanthe hunted the wilde bore,
And Meleagre, and many another mo,
For which Diane wroughte hem care and wo.
Ther saw I many another wonder storie,
The which me liste not drawen to memorie.
This goddesse on an hart ful heye sete,
With smale houndes all aboute hire fete,
And undernethe hire feet she hadde a mone,
Wexing it was, and shulde wanen sone.
In gaudy grene hire statue clothed was,
With bow in hond, and arwes in a cas.
Hire eyen caste she ful low adoun,
Ther Pluto hath his derke regioun.
A woman travailling was hire beforne,
But for hire childe so longe was unborne
Ful pitously Lucina gan she call,
And sayed; "Helpe, for thou mayst beste of all."
Wel coude he peinten lifly that it wrought,
With many a florein he the hewes bought.
Now ben these listes made, and Theseus
That at his grete cost arraied thus
The temples, and the theatre everidel,
Whan it was don, him liked wonder wel.
But stint I wol of Theseus a-lite,
And speke of Palamon and of Arcite.
The day approcheth of hir returning,
That everich shuld an hundred knightes bring,
The batailie to darreine, as I you told;
And til Athenes, hir covenant for to hold,
Hath everich of hem brought an hundred knightes,
Wel armed for the werre at alle rightes.
And sikerly ther trowed many a man,
That never, sithen that the world began,
As for to speke of knighthood of hir hond,
As fer as God hath maked see and lond,
N'as, of so fewe, so noble a compagnie.
For every wight that loved chevalrie,
And wold, his thankes, han a passant name,
Hath praied, that he might ben of that game,
And wel was him, that therto chosen was.
For if ther fell to-morwe swiche a cas,
Ye knowen wel, that every lusty knight,
That loveth *par amour*, and hath his might,
Were it in Englelond, or elleswher,
They wold, hir thankes, willen to be ther.
To fight for a lady, a! *benedicite*,
It were a lusty sighte for to se.
And right so ferden they with Palamon.
With him ther wenten knightes many on.
Som wol ben armed in an habergeon,
And in a brest plate, and in a gipon;
And som wol have a pair of plates large;
And som wol have a Pruce shield, or a targe;
Some wol ben armed on his legges wele,
And have an axe, and som a mace of stele.

Ther n'is no newe guise, that it n'as old.
Armed they weren, as I have you told,
Everich after his opinion.
There maist thou se coming with Palamon
Licurge himself, the grete king of Trace:
Blake was his berd, and manly was his face.
The cercles of his eyen in his hed
They gloweden betwixen yelwe and red,
And like a griffon loked he about,
With kemped heres on his browes stout;
His limmes gret, his braunes hard and stronge,
His shouldres brode, his armes round and longe.
And as the guise was in his contree,
Ful highe upon a char of gold stood he,
With foure white bolles in the trais.
Instede of cote-armure on his harnais,
With nayles yelwe, and bright as any gold,
He hadde a beres skin, cole-blake for old.
His longe here was kempt behind his bak,
As any ravenes fether it shone for blake.
A wreth of gold arm-gret, of huge weight,
Upon his hed sate full of stones bright,
Of fine rubins and of diamants.
About his char ther wenten white alauns,
Twenty and mo, as gret as any stere,
To hunten at the leon or the dere,
And folwed him, with mosel fast ybound,
Colered with gold, and torettes filed round.
An hundred lordes had he in his route
Armed full wel, with hertes sterne and stoute.
With Arcita, in stories as men find,
The gret Emetrius the king of Inde,
Upon a stede bay, trapped in stele,
Covered with cloth of gold diapred wele,
Came riding like the god of armes Mars.
His cote-armure was of a cloth of Tars,
Couched with perles, white, and round and grete.
His sadel was of brent gold new ybete;
A mantelet upon his shouldres hanging
Bret-ful of rubies red, as fire sparkling.
His crispe here like ringes was yronne,
And that was yelwe, and glitered as the Sonne.
His nose was high, his eyen bright citrin,
His lippes round, his colour was sanguin,
A fewe fraknes in his face yspreut,
Betwixen yelwe and blake somdel ymeint,
And as a leon he his loking caste.
Of five and twenty yere his age I caste.
His berd was wel begonnen for to spring;
His vois was as a trompe thondering.
Upon his hed he wered of laurer grene
A gerlond freshe and lusty for to sene.
Upon his hond he bare for his deduit
An egle tame, as any lily whit.
An hundred lordes had he with him there,
All armed save hir hedes in all hir gere,
Ful richely in alle manere thinges.
For trusteth wel, that erles, dukes, kinges
Were gathered in this noble compagnie,
For love, and for encrese of chevalrie.
About this king ther ran on every part
Ful many a tame leon and leopart.
And in this wise, these lordes all and some
Ben on the Sonday to the citee come
Aboute prime, and in the toun alight.
This Theseus, this duk, this worthy knight,
Whan he had brought hem into his citee,
And inned hem, everich at his degree,
He festeth hem, and doth so gret labour
To esen hem, and don hem all honour,
That yet men wenen that no manues wit
Of non estat ne coud amenden it.
The minstralcie, the service at the feste,
The grete yeftes to the most and leste,
The riche array of Theseus paleis,
Ne who sate first, ne last upon the deis,
What ladies fayrest ben or best dancing,
Or which of hem can carole best or sing,
Ne who most felingly speketh of love;
What haukes sitten on the perche above,
What houndes liggen on the floor adoun,
Of all this now make I no mentioun;
But of the effect; that thinketh me the beste;
Now cometh the point, and herkeneth if you leste.
The Sonday night, or day began to spring,
Whan Palamon the larke herde sing,
Although it n'ere not day by houres two,
Yet sang the larke, and Palamon right tho
With holy herte, and with an high corage
He rose, to wenden on his pilgrimage
Unto the blisful Citherea benigne,
I mene Venus, honourable and digne.
And in hire houre, he walketh forth a pas
Unto the listes, ther hire temple was,
And doun he kneleth, and with humble chere
And herte sore, he sayde as ye shul here.
"Fayrest of fayre, o lady min Venus,
Daughter to Jove, and spouse of Vulcanus,
Thou glader of the mount of Citheron,
For thilke love thou haddest to Adon
Have pitee on my bitter teres smert,
And take myn humble praier at thin herte.
"Alas! I ne have no language to tell
The effecte, ne the torment of min Hell;
Min herte may min harmes not bewrey:
I am so confuse, that I cannot say.
But mercy, lady bright, that knowest wele
My thought, and seest what harmes that I fele,
Consider all this, and rue upon my sore,
As wisly as I shall for evermore,
Emforth my might, thy trewe servant be,
And holden werre alway with chastite:
That make I min avow, so ye me helpe.
I kepe nought of armes for to yelpe,
Ne axe I nat to-morwe to have victorie,
Ne renoun in this cas, ne vaine glorie
Of pris of armes, blowen up and doun,
But I wold have fully possessioun
Of Emelie, and die in hire servise;
Find thou the manere how, and in what wise.
I rekke not, but it may better be,
To have victorie of hem, or they of me,
So that I have my lady in min armes.
For though so be that Mars is god of armes,
Your vertue is so grete in Heven above,
That if you liste, I shal wel have my love.
Thy temple wol I worship evermo,
And on thin auter, wher I ride or go,
I wol don sacrifice, and fires bete.
And if ye wol not so, my lady swete,
Than pray I you, to-morwe with a spere
That Arcita me thurgh the herte bere.
Than rekke I not, whan I have lost my lif,
Though that Arcita win hire to his wif.
This is the effecte and ende of my praiere;
Yeve me my love, thou blisful lady dere."
Whan the orison was don of Palam.,
His sacrifice he did, and that anon,
Full pitously, with alle circumstances,
All tell I not as now his observances.

But at the last the statue of Venus shoke,
And made a signe, wherby that he toke,
That his praiere accepted was that day.
For though the signe shewed a delay,
Yet wist he wel that granted was his bone;
And with glad herte he went him home ful sone.
The thridde houre inequal that Palamon
Began to Venus temple for to gon,
Up rose the Sonne, and up rose Emelie,
And to the temple of Diane gan hie.
Hire maydens, that she thider with hire ladde,
Ful redily with hem the fire they hadde,
Th' encense, the clothes, and the remenant all
That to the sacrifice longen shall.
The hornes ful of mede, as was the gise,
Ther lakked nought to don hire sacrifise.
Smoking the temple, ful of clothes fayre,
This Emelie with herte debonaire
Hire body wesshe with water of a well.
But how she did hire rite I dare not tell;
But it be any thing in general;
And yet it were a game to heren all;
To him that meneth wel it n'ere no charge:
But it is good a man to ben at large.
Hire bright here kembed was, untressed all.
A coroune of a grene oke cerial
Upon hire hed was set ful fayre and mete.
Two fires on the auter gan she bete,
And did hire thinges, as men may behold
In Stace of Thebes, and these bokes old.
Whan kindled was the fire, with pitous chere
Unto Diane she spake, as ye may here.
" O chaste goddesse of the wodes grene,
To whom both Heven and erthe and see is sene,
Quene of the regne of Pluto, derke and lowe,
Goddesse of maydens, that min herte hast knowe
Ful many a yere, and wost what I desire,
As kepe me fro thy vengeance and thin ire,
That Atteon aboughte cruelly:
Chaste goddesse, wel wotest thou that I
Desire to ben a mayden all my lif,
Ne never wol I be no love ne wif.
I am (thou wost) yet of thy compagnie,
A mayde, and love hunting and venerie,
And for to walken in the wodes wilde,
And not to ben a wif, and be with childe,
Nought wol I knowen compagnie of man.
Now helpe me, lady, sith ye may and can,
For tho three formes that thou hast in thee.
And Palamon, that hath swiche love to me,
And eke Arcite, that loveth me so sore,
This grace I praie thee withouten more;
As sende love and pees betwix hem two:
And fro me torne away hir hertes so,
That all hir hote love, and hir desire,
And all hir besy torment, and hir fire
Be queinte, or torned in another place.
And if so be thou wolt not do me grace,
Or if my destinee be shapen so,
That I shall nedes have on of hem two,
As sende me him that most desireth me.
" Behold, goddesse of clene chastite,
The bitter teres, that on my chekes fall.
Sin thou art mayde, and keper of us all,
My maydenhed thou kepe and wel conserve,
And while I live, a mayde I wol thee serve."
The fires brenne upon the auter clere,
While Emelie was thus in hire praiere:
But sodenly she saw a sighte queinte.
For right anon on of the fires queinte,
And quiked again, and after that anon
That other fire was queinte, and all agon:
And as it queinte, it made a whisteling,
As don these brondes wet in hir brenning.
And at the brondes ende outran anon
As it were blody dropes many on:
For which so sore agast was Emelie,
That she was wel neigh mad, and gan to crie,
For she ne wiste what it signified;
But only for the fere thus she cried,
And wept, that it was pittee for to here.
And therwithall Diane gan appere
With bowe in hond, right as an hunteresse,
And sayde; " Doughter, stint thin hevinesse.
Among the goddes highe it is affermed,
And by eterne word written and confermed,
Thou shalt be wedded unto on of tho,
That han for thee so mochel care and wo:
But unto which of hem I may not tell.
Farewel, for here I may no longer dwell.
The fires which that on min auter brenne,
Shal thee declaren er that thou go henne,
Thin aventure of love, as in this cas."
And with that word, the arwes in the cas
Of the goddesse clatteren fast and ring,
And forth she went, and made a vanishing,
For which this Emelie astonied was,
And sayde; " What amounteth this, alas!
I putte me in thy protection,
Diane, and in thy disposition."
And home she goth anon the nexte way.
This is the effecte, ther n'is no more to say.
The nexte houre of Mars folwing this
Arcite unto the temple walked is
Of fierce Mars, to don his sacrifise
With all the rites of his payen wise.
With pitous herte and high devotion,
Right thus to Mars he sayde his orison.
" O stronge god, that in the regnes cold
Of Trace honoured art, and lord yhold,
And hast in every regne and every lond
Of armes all the bridel in thin hond,
And hem fortunest as thee list devise,
Accept of me my pitous sacrifise.
If so be that my youthe may deserve,
And that my might be worthy for to serve
Thy godhed, that I may ben on of thine,
Than praie I thee to rewe upon my pine,
For thilke peine, and thilke hote fire,
In which thou whilom brendest for desire
Whanne that thou usedest the beautee
Of fayre yonge Venus, freshe and free,
And haddest hire in armes at thy wille:
Although thee ones on a time misfille,
Whan Vulcanus had caught thee in his las,
And fond the ligging by his wif, alas!
For thilke sorwe that was tho in thin herte,
Have reuthe as wel upon my peines smerte.
" I am yonge and unkonning, as thou wost,
And, as I trow, with love offended most,
That ever was ony lives creature:
For she, that doth me all this wo endure,
Ne recceth never, whether I sinke or flete.
And wel I wot, or she me mercy hete,
I moste with strengthe win hire in the place:
And wel I wot, withouten helpe or grace
Of thee, ne may my strengthe not availle:
Than helpe me, lord, to-morwe in my bataille,
For thilke fire that whilom brenned thee,
As wel as that this fire now brenneth me;

And do, that I to-morwe may han victorie.
Min be the travaille, and thin be the glorie.
Thy soveraine temple wol I most honouren
Of ony place, and alway most labouren
In thy plesance and in thy craftes strong.
And in thy temple I wol my baner hong,
And all the armes of my compagnie,
And evermore, until that day I die,
Eterne fire I wol beforne thee finde,
And eke to this avow I wol me binde.
My berd, my here that hangeth long adoun,
That never yet felt non offensioun
Of rasour ne of shere, I wol thee yeve,
And ben thy trewe servant while I live.
Now, lord, have reuthe upon my sorwes sore,
Yeve me the victorie, I axe thee no more."
The praier stint of Arcita the stronge,
The ringes on the temple dore that honge,
And eke the dores clattereden ful faste,
Of which Arcita somwhat him agaste.
The fires brent upon the auter bright,
That it gan all the temple for to light;
A sweete smell anon the ground up yaf,
And Arcita anon his hond up haf,
And more encense into the fire he cast,
With other rites mo, and at the last
The statue of Mars began his hauberke ring;
And with that soun he herd a murmuring
Ful low and dim, that sayde thus, "Victorie."
For which he yaf to Mars honour and glorie.
And thus with joye, and hope wel to fare,
Arcite anon unto his inne is fare,
As fayn as foul is of the brighte Sonne.
And right anon swiche strif ther is begonne
For thilke granting, in the Heven above,
Betwixen Venus the goddesse of love,
And Mars the sterne god armipotent,
That Jupiter was besy it to stent:
Til that the pale Saturnus the colde,
That knew so many of aventures olde,
Fond in his olde experience and art,
That he ful sone hath plesed every part.
As sooth is sayd, elde hath gret avantage,
In elde is bothe wisdom and usage:
Men may the old out-renne, but not out-rede.
Saturne anon, to stenten strif and drede,
Al be it that it is again his kind,
Of all this strif he gan a remedy find.
"My dere doughter Venus," quod Saturne,
"My cours, that hath so wide for to turne,
Hath more power than wot any man.
Min is the drenching in the see so wan,
Min is the prison in the derke cote,
Min is the strangel and hanging by the throte,
The murmure, and the cherles rebelling,
The groyning, and the prive empoysoning.
I do vengeance and pleine correction,
While I dwell in the signe of the Leon.
Min is the ruine of the highe halles,
The falling of the toures and of the walles
Upon the minour, or the carpenter:
I slew Sampson in shaking the piler.
Min ben also the maladies colde,
The derke tresons, and the castes olde:
My loking is the fader of pestilence.
Now wepe no more, I shal do diligence,
That Palamon, that is thin owen knight,
Shal have his lady, as thou hast him hight.
Thogh Mars shal help his knight yet natheles.
Betwixen you ther mot somtime be pees:
And be ye not of o complexion,
That causeth all day swiche division.
I am thin ayel, redy at thy will;
Wepe now no more, I shal thy lust fulfill."
Now wol I stenten of the goddes above,
Of Mars, and of Venus goddesse of love,
And tellen you as plainly as I can
The gret effect, for which that I began.
Gret was the feste in Athenes thilke day,
And eke the lusty seson of that May
Made every wight to ben in swiche plesance,
That all that Monday justen they and dance,
And spenden it in Venus highe servise.
But by the cause that they shulden rise
Erly a-morwe for to seen the fight,
Unto hir reste wenten they at night.
And on the morwe whan the day gan spring,
Of hors and harneis noise and clattering
Ther was in the hostelries all aboute:
And to the paleis rode ther many a route
Of lordes, upon stedes and palfreis.
Ther mayst thou see devising of harneis
So uncouth and so riche, and wrought so wele
Of goldsmithry, of brouding, and of stele;
The sheldes brighte, testeres, and trappures;
Gold-hewen helmes, hauberkes, cote-armures;
Lordes in paramentes on hir courseres,
Knightes of retenue, and eke squieres,
Nailing the speres, and helmes bokeling,
Gniding of sheldes, with lainers lacing;
Ther as nede is, they weren nothing idel:
The fomy stedes on the golden bridel
Gnawing, and fast the armureres also
With file and hammer priking to and fro;
Yemen on foot, and communes many on
With shorte staves, thicke as they may gon;
Pipes, trompes, nakeres, and clarjounes,
That in the bataille blowen blody sounes;
The paleis ful of peple up and doun,
Here three, ther ten, holding hir questioun,
Devining of these Theban knightes two.
Som sayden thus, som sayde it shal be so;
Som helden with him with the blacke berd,
Som with the balled, som with the thick herd;
Som saide he loked grim, and wolde fighte:
He hath a sparth of twenty pound of wighte.
Thus was the halle full of devining
Long after that the Sonne gan up spring.
The gret Theseus that of his slepe is waked
With minstralcie and noise that was maked,
Held yet the chambre of his paleis riche,
Til that the Theban knightes bothe yliche
Honoured were, and to the paleis fette.
Duk Theseus is at a window sette,
Araied right as he were a god in trone:
The peple preseth thiderward ful sone
Him for to seen, and don high reverence,
And eke to herken his heste and his sentence.
An herauld on a scaffold made an O,
Till that the noise of the peple was ydo:
And whan he saw the peple of noise al still,
Thus shewed he the mighty dukes will:
"The lord hath of his high discretion
Considered, that it were destruction
To gentil blood, to fighten in the gise
Of mortal bataille now in this emprise:
Wherfore to shapen that they shul not die,
He wol his firste purpos modifie.
"No man therfore up peine of losse of lif,
No maner shot, ne pollax, ne short knif

Into the listes send, or thider bring.
Ne short sweord for to stike with point biting
No man ne draw, ne bere it by his side.
Ne no man shal unto his felaw ride
But o cours, with a sharpe ygrounden spere:
Foin if him list on foot, himself to were.
And he that is at meschief, shal be take,
And not slaine, but be brought unto the stake,
That shal ben ordeined on eyther side,
Thider he shal by force, and ther abide.
And if so fall, the chevetain be take
On eyther side, or elles sleth his make,
No longer shal the tourneying ylast.
God spede you; goth forth and lay on fast.
With longe sword and with mase fighteth your fill.
Goth now your way; this is the lordes will."
The vois of the peple touched to the Heven,
So loude crieden they with mery steven:
"God save swiche a lord that is so good,
He wilneth no destruction of blood."
Up gon the trompes and the melodie,
And to the listes rit the compagnie
By ordinance, thurghout the cite large,
Hanged with cloth of gold, and not with sarge.
Ful like a lord this noble duk gan ride,
And these two Thebans upon eyther side:
And after rode the quene and Emelie,
And after that another compagnie
Of on and other, after hir degree.
And thus they passen thurghout the citee,
And to the listes comen they be time:
It n'as not of the day yet fully prime.
Whan set was Theseus ful rich and hie,
Ipolita the quene, and Emelie,
And other ladies in degrees aboute,
Unto the setes preseth all the route.
And westward, thurgh the gates under Mart,
Arcite, and eke the hundred of his part,
With baner red, is entred right anon;
And in the selve moment Palamon
Is, under Venus, estward in the place,
With baner white, and hardy chere and face.
In all the world, to seken up and doun,
So even without variatioun
Ther n'ere swiche compagnies never twey.
For ther was non so wise that coude sey,
That any hadde of other avantage
Of worthinesse, ne of estat, ne age,
So even were they chosen for to gesse.
And in two renges fayre they hem dresse.
Whan that hir names red were everich on,
That in hir nombre gile were ther non,
Tho were the gates shette, and cried was loude;
"Do now your devoir, yonge knightes proude."
The heraudes left hir priking up and doun.
Now ringen trompes loud and clarioun.
Ther is no more to say, but est and west
In gon the speres sadly in the rest;
In goth the sharpe spore into the side.
Ther see men who can juste, and who can ride.
Ther shiveren shaftes upon sheldes thicke;
He feleth thurgh the herte-spone the pricke.
Up springen speres twenty foot on highte;
Out gon the swerdes as the silver brighte.
The helmes they to-hewen, and to-shrede;
Out brest the blod, with sterne stremes rede.
With mighty maces the bones they to-breste.
He thurgh the thickest of the throng gan threste.
Ther stomblen stedes strong, and doun goth all:
He rolleth under foot as doth a ball.
He foineth on his foo with a tronchoun,
And he him hurtleth with his hors adoun.
He thurgh the body is hurt, and sith ytake
Maugre his hed, and brought unto the stake,
As forword was, right ther he must abide.
Another lad is on that other side.
And sometime doth hem Theseus to rest,
Hem to refresh, and drinken if hem lest.
Ful oft a day han thilke Thebanes two
Togeder met, and wrought eche other wo:
Unhorsed hath eche other of hem twey.
Ther n'as no tigre in the vale of Galaphey,
Whan that hire whelpe is stole, whan it is lite,
So cruel on the hunt, as is Arcite
For jalous herte upon this Palamon:
Ne in Belmarie ther n'is so fell leon,
That hunted is, or for his hunger wood,
Ne of his prey desireth so the blood,
As Palamon to sleen his foo Arcite.
The jalous strokes on hir helmes bite;
Out renneth blood on both hir sides rede.
Somtime an ende ther is of every dede.
For er the Sonne unto the reste went,
The stronge king Emetrius gan hent
This Palamon, as he fought with Arcite,
And made his swerd depe in his flesh to bite.
And by the force of twenty is he take
Unyolden, and ydrawen to the stake.
And in the rescous of this Palamon
The stronge king Licurge is borne adoun:
And king Emetrius for all his strengthe
Is borne out of his sadel a swerdes lengthe,
So hitte him Palamon or he were take:
But all for nought, he was brought to the stake:
His hardy herte might him helpen naught,
He moste abiden, whan that he was caught,
By force, and eke by composition.
Who sorweth now but woful Palamon?
That moste no more gon again to fight.
And whan that Theseus had seen that sight,
Unto the folk that foughten thus eche on,
He cried, "Ho! no more, for it is don.
I wol be trewe juge, and not partie.
Arcite of Thebes shal have Emelie,
That by his fortune hath hire fayre ywonne."
Anon ther is a noise of peple begonne
For joye of this, so loud and high withall,
It semed that the listes shulden fall.
What can now fayre Venus don above?
What saith she now? what doth this quene of love?
But wepeth so, for wanting of hire will,
Til that hire teres in the listes fill:
She sayde: "I am ashamed douteless."
Saturnus sayde: "Daughter, hold thy pees."
Mars hath his will, his knight hath all his bone,
And by min hed thou shalt ben esed sone.
The trompoures with the loude minstralcie,
The heraudes, that so loude yell and crie,
Ben in hir joye for wele of Dan Arcite.
But herkeneth me, and stenteth noise a lite,
Whiche a miracle ther befell anon.
This fierce Arcite hath of his helme ydon,
And on a courser for to shew his face
He priketh endelong the large place,
Loking upward upon this Emelie;
And she again him cast a friendlich eye,
(For women, as to speken in commune,
They folwen all the favour of fortune)
And was all his in chere, as his in herte.
Out of the ground a fury infernal sterte,

From Pluto sent, at requeste of Saturne,
For which his hors for fere gan to turne,
And lepte aside, and foundred as he lepe:
And er that Arcite may take any kepe,
He pight him on the pomel of his hed,
That in the place he lay as he were ded,
His brest to-brosten with his sadel bow.
As blake he lay as any cole or crow,
So was the blood yronnen in his face.
Anon he was yborne out of the place
With herte sore, to Theseus paleis.
Tho was he corven out of his harneis,
And in a bed ybrought ful fayre and blive,
For he was yet in memorie, and live,
And alway crying after Emelie.
Duk Theseus, with all his compagnie,
Is comén home to Athenes his citee,
With alle blisse and gret solempnite.
Al be it that this aventure was falle,
He n'olde not discomforten hem alle.
Men sayden eke, that Arcite shal not die,
He shal ben heled of his maladie.
And of another thing they were as fayn,
That of hem alle was ther non yslain,
Al were they sore yhurt, and namely on,
That with a spere was thirled his brest bone.
To other woundes, and to broken armes,
Som hadden salves, and som hadden charmes:
And fermacies of herbes, and eke save
They dronken, for they wold hir lives have.
For which this noble duk, as he wel can,
Comforteth and honoureth every man,
And made revel all the longe night,
Unto the strange lordes, as was right.
Ne ther n'as holden no discomforting,
But as at justes or a tourneying;
For sothly ther n'as no discomfiture,
For falling n'is not but an aventure.
Ne to be lad by force unto a stake
Unyolden, and with twenty knightes take,
O person all alone, withouten mo,
And haried forth by armes, foot, and too,
And eke his stede driven forth with staves,
With footmen, bothe yemen and eke knaves,
It was aretted him no vilanie:
Ther may no man clepen it cowardie.
For which anon duk Theseus let crie,
To stenten alle rancour and envie,
The gree as wel of o side as of other,
And eyther side ylike, as others brother:
And yave hem giftes after hir degree,
And helde a feste fully dayes three:
And conveyed the kinges worthily
Out of his toun a journee largely.
And home went every man the righte way,
Ther n'as no more, but farewel, have good day.
Of this battaille I wol no more endite,
But speke of Palamon and of Arcite.
Swelleth the brest of Arcite, and the sore
Encreseth at his herte more and more.
The clotered blood, for any leche-craft,
Corrumpeth, and is in his bouke ylaft,
That neyther veine-blood, ne ventousing,
Ne drinke of herbes may ben his helping.
The vertue expulsif, or animal,
Fro thilke vertue cleped natural,
Ne may the veine voiden, ne expell.
The pipes of his longes gan to swell,
And every lacerte in his brest adoun
Is shent with venime and corruptioun.
Him gaineth neyther, for to get his lif,
Vomit upward, ne dounward laxatif;
All is to-brosten thilke region;
Nature hath now no domination.
And certainly ther nature wol not werche,
Farewel physike: go bere the man to cherche,
This is all and som, that Arcite moste die.
For which he sendeth after Emelie,
And Palamon, that was his cosin dere.
Than sayd he thus, as ye shuln after here.
"Nought may the woful spirit in myn herte
Declaré o point of all my sorwes smerte
To you, my lady, that I love most;
But I bequethe the service of my gost
To you aboven every creature,
Sin that my lif ne may no lenger dure.
"Alas the wo! alas the peines stronge,
That I for you have suffered, and so longe!
Alas the deth! alas min Emelie!
Alas departing of our compagnie!
Alas min hertes quene! alas my wif!
Min hertes ladie, ender of my lif!
What is this world? what axen men to have?
Now with his love, now in his colde grave
Alone withouten any compagnie.
Farewel my swete, farewel min Emelie,
And softe take me in your armes twey,
For love of God, and herkeneth what I sey.
"I have here with my cosin Palamon
Had strif and rancour many a day agon
For love of you, and for my jalousie.
And Jupiter so wis my soule gie,
To speken of a servant proprely,
With alle circumstances trewely,
That is to sayn, trouth, honour, and knighthede,
Wisdom, humblesse, estat, and high kinrede,
Fredom, and all that longeth to that art,
So Jupiter have of my soule part,
As in this world right now ne know I non,
So worthy to be loved as Palamon,
That serveth you, and wol don all his lif.
And if that ever ye shal ben a wif,
Foryete not Palamon, the gentil man."
And with that word his speche faille began.
For from his feet up to his brest was come
The cold of deth, that had him overnome.
And yet moreover in his armes two
The vital strength is lost, and all ago.
Only the intellect, withouten more,
That dwelled in his herte sike and sore,
Gan feillen, whan the herte felte deth;
Dusked his eyen two, and failled his breth.
But on his ladie yet cast he his eye;
His laste word was; "Mercy, Emelie!"
His spirit changed hous, and wente ther,
As I came never I cannot tellen wher,
Therfore I stent, I am no divinistre;
Of soules find I not in this registre.
Ne me lust not th' opinions to telle
Of hem, though that they writen wher they dwelle.
Arcite is cold, ther Mars his soule gie.
Now wol I speken forth of Emelie.
Shright Emelie, and houleth Palamon,
And Theseus his sister took anon
Swouning, and bare hire from the corps away.
What helpeth it to tarien forth the day,
To tellen how she wep both even and morwe?
For in swiche cas wimmen have swiche sorwe,
Whan that hir housbonds ben fro hem ago,
That for the more part they sorwen so,

Or elles fallen in swiche maladie,
That atte laste certainly they die.
Infinite hen the sorwes and the teres
Of olde folk, and folk of tendre yeres,
In all the toun for deth of this Theban:
For him ther wepeth both childe and man.
So gret a weping was ther non certain,
Whan Hector was ybrought, all fresh yslain
To Troy, alas! the pitee that was there,
Cratching of chekes, rending eke of here.
"Why woldest thou be ded?" thise women crie,
"And haddest gold ynough, and Emelie."
No man might gladen this duk Theseus,
Saving his olde fader Egeus,
That knew this worldes transmutatioun,
As he had seen it chaungen up and doun,
Joye after wo, and wo after gladnesse;
And showed him ensample and likenesse.
"Right as ther died never man" (quod he)
"That he ne lived in erthe in som degree,
Right so ther lived never man" (he seyd)
"In all this world, that somtime he ne deyd.
This world n'is but a thurghfare ful of wo,
And we ben pilgrimes, passing to and fro:
Deth is an end of every worldes sore."
And over all this yet said he mochel more
To this effect, ful wisely to enhort
The peple, that they shuld hem recomfort.
Duk Theseus with all his besy cure
He casteth now, wher that the sepulture
Of good Arcite may best ymaked be,
And eke most honourable in his degree.
And at the last he toke conclusion,
That ther as first Arcite and Palamon
Hadden for love the bataille hem betwene,
That in that selve grove, sote and grene,
Ther as he hadde his amorous desires,
His complaint, and for love his hote fires,
He wolde make a fire, in which the office
Of funeral he might all accomplise;
And lete anon commande to hack and hewe
The okes old, and lay hem on a rew
In culpons, wel araied for to brenne.
His officers with swifte feet they renne
And ride anon at his commandement.
And after this, this Theseus hath sent
After a bere, and it all overspradde
With cloth of gold, the richest that he hadde;
And of the same suit he cladde Arcite.
Upon his hondes were his gloves white,
Eke on his hed a croune of laurer grene,
And in his hond a swerd ful bright and kene.
He laid him bare the visage on the bere,
Therwith he wept that pitee was to here.
And for the peple shulde seen him alle,
Whan it was day he brought him to the halle,
That roreth of the crying and the soun.
Tho came this woful Theban Palamon
With flotery berd, and ruggy asshy heres,
In clothes blake, ydropped all with teres,
And (passing over of weping Emelie)
The reufullest of all the compagnie.
And in as much as the service shuld be
The more noble and riche in his degree,
Duk Theseus let forth three stedes bring,
That trapped were in stele all glittering,
And covered with the armes of Dan Arcite.
And eke upon these stedes gret and white
Ther saten folk, of which on bare his sheld,
Another his spere up in his hondes held;
The thridde bare with him his bow Turkeis,
Of brent gold was the cas and the harnies:
And riden forth a pas with sorweful chere
Toward the grove, as ye shul after here.
The noblest of the Grekes that ther were
Upon hir shuldres carrieden the bere,
With slacke pas, and eyen red and wete,
Thurghout the citee, by the maister strete,
That sprad was all with black, and wonder hie
Right of the same is all the strete ywrie.
Upon the right hand went olde Egeus,
And on that other side duk Theseus,
With vessels in hir hond of gold ful fine,
All ful of hony, milk, and blood, and wine;
Eke Palamon, with ful gret compagnie:
And after that came woful Emelie,
With fire in hond, as was that time the gise,
To don the office of funeral service.
High labour, and ful gret apparailling
Was at the service of that fire making,
That with his grene top the Heven raught,
And twenty fadom of brede the armes straught:
This is to sain, the boughes were so brode.
Of stre first ther was laied many a lode.
But how the fire was maked up on highte,
And eke the names how the trees highte,
As oke, fir, birch, aspe, alder, holm, poplere,
Wilow, elm, plane, ash, box, chestein, lind, laurere
Maple, thorn, beche, hasel, ew, whipultre,
How they were feld, shall not be told for me;
Ne how the goddes runnen up and doun
Disherited of her habitatioun,
In which they woneden in rest and pees,
Nimphes, Faunes, and Amadriades;
Ne how the bestes, and the briddes alle
Fledden for fere, whan the wood gan falle;
Ne how the ground agast was of the light,
That was not wont to see the Sonne bright;
Ne how the fire was couched first with stre,
And than with drie stickes cloven a-thre,
And than with grene wood and spicerie,
And than with cloth of gold and with perrie,
And gerlonds hanging with ful many a flour,
The mirre, th' encense also with swete odour;
Ne how Arcita lay among all this,
Ne what richesse about his body is;
Ne how that Emelie, as was the gise,
Put in the fire of funeral service;
Ne how she swounded when she made the fire,
Ne what she spake, ne what was hir desire;
Ne what jewelles men in the fire caste,
Whan that the fire was gret and brente faste;
Ne how som cast hir sheld, and som hir spere,
And of hir vestimentes, which they were,
And cuppes full of wine, and milk, and blood,
Into the fire, that brent as it were wood;
Ne how the Grekes with a huge route
Three times riden all the fire aboute
Upon the left hond, with a loud shouting,
And thries with hir speres clatering;
And thries how the ladies gan to crie;
Ne how that led was homeward Emelie;
Ne how Arcite is brent to ashen cold;
Ne how the liche-wake was yhold
All thilke night, ne how the Grekes play.
The wake-plaies ne kepe I not to say:
Who wrestled best naked, with oile enoint,
Ne who that bare him best in no disjoint.
I woll not tellen eke how they all gon
Home til Athenes whan the play is don;

But shortly to the point now wol I wende,
And maken of my longe tale an ende.
By processe and by longthe of certain yeres
All stenten is the mourning and the teres
Of Grekes, by on general assent.
Than semeth me ther was a parlement
At Athenes, upon certain points and cas:
Amonges the which points yspoken was
To have with certain contrees alliance,
And have of Thebanes fully obeisance.
For which this noble Theseus anon
Let senden after gentil Palamon,
Unwist of him, what was the cause and why:
But in his black clothes sorwefully
He came at his commandement on hie;
Tho sente Theseus for Emelie.
Whan they were set, and husht was al the place,
And Theseus abiden hath a space,
Or any word came from his wise brest
His eyen set he ther as was his lest,
And with a sad visage he siked still,
And after that right thus he sayd his will.
"The firste mover of the cause above
Whan he firste made the fayre chaine of love,
Grét was th' effect, and high was his entent;
Wel wist he why, and what therof he ment:
For with that fayre chaine of love he bond
The fire, the air, the watre, and the lond
In certain bondes, that they may not flee:
The same prince and mover eke" (quod he)
"Hath stablisht, in this wretched world adoun,
Certain of dayes and duration
To all that are engendred in this place,
Over the which day they ne mow not pace,
Al mow they yet dayes wel abrege,
Ther nedeth non autoritee allege,
For it is preved by experience,
But that me lust declaren my sentence.
Than may men by this ordre wel discerne,
That thilke mover stable is and eterne.
Wel may men knowen, but it be a fool,
That every part deriveth from his hool.
For nature hath not taken his beginning
Of no partie ne cantel of a thing,
But of a thing that parfit is and stable,
Descending so, til it be corrumpable.
And therfore of his wise purveyance
He hath so wel beset his ordinance,
That speces of thinges and progressions
Shullen enduren by successions,
And not eterne, withouten any lie:
This maiest thou understand and seen at eye.
Lo the oke, that hath so long a norishing
Fro the time that it ginneth first to spring,
And hath so long a lif, as ye may see,
Yet at the laste wasted is the tree.
Considereth eke, how that the harde stone
Under our feet, on which we trede and gon,
It wasteth, as it lieth by the wey.
The brode river somtime wexeth drey.
The grete tounes see we wane and wende.
Than may ye see that all thing hath an ende.
Of man and woman see we wel also,
That nedes in on of the termes two,
That is to sayn, in youthe or elles age,
He mote be ded, the king as shall a page;
Som in his bed, som in the depe see,
Som in the large field, as ye may see:
Ther helpeth nought, all goth that ilke wey:
Than may I sayn that alle thing mote dey.
What maketh this but Jupiter the king?
The which is prince, and cause of alle thing,
Converting alle unto his propre wille,
From which it is derived, soth to telle.
And here-againes no creature on live
Of no degree availleth for to strive.
Than is it wisdom, as it thinketh me,
To maken vertue of necessite,
And take it wel, that we may not eschewe,
And namely that to us all is dewe.
And who so grutcheth ought, he doth folie,
And rebel is to him that all may gie.
And certainly a man hath most honour
To dien in his excellence and flour,
Whan he is siker of his goode name.
Than hath he don his frend, ne him, no shame;
And glader ought his frend ben of his deth.
Whan with honour is yolden up his breth,
Than whan his name appalled is for age;
For all foryetten is his vassallage.
Than is it best, as for a worthy fame,
To dien whan a man is best of name.
The contrary of all this is wilfulnesse.
Why grutchen we? why have we hevinesse,
That good Arcite, of chivalry the flour,
Departed is, with dutee and honour,
Out of this foule prison of this lif?
Why grutchen here his cosin and his wif
Of his welfare, that loven him so wel?
Can he him thank? nay, God wot, never a del,
That both his soule, and eke hemself offend,
And yet they mow hir lustes not to amend.
"What may I conclude of this longe serie,
But after sorwe I rede us to be merie,
And thanken Jupiter of all his grace.
And er that we departen from this place,
I rede that we make of sorwes two
O parfit joye lasting evermo:
And loketh now wher most sorwe is herein,
Ther wol I first amenden and begin.
"Sister," (quod he) "this is my full assent,
With all th' avis here of my parlement,
That gentil Palamon, your owen knight,
That serveth you with will, and herte, and might,
And ever hath don, sin ye first him knew,
That ye shall of your grace upon him rew,
And taken him for husbond and for lord:
Lene me your hand, for this is oure accord.
"Let see now of your womanly pitee.
He is a kinges brothers sone pardee,
And though he were a poure bachelere,
Sin he hath served you so many a yere,
And had for you so gret adversite,
It moste ben considered, leveth me.
For gentil mercy oweth to passen right."
Than sayd he thus to Palamon the knight;
"I trow ther nedeth litel sermoning
To maken you assenten to this thing.
Cometh ner, and take your lady by the hond."
Betwixen hem was maked anon the bond,
That highte matrimoine or mariage,
By all the conseil of the baronage.
And thus with alle blisse and melodie
Hath Palamon ywedded Emelie.
And God that all this wide world hath wrought,
Send him his love, that hath it dere ybought.
For now is Palamon in alle wele,
Living in blisse, in richesse, and in hele,
And Emelie him loveth so tendrely,
And he hire serveth al so gentilly,

That never was ther no word hem betwene
Of jalousie, ne of non other tene.
Thus endeth Palamon and Emelie;
And God save all this fayre compagnie.

THE MILLERES PROLOGUE.

WHAN that the Knight had thus his tale told,
In all the compagnie n' as ther yong ne old,
That he ne said it was a noble storie,
And worthy to be drawen to memorie;
And namely the gentiles everich on.
Our hoste lough and swore, "So mote I gon,
This goth aright; unbokeled is the male;
Let see now who shal tell another tale:
For trewely this game is wel begonne.
Now telleth ye, sire Monk, if that ye conne,
Somwhat to quiten with the knightes tale."
The Miller that for-dronken was all pale,
So that unethes upon his hors he sat,
He n'old avalen neither hood ne hat,
Ne abiden no man for his curtesie,
But in Pilates vois he gan to crie,
And swore by armes, and by blood, and bones,
"I can a noble tale for the nones,
With which I wol now quite the knightes tale."
Our hoste saw that he was dronken of ale,
And sayd; "Abide, Robin, my leve brother,
Som better man shall tell us first another:
Abide, and let us werken thriftily."
"By Goddes soule" (quod he) "that wol not I,
For I wol speke, or elles go my way."
Our hoste answered; "Tell on a devil way;
Thou art a fool; thy wit is overcome." [some:
"Now herkeneth," quod the Miller, "all and
But first I make a protestatioun
That I am dronke, I know it by my soun:
And therfore if that I misspeke or say,
Wite it the ale of Southwerk, I you pray:
For I wol tell a legend and a lif
Both of a carpenter and of his wif,
How that a clerk hath set the wrightes cappe."
The Reve answerd and saide, "Stint thy clappe.
Let be thy lewed dronken harlotrie.
It is a sinne, and eke a gret folie
To apeiren any man, or him defame,
And eke to bringen wives in swiche a name.
Thou mayst ynough of other thinges sain."
This dronken Miller spake ful sone again,
And sayde; "Leve brother Osewold,
Who hath no wif, he is no cokewold.
But I say not therfore that thou art on;
Ther ben ful goode wives many on.
Why art thou angry with my tale now?
I have a wif parde as wel as thou,
Yet n' olde I, for the oxen in my plough,
Taken upon me more than ynough
As demen of myself that I am on;
I wol beleven wel that I am non.
An husbond shulde not ben inquisitif
Of Goddes privite, ne of his wif.
So he may finden Goddes foison there,
Of the remenant nedeth not to enquere."
What shuld I more say, but this Millere
He n' olde his wordes for no man forbere,
But told his cherles tale in his manere,
Me thinketh, that I shal reherse it here.
And therfore every gentil wight I pray,
For Goddes love as deme not that I say
Of evil entent, but that I mote reherse
Hir tales alle, al be they better or werse,
Or elles falsen som of my matere.
And therfore who so list it not to here,
Turne over the leef, and chese another tale,
For he shal find ynow bothe gret and smale,
Of storial thing that toucheth gentillesse,
And eke moralite, and holinesse.
Blameth not me, if that ye chese amis.
The Miller is a cherl, ye know wel this,
So was the Reve, (and many other mo)
And harlotrie they tolden bothe two.
Aviseth you now, and put me out of blame;
And eke men shuld not make ernest of game.

THE MILLERES TALE.

WHILOM ther was dwelling in Oxenforde
A riche gnof, that gestes helde to borde,
And of his craft he was a carpenter.
With him ther was dwelling a poure scoler,
Had lerned art, but all his fantasie
Was turned for to lerne astrologie,
And coude a certain of conclusions
To demen by interrogations,
If that men asked him in certain houres,
Whan that men shulde have drought or elles shoures:
Or if men asked him what shulde falle
Of every thing, I may not reken alle.
This clerk was cleped hendy Nicholas;
Of derne love he coude and of solas;
And therto he was slie and ful prive,
And like a maiden meke for to se.
A chambre had he in that hostelrie
Alone withouten any compagnie,
Ful fetisly ydight with herbes sote,
And he himself was swete as is the rote
Of licoris, or any setewale.
His almageste, and bokes grete and smale,
His astrelabre, longing for his art,
His augrim stones, layen faire apart
On shelves couched at his beddes hed,
His presse ycovered with a falding red.
And all about there lay a gay sautrie,
On which he made on nightes melodie,
So swetely, that all the chambre rong:
And *Angelus ad virginem* he song.
And after that he song the kinges note;
Ful often blessed was his mery throte.
And thus this swete clerk his time spent
After his frendes finding and his rent.
This carpenter had wedded new a wif,
Which that he loved more than his lif:
Of eightene yere she was I gesse of age.
Jalous he was, and held hire narwe in cage,
For she was wild and yonge, and he was old,
And demed himself belike a cokewold.
He knew not Caton, for his wit was rude,
That bade a man shulde wedde his similitude.
Men shulden wedden after hir estate,
For youthe and elde is often at debate.
But sithen he was fallen in the snare,
He most endure (as other folk) his care.
Fayre was this yonge wif, and therwithal
As any wesel hire body gent and smal.
A seint she wered, barred all of silk,
A barme-cloth eke as white as morwe milk

Upon hire lendes, ful of many a gore.
White was hire smok, and brouded all before
And eke behind on hire colere aboute
Of cole-black silk, within and eke withoute.
The tapes of hire white volupere
Were of the same suit of hire colere;
Hire fillet brode of silk, and set full hye:
And sikerly she had a likerous eye.
Ful smal ypulled were hire browes two,
And they were bent, and black as any sloo.
She was wel more blisful on to see
Than is the newe perjenete tree;
And softer than the wolle is of a wether.
And by hire girdle heng a purse of lether,
Tasseled with silk, and perled with latoun.
In all this world to seken up and doun
Ther n'is no man so wise, that coude thenche
So gay a popelot, or swiche a wenche.
Ful brighter was the shining of hire hewe,
Than in the tour the noble yforged newe.
But of hire song, it was as loud and yerne,
As any swalow sitting on a berne.
Therto she coude skip, and make a game,
As any kid or calf folowing his dame.
Hire mouth was swete as braket or the meth,
Or hord of appels, laid in hay or heth.
Winsing she was, as is a joly colt,
Long as a mast, and upright as a bolt.
A broche she bare upon hire low colere,
As brode as is the bosse of a bokelere.
Hire shoon were laced on hire legges hie;
She was a primerole, a piggesnie,
For any lord to liggen in his bedde,
Or yet for any good yeman to wedde.
Now sire, and eft sire, so befall the cas,
That on a day this hendy Nicholas
Fel with the yonge wif to rage and pleye,
While that her husbond was at Oseney,
As clerkes ben ful subtil and ful queint,
And prively he caught hire by the queint.
And sayde; "Ywis, but if I have my will,
For derne love of thee, lemman, I spill."
And held hire faste by the haunch bones,
And sayde; "Lemman, love me wel at ones,
Or I wol dien, al so God me save."
And she sprong as a colt doth in the trave;
And with hire hed she writhed faste away,
And sayde; "I wol not kisse thee by my fay.
Why let be," (quod she) "let be, Nicholas,
Or I wol crie out harrow and alas.
Do way your hondes for your curtesie."
This Nicholas gan mercy for to crie,
And spake so faire and profered him so fast,
That she hire love him granted at the last,
And swore hire oth by Seint Thomas of Kent,
That she would ben at his commandement,
Whan that she may hire leiser wel espie.
"Myn husbond is so ful of jalousie,
That but ye waiten wel, and be prive,
I wot right wel I n'am but ded," quod she.
"Ye moster be ful derne as in this cas."
"Nay, therof care you not," quod Nicholas:
"A clerk had litherly beset his while,
But if he coude a carpenter begile."
And thus they were accorded and ysworne
To waite a time, as I have said beforne
Whan Nicholas had don thus every del,
And thacked hire about the lendes wel,
He kissed hire swete, and taketh his sautrie,
And plaieth fast, and maketh melodie.

Than fell it thus, that to the parish cherche
(Of Cristes owen werkes for to werche)
This good wif went upon a holy day:
Hire forehed shone as bright as any day,
So was it washen, whan she lete hire werk.
Now was ther of that chirche a parish clerk,
The which that was ycleped Absolon.
Crulle was his here, and as the gold it shon,
And strouted as a fanne large and brode;
Ful streight and even lay his joly shode.
His rode was red, his eyen grey as goos,
With poules windowes corven on his shoos.
In hosen red he went ful fetisly.
Yclad he was ful smal and proprely,
All in a kirtel of a light waget;
Ful faire and thicke ben the pointes set.
And therupon he had a gay surplise,
As white as is the blosme upon the rise.
A mery child he was, so God me save;
Wel coud he leten blod, and clippe, and shave,
And make a chartre of lond, and a quitance.
In twenty manere coud he trip and dance,
(After the scole of Oxenforde tho)
And with his legges casten to and fro;
And playen songes on a smal ribible;
Therto he song somtime a loud quinible.
And as wel coud he play on a giterne.
In all the toun n'as brewhous ne taverne,
That he ne visited with his solas,
Ther as that any galliard tapstere was.
But soth to say he was somdel squaimous
Of farting, and of speche dangerous.
This Absolon, that joly was and gay,
Goth with a censer on the holy day,
Censing the wives of the parish faste;
And many a lovely loke he on hem caste,
And namely on this carpenteres wif:
To loke on hire he thought a mery lif.
She was so propre, and swete, and likerous.
I dare wel sain, if she had ben a mous,
And he a cat, he wolde hire hente anon.
This parish clerk, this joly Absolon,
Hath in his herte swiche a love-longing,
That of no wif toke he non offering;
For curtesie, he sayd, he n'olde non.
The Moone at night ful clere and brighte shon,
And Absolon his giterne hath ytake,
For paramours he thoughte for to wake.
And forth he goth, jolif and amorous,
Til he came to the carpenteres hous,
A litel afte the cockes had ycrow,
And dressed him up by a shot window,
That was upon the carpenteres wal.
He singeth in his vois gentil and smal;
"Now, dere lady, if thy wille be,
I pray you that ye wol rewe on me;"
Ful wel accordant to his giterning.
This carpenter awoke, and herd him sing,
And spake unto his wif, and said anon,
"What, Alison, heres thou not Absolon,
That chanteth thus under our boures wal?
And she answerd hire husbond therwithal;
"Yes, God wot, John, I here him every del."
This passeth forth; what wol ye bet than wel?
Fro day to day this joly Absolon
So loveth hire, that him is wo-begon.
He waketh all the night, and all the day,
He kembeth his lockes brode, and made him gay.
He woeth hire by menes and brocage,
And swore he wolde ben hire owen page.

He singeth brokking as a nightingale.
He sent hire pinnes, methe, and spiced ale,
And wafres piping hot out of the glede:
And for she was of toun, he profered mede.
For som folk wol be wonnon for richesse,
And som for strokes, and som with gentillesse.
Somtime to shew his lightnesse and maistrie
He plaieth Herode on a skaffold hie.
But what availeth him as in this cas?
So loveth she this hendy Nicholas,
That Absolon may blow the buckes horne:
He ne had for his labour but a scorne.
And thus she maketh Absolon hire ape,
And all his ernest tourneth to a jape.
Ful soth is this proverbe, it is no lie;
Men say right thus alway; "The neighe slie
Maketh oft time the fer leef to be lothe."
For though that Absolon be wood or wrothe,
Because that he fer was from hire sight,
This neighe Nicholas stood in his light.
Now bere thee wel, thou hendy Nicholas,
For Absolon may waile and sing alas.
And so befell that on a Saturday,
This carpenter was gon to Osenay,
And hendy Nicholas and Alison
Accorded ben to this conclusion,
That Nicholas shal shapen him a wile
This sely jalous husbond to begile;
And if so were the game went aright,
She shuld slepe in his armes alle night,
For this was hire desire and his also.
And right anon, withouten wordes mo,
This Nicholas no lenger wolde tarie,
But doth ful soft unto his chambre carie
Both mete and drinke for a day or twey.
And to hire husbond bad hire for to sey,
If that he axed after Nicholas,
She shuld say, she n'iste not wher he was;
Of all the day she saw him not with eye,
She trowed he was in som maladie,
For for no crie hire maiden coud him calle
He n' olde answer, for nothing that might falle.
Thus passeth forth all thilke Saturday,
That Nicholas still in his chambre lay,
And ete, and slept, and did what him list
Till Sonday, that the Sonne goth to rest.
This sely carpenter hath gret mervaile
Of Nicholas, or what thing might him aile,
And said; "I am adrad by Seint Thomas
It stondeth not aright with Nicholas:
God shilde that he died sodenly.
This world is now ful tikel sikerly.
I saw to-day a corps yborne to cherche,
That now on Monday last I saw him werche.
"Go up" (quoth he unto his knave) "anon;
Clepe at his dore, or knocke with a ston:
Loke how it is, and tell me boldely."
This knave goth him up ful sturdely,
And at the chambre dore while that he stood,
He cried and knocked as that he were wood:
"What how? what do ye, maister Nicholay?
How may ye slepen all the longe day?"
But all for nought, he herde not a word.
An hole he fond ful low upon the bord,
Ther as the cat was wont in for to crepe,
And at that hole he loked in ful depe,
And at the last he had of him a sight.
This Nicholas sat ever gaping upright,
As he had kyked on the newe Mone.
Adoun he goth, and telleth his maister sone,
In what array he saw this ilke man.
This carpenter to blissen him began,
And said; "Now helpe us Seinte Frideswide.
A man wote litel what shal him betide.
This man is fallen with his astronomie
In som woodnesse or in som agonie.
I thought ay wel how that it shulde be.
Men shulde not know of Goddes privetee.
Ya blessed be alway a lewed man,
That nought but only his beleve can.
So ferd another clerk with astronomie;
He walked in the felds for to prie
Upon the sterres, what there shuld befalle,
Till he was in a marlepit yfalle.
He saw not that. But yet by Seint Thomas
Me reweth sore of hendy Nicholas:
He shal be rated of his studying,
If that I may, by Jesus, Heven king.
"Get me a staf, that I may underspore
While that thou, Robin, hevest of the dore:
He shal out of his studying, as I gesse."
And to the chambre dore he gan him dresse.
His knave was a strong carl for the nones,
And by the haspe he haf it of at ones;
Into the flore the dore fell anon.
This Nicholas sat ay as stille as a ston,
And ever he gaped upward into the eire.
This carpenter wead he were in despeire,
And hent him by the shulders mightily,
And shoke him hard, and cried spitously;
"What, Nicholas? what how man? loke adoun:
Awake, and thinke on Cristes passioun.
I crouche thee from elves, and from wightes."
Therwith the nightspel said he anon rightes,
On foure halves of the hous aboute,
And on the threswold of the dore withoute.
"Jesu Crist, and Seint Benedight,
Blisse this hous from every wicked wight,
Fro the nightes mare, the wite Pater-noster;
Wher wonest thou Seint Peters suster?"
And at the last this hendy Nicholas
Gan for to siken sore, and said; "Alas!
Shal all the world be lost eftsones now?"
This carpenter answered; "What saiest thou?
What? thinke on God, as we do, men that swinke."
This Nicholas answered; "Fetch me a drinke;
And after wol I speke in privetee
Of certain thing that toucheth thee and me:
I wol tell it non other man certain."
This carpenter goth doun, and cometh again,
And brought of mighty ale a large quart;
And whan that eche of hem had dronken his part,
This Nicholas his dore faste shette,
And doun the carpenter by him he sette,
And saide; "John, min hoste lefe and dere,
Thou shalt upon thy trouthe swere me here,
That to no wight thou shalt my conseil wrey:
For it is Cristes conseil that I say,
And if thou tell it man, thou art forlore:
For this vengeance thou shalt have therefore,
That if thou wreye me, thou shalt be wood."
"Nay, Crist forbede it for his holy blood,"
Quod tho this sely man; "I am no labbe,
Ne though I say it, I n'am not lefe to gabbe.
Say what thou wolt, I shal it never telle
To child ne wif, by him that harwed Helle."
"Now, John," (quod Nicholas) "I wol not lie.
I have yfounde in min astrologie,
As I have loked in the Moone bright,
That now on Monday next, at quarter night,

Shal fall a rain, and that so wild and wood
That half so gret was never Noes flood.
This world" (he said) " in lesse than in an houre
Shal al be dreint, so hidous is the shoure:
Thus shal mankinde drenche, and lese hir lif."
This carpenter answerd; " Alas my wif!
And shal she drenche? alas min Alisoun!"
For sorwe of this he fell almost adoun,"
And said; " Is ther no remedy in this cas?"
" Why yes, for God," quod hendy Nicholas;
" If thou wolt werken after lore and rede;
Thou maist not werken after thin owen hede.
For thus saith Salomon, that was ful trewe;
Werke all by conseil, and thou shalt not rewe.
And if thou werken wolt by good conseil,
I undertake, withouten mast or seyl,
Yet shal I saven hire, and thee and me.
Hast thou not herd how saved was Noe,
Whan that our Lord had warned him beforne,
That all the world with water shuld be lorne?"
" Yes," (quod this carpenter) " ful yore ago."
" Hast thou not herd" (quod Nicholas) " also
The sorwe of Noe with his felawship,
Or that he might get his wif to ship?
Him had he lever, I dare wel undertake,
At thilke time, than all his wethers blake,
That she had had a ship hireself alone.
And therfore wost thou what is best to done?
This axeth hast, and of an hastif thing
Men may not preche and maken tarying.
Anon go get us fast into this in
A kneding trough or elles a kemelyn,
For eche of us; but loke that they ben large,
In which we mowen swimme as in a barge:
And have therin vitaille suffisant
But for a day; fie on the remenant;
The water shall aslake and gon away
Abouten prime upon the nexte day.
But Robin may not wete of this, thy knave,
Ne eke thy mayden Gille I may not save:
Axe not why: for though thou axe me,
I wol not tellen Goddes privetee.
Sufficeth thee, but if thy wittes madde,
To have as gret a grace as Noe hadde.
Thy wif shal I wel saven out of doute.
Go now thy way, and spede thee hereaboute.
" But whan thou hast for hire, and thee, and me,
Ygeten us these kneding tubbes thre,
Than shalt thou heng hem in the roofe ful hie,
That no man of our purveyance espie:
And whan thou hast don thus as I have said,
And hast our vitaille faire in hem ylaid,
And eke an axe to smite the cord a-two
Whan that the water cometh, that we may go,
And breke an hole on high upon the gable
Unto the gardin ward, over the stable,
That we may frely passen forth our way,
Whan that the grete shoure is gon away.
Than shal thou swim as mery, I undertake,
As doth the white doke after hire drake:
Than wol I clepe, 'How Alison, how John,
Be mery: for the flood wol passe anon.'
And thou wolt sain, 'Haile maister Nicholay,
Good morwe, I see thee wel, for it is day.'
And than shall we be lordes all our lif
Of all the world, as Noe and his wif.
But of o thing I warne thee ful right,
Be wel avised on that ilke night,
That we ben entred into shippes bord,
That non of us ne speke not o word,
Ne clepe ne crie, but be in his praiere,
For it is Goddes owen heste dere.
" Thy wif and thou moste hangen fer a-twinne,
For that betwixen you shal be no sinne,
No more in loking than ther shal in dede.
This ordinance is said; go, God thee spede.
To-morwe at night, whan men ben all aslepe,
Into our kneding tubbes wol we crepe,
And sitten ther, abiding Goddes grace,
Go now thy way, I have no lenger space
To make of this no lenger sermoning:
Men sain thus: 'Send the wise, and say nothing:
Thou art so wise, it nedeth thee nought teche.
Go, save our lives, and that I thee beseche."
This sely carpenter goth forth his way,
Ful oft he said " Alas, and wala wa,"
And to his wif he told his privetee,
And she was ware, and knew it bet than he
What all this queinte cast was for to sey.
But natheles she ferde as she wold dey,
And said; " Alas! go forth thy way anon.
Helpe us to scape, or we be ded eche on.
I am thy trewe veray wedded wif;
Go, dere spouse, and helpe to save our lif."
Lo, what a gret thing is affection,
Men may die of imagination,
So depe may impression be take.
This sely carpenter beginneth quake:
Him thinketh verily that he may see
Noes flood comen walwing as the see
To drenchen Alison, his hony dere.
He wepeth, waileth, maketh sory chere;
He siketh, with ful many a sory swough.
He goth and geteth him a kneding trough,
And after a tubbe, and a kemelin,
And prively he sent hem to his in:
And heng hem in the roof in privetee,
His owen hond than made he ladders three,
To climben by the renges and the stalkes
Unto the tubbes honging in the balkes;
And vitialled bothe kemelin, trough and tubbe,
With bred and chese, and good ale in a jubbe,
Sufficing right ynow as for a day.
But er that he had made all this array,
He sent his knave, and eke his wenche also
Upon his nede to London for to go.
And on the Monday, whan it drew to night,
He shette his dore, withouten candel light,
And dressed all thing as it shulde bee.
And shortly up they clomben alle three.
They sitten stille wel a furlong way.
" Now, *Pater noster*, clum," said Nicholay,
And " Clum," quod John, and " Clum," said Alison:
This carpenter said his devotion,
And still he sit, and biddeth his praiere,
Awaiting on the rain, if he it here.
The dede slepe, for wery besinesse,
Fell on this carpenter, right as I gesse,
Abouten curfew-time, or litel more.
For travaille of his gost he groneth sore,
And eft he routeth, for his hed mislay.
Doun of the ladder stalketh Nicholay,
And Alison ful soft adoun hire spedde.
Withouten wordes mo they went to bedde,
Ther as the carpenter was wont to lie;
Ther was the revel, and the melodie.
And thus lith Alison, and Nicholas,
In besinesse of mirthe and in solas,
Til that the bell of *laudes* gan to ring,
And freres in the chancel gon to sing.

This parish clerk, this amorous Absolon,
That is for love alway so wo-begon,
Upon the Monday was at Osenay
With compagnie, him to disport and play;
And asked upon cas a cloisterer
Ful prively after John the carpenter;
And he drew him apart out of the chirche.
He said, "I n'ot; I saw him not here wirche
Sith Saturday; I trow that he be went
For timbre, ther our abbot hath him sent.
For he is wont for timbre for to go,
And dwellen at the Grange a day or two:
Or elles he is at his hous certain,
Wher that he be, I cannot sothly sain."
This Absolon ful joly was and light,
And thoughte, now is time to wake al night,
For sikerly, I saw him nat stiring
About his dore, sin day began to spring.
So mote I thrive, I shal at cockes crow
Ful prively go knocke at his window,
That stant ful low upon his boures wall:
To Alison wol I now tellen all
My love-longing; for yet I shall not misse,
That at the leste way I shal hire kisse.
Some maner comfort shal I have parfay,
My mouth hath itched all this longe day:
That is a signe of kissing at the leste.
All night me mette eke, I was at a feste.
Therfore I wol go slepe an houre or twey,
And all the night than wol I wake and pley."
Whan that the firste cocke hath crowe, anon
Up rist this joly lover Absolon,
And him arayeth gay, at point devise.
But first he cheweth grein and licorise,
To smellen sote, or he had spoke with here.
Under his tonge a trewe love he bere,
For therby wend he to ben gracious.
He cometh to the carpenteres hous,
And still he stant under the shot window;
Unto his brest it raught, it was so low;
And soft he cougheth with a semisoun.
"What do ye honycombe, swete Alisoun?
My faire bird, my swete sinamome.
Awaketh, lemman min, and speketh to me.
Ful litel thinken ye upon my wo,
That for your love I swete ther as I go.
No wonder is though that I swelte and swete,
I mourne as doth a lamb after the tete.
Ywis, lemman, I have swiche love-longing,
That like a turtel trewe is my mourning.
I may not ete no more than a maid."
"Go fro the window, jacke fool," she said:
"As helpe me God, it wol not be, compame.
I love another, or elles I were to blame,
Wel bet than thee by Jesu, Absolon
Go forth thy way, or I wol cast a ston;
And let me slepe; a twenty divel way."
"Alas!" (quod Absolon) "and wala wa!
That trewe love was ever so yvel besette:
Than kisse me, sin that it may be no bette,
For Jesus love, and for the love of me."
"Wilt thou then go thy way therwith?" quod she.
"Ya certes, lemman," quod this Absolon.
"Than make thee redy," (quod she) "I come anon."
This Absolon doun set him on his knees,
And saide; "I am a lord at all degrees:
For after this I hope ther cometh more;
Lemman, thy grace, and, swete bird, thyn ore."
The window she undoth, and that in haste. [faste.
"Have don," (quod she) "come of, and spede thee
Lest that our neigheboures thee espie."
This Absolon gan wipe his mouth ful drie.
Derke was the night, as pitch or as the cole,
And at the window she put out hire hole,
And Absolon him felle ne bet ne wers,
But with his mouth he kist hire naked ers
Ful savorily, er he was ware of this.
Abak he sterte, and thought it was amis,
For wel he wist a woman hath no berd.
He felt a thing all rowe, and long yherd,
And saide; "Fy, alas! what have I do?
"Te he," quod she, and clap' the window to;
And Absolon goth forth a sory pas.
"A berd, a berd," said hendy Nicholas;
"By goddes *corpus*, this goth faire and wel."
This sely Absolon herd every del,
And on his lippe he gan for anger bite;
And to himself he said, "I shal thee quite."
Who rubbeth now, who froteth now his lippes
With dust, with sond, with straw, with cloth, with chippes,
But Absolon? that saith full oft, "Alas! [
My soule betake I unto Sathanas,
But me were lever than all this toun" (quod he)
"Of this despit awroken for to be.
Alas! alas! that I ne had yblent."
His hote love is cold, and all yqueint.
For fro that time that he had kist hire ers,
Of paramours ne raught he not a kers,
For he was heled of his maladie;
Ful often paramours he gan defie,
And wepe as doth a child that is ybete.
A softe pas he went him over the strete
Until a smith, men callen dan Gerveis,
That in his forge smithed plow-harneis;
He sharpeth share and cultre besily.
This Absolon knocketh all esily,
And said; "Undo, Gerveis, and that anon."
"What, who art thou?" "It am I Absolon."
"What? Absolon, what? Cristes swete tre,
Why rise ye so rath? ey *benedicite*,
What eileth you? some gay girle, God it wote,
Hath brought you thus upon the viretote:
By Seint Neote, ye wote wel what I mene."
This Absolon ne raughte not a bene
Of all his play; no word again he yaf.
He hadde more tawe on his distaf
Than Gerveis knew, and saide; "Friend so dere,
That hote culter in the cheminee here
As lene it me, I have therwith to don:
I wol it bring again to thee ful sone."
Gerveis answered; "Certes, were it gold,
Or in a poke nobles all untold,
Thou shuldest it have, as I am a trewe smith.
Ey, Cristes foot, what wol ye don therwith?"
"Therof," quod Absolon, "be as it may;
I shal wel tellen thee another day:"
And caught the culter by the colde stele,
Ful soft out at the dore he gan to stele,
And went unto the carpenteres wall.
He coughed first, and knocked therwithall
Upon the window, right as he did er.
This Alison answered; "Who is ther
That knocketh so? I warrant him a thefe."
"Nay, nay," (quod he) "God wot, my swete lefe,
I am thin Absolon, thy dereling.
Of gold" (quod he) "I have thee brought a ring,
My mother yave it me, so God me save,
Ful fine it is, and therto wel ygrave:
This wol I yeven thee, if thou me kisse."
This Nicholas was risen for to pisse,

And thought he wolde amenden all the jape,
He shulde kisse his ers er that he scape:
And up the window did he hastily,
And out his ers he putteth prively
Over the buttok, to the hanche bon.
And therwith spake this clerk, this Absolon,
"Speke swete bird, I n'ot not wher thou art."
This Nicholas anon let fleen a fart,
As gret as it had ben a thonder dint,
That with the stroke he was wel nie yblint:
And he was redy with his yren hote,
And Nicholas amid the ers he smote.
Off goth the skinne an hondbrede al aboute.
The hote culter brenned so his toute,
That for the smert he wened for to die;
As he were wood, for wo he gan to crie,
"Help, water, water, help for Goddes herte."
The carpenter out of his slomber sterte,
And herd on crie water, as he were wood,
And thought, "Alas, now cometh Noes flood."
He set him up withouten wordes mo,
And with his axe he smote the cord atwo;
And doun goth all; he fond neyther to selle
Ne breed ne ale, til he came to the selle,
Upon the flore, and ther aswoune he lay.
Up sterten Alison and Nicholay,
And crieden, "Out and harow!" in the strete.
The neigheboures bothe smale and grete
In rannen, for to gauren on this man,
That yet aswoune lay, bothe pale and wan:
For with the fall he brosten hath his arm.
But stonden he must unto his owen harm,
For whan he spake, he was anon bore doun
With hendy Nicholas and Alisoun.
They tolden every man that he was wood;
He was agaste so of Noes flood
Thurgh fantasie, that of his vanitee
He had ybought him kneding tubbes three,
And had hem honged in the roof above;
And that he praied hem for Goddes love
To sitten in the roof *par compagnie*.
The folk gan laughen at his fantasie.
Into the roof they kyken, and they gape,
And turned all his harm into a jape.
For what so that this carpenter answerd,
It was for nought, no man his reson herd.
With othes gret he was so sworne adoun,
That he was holden wood in all the toun.
For everich clerk anon right held with other;
They said, the man was wood, my leve brother;
And every wight gan laughen at this strif.
Thus swived was the carpenteres wif,
For all his keping, and his jalousie;
And Absolon hath kist hire nether eye;
And Nicholas is scalded in the toute.
This tale is don, and God save all the route.

THE REVES PROLOGUE.

Whan folk han laughed at this nice cas
Of Absolon and hendy Nicholas,
Diverse folk diversely they saide,
But for the more part they lought and plaide;
Ne at this tale I saw no man him greve,
But it were only Osewold the Reve.
Because he was of carpenteres craft,
A litel ire is in his herte ylaft;
He gan to grutch and blamen it a lite.
"So the ik," quod he, "ful wel conde I him quite
With blering of a proude milleres eye,
If that me list to speke of ribaudrie.
But ik am olde; me list not play for age;
Gras time is don, my foddre is now forage.
This white top writeth min olde yeres;
Min herte is also mouled as min heres;
But if I fare as doth an open-ers;
That ilke fruit is ever lenger the wers,
Til it be roten in mullok, or in stre.
"We olde men, I drede, so faren we,
Til we be roten, can we not be ripe;
We hoppe alway, while that the world wol pipe;
For in our wil ther stiketh ever a nayl,
To have a hore hed and a grene tayl,
As hath a leke; for though our might be gon,
Our will desireth folly ever in on:
For whan we may not don, than wol we speken,
Yet in our ashen cold is fire yreken.
"Foure gledes han we, which I shal devise,
Avaunting, lying, anger, and covetise.
These foure sparkes longen unto elde.
Our olde limes mow wel ben unwelde.
But will ne shal not faillen, that is sothe.
And yet have I alway a coltes tothe,
As many a yere as it is passed henne,
Sin that my tappe of lif began to renne.
For sikerly, whan I was borne, anon
Deth drow the tappe of lif, and let it gon:
And ever sith hath so the tappe yronne,
Til that almost all empty is the tonne.
The streme of lif now droppeth on the chimbe
The scly tonge may wel ringe and chimbe
Of wretchednesse, that passed is ful yore:
With olde folk, save dotage, is no more."
Whan that our hoste had herd this sermoning,
He gan to speke as lordly as a king,
And sayde; "What amounteth all this wit?
What? shall we speke all day of holy writ?
The divel made a Reve for to preche,
Or of a souter a shipman, or a leche.
"Say forth thy tale, and tary not the time:
Lo Depeford, and it is half way prime:
Lo Grenewich, ther many a shrew is inne.
It were al time thy tale to beginne."
"Now, sires," quod this Osewold the Reve,
"I pray you alle, that ye not you greve,
Though I answere, and somdel set his howve.
For lefful is with force force off to showve.
This dronken Miller hath ytold us here,
How that begiled was a carpentere,
Paraventure in scorne, for I am on:
And by your leve, I shal him quite anon.
Right in his cherles termes wol I speke.
I pray to God his necke mote to-breke.
He can wel in min eye seen a stalk,
But in his owen he cannot seen a balk."

THE REVES TALE.

At Trompington, not fer fro Cantebrigge,
Ther goth a brook, and over that a brigge,
Upon the whiche brook ther stont a melle:
And this is veray sothe, that I you telle.
A miller was ther dwelling many a day,
As any peacok he was proude and gay:
Pipen he coude, and fishe, and nettes bete,
And turnen cuppes, and wrastlen wel, and shete.
Ay by his belt he bare a long pavade,
And of a swerd ful trenchant was the blade.

A joly popper bare he in his pouche;
Ther n'as no man for peril dorst him touche.
A Shefeld thwitel bare he in his hose.
Round was his face, and camuse was his nose.
As pilled as an ape was his skull.
He was a market-beter at the full.
Ther dorste no wight hond upon him legge,
That he ne swore he shuld anon abegge.
A thefe he was forsoth, of corn and mele,
And that a slie, and usant for to stele.
His name was hoten deinous Simekin.
A wif he hadde, comen of noble kin:
The person of the toun hire father was.
With hire he yaf ful many a panne of bras,
For that Simkin shuld in his blood allie.
She was yfostered in a nonnerie:
For Simkin wolde no wif, as he sayde,
But she were wel ynourished, and a mayde,
To saven his estat of yemanrie:
And she was proud, and pert as is a pie.
A ful faire sight was it upon hem two.
On holy dayes beforne hire wold he go
With his tipet ybounde about his hed;
And she came after in a gite of red,
And Simkin hadde hosen of the same.
Ther dorste no wight clepen hire but dame:
Was non so hardy, that went by the way,
That with hire dorste rage or ones play,
But if he wold be slain of Simekin
With pavade, or with knif, or bodekin.
(For jalous folk ben perilous evermo:
Algate they wold hir wives wenden so.)
And eke for she was smodel smoterlich,
She was as digne as water in a dich,
And al so ful of hoker, and of bismare.
Hire thoughte that a ladie shuld hire spare,
What for hire kinrede, and hire nortelrie,
That she had lerned in the nonnerie.
A doughter hadden they betwixt hem two
Of twenty yere, withouten any mo,
Saving a child that was of half yere age,
In cradle it lay, and was a propre page.
This wenche thicke and wel ygrowen was,
With camuse nose, and eyen grey as glas;
With buttokes brode, and brestes round and hie;
But right faire was hire here, I wol nat lie.
The person of the toun, for she was faire,
In purpos was to maken hire his haire
Both of his catel, and of his mesuage,
And strange he made it of hire mariage.
His purpos was for to bestowe hire hie
Into som worthy blood of ancestrie.
For holy chirches good mote ben despended
On holy chirches blood that is descended.
Therfore he wolde his holy-blood honoure,
Though that he holy chirche shuld devoure.
Gret soken hath this miller out of doute
With whete and malt, of all the land aboute;
And namely ther was a gret college
Men clepe the Soler hall at Cantebrege,
Ther was hir whete and eke hir malt yground.
And on a day it happed in a stound,
Sike lay the manciple on a maladie,
Men wenden wisly that he shulde die.
For which this miller stale both mele and corn
An hundred times more than beforn.
For therbeforn he stale but curteisly,
But now he was a thefe outrageously.
For which the wardein chidde and made fare,
But therof set the miller not a tare;
He craked bost, and swore it n'as not so.
Than were ther yonge poure scoleres two,
That dwelten in the halle of which I say;
Testif they were, and lusty for to play;
And only for hir mirth and revelrie
Upon the wardein besily they crie,
To yeve hem leve but a litel stound,
To gon to mille, and seen hir corn yground:
And hardily they dorsten lay hir necke,
The miller shuld not stele hem half a pecke
Of corn by sleighte, ne by force hem reve.
And at the last the wardein yave hem leve:
John highte that on, and Alein highte that other,
Of o toun were they born that highte Strother,
Fer in the north, I can not tellen where.
This Alein maketh redy all his gere,
And on a hors the sak he cast anon:
Forth goth Alein the clerk, and also John,
With good swerd and with bokeler by hir side.
John knew the way, him neded not no guide,
And at the mille the sak adoun he laith.
Alein spake first; "All haile, Simond, in faith,
How fares thy faire daughter, and thy wif?"
"Alein, welcome" (quod Simkin) "by my lif,
And John also: how now, what do ye here?"
"By God, Simond," (quod John) "nede has no pere.
Him behoves serve himself that has na swain,
Or elles he is a fool, as clerkes sain.
Our manciple I hope he wol be ded,
Swa werkes ay the wanges in his hed:
And therfore is I come, and eke Alein,
To grind our corn and cary it hame agein:
I pray you spede us henen that we may."
"It shal be don" (quod Simkin) "by may fay.
What wol ye don while that it is in hand?"
"By God, right by the hopper wol I stand,"
(Quod John) "and seen how that the corn gas in.
Yet saw I never by my fader kin,
How that the hopper wagges til and fra."
Alein answered; "John, and wolt thou swa?
Than wol I be benethe by my croun,
And see how that the mele falles adoun
In til the trogh, that shal be my disport:
For, John, in faith I may ben of your sort;
I is as ill a miller as is ye."
This miller smiled at hir nicetee,
And thought, "All this n'is don but for a wile.
They wenen that no man may hem begile,
But by my thrift yet shal I blere hir eie,
For all the sleighte in hir philosophie.
The more queinte knakkes that they make,
The more wol I stele whan that I take.
In stede of flour yet wol I yeve hem bren.
The gretest clerkes ben not the wisest men,
As whilom to the wolf thus spake the mare:
Of all hir art ne count I not a tare."
Out at the dore he goth ful prively,
Whan that he saw his time, softely.
He loketh up and doun, til he hath found
The clerkes hors, ther as he stood ybound
Behind the mille, under a levesell:
And to the hors he goth him faire and well,
And stripeth of the bridel right anon.
And whan the hors was laus, he gan to gon
Toward the fen, ther wilde mares renne,
And forth, with wehee, thurgh thick and thinne.
This miller goth again, no word he said,
But doth his note, and with these clerkes plaid,
Til that hir corn was faire and wel yground.
And whan the mele is sacked and ybound,

This John goth out, and fint his hors away,
And gan to crie, "Harow and wala wa!
Our hors is lost: Alein, for Godde's banes,
Step on thy feet; come of, man, al at anes:
Alas! our wardein has his palfrey lorn."
This Alein al forgat both mele and corn;
Al was out of his mind his husbandrie:
"What, whilke way is he gon?" he gan to crie.
The wif came leping inward at a renne,
She sayd; "Alas! youre hors goth to the fenne
With wilde mares, as fast as he may go.
Unthank come on his hond that bond him so,
And he that better shuld have knit the rein."
"Alas!" quod John, "Alein, for Christes pein
Lay doun thy sword, and I shal min alswa.
I is ful wight, God wate, as is a ra.
By Goddes saule he shal not scape us bathe.
Why ne had thou put the capel in the lathe?
Ill haile, Alein, by God thou is a fonne."
These sely clerkes han ful fast yronne
Toward the fen, bothe Alein and eke John:
And whan the miller saw that they were gon,
He half a bushel of hir flour hath take,
And bad his wif go knede it in a cake.
He sayd; "I trow, the clerkes were aferde.
Yet can a miller make a clerkes berde,
For all his art. Ye, let hem gon hir way.
Lo wher they gon. Ye, let the children play:
They get him not so lightly by my croun."
These sely clerkes rennen up and doun
With "Kepe, kepe; stand, stand; jossa, warderere.
Ga whistle thou, and I shal kepe him here."
But shortly, til that it was veray night
They coude not, though they did all hir might,
Hir capel catch, he ran alway so fast:
Til in a diche they caught him at the last.
Wery and wet, as bestes in the rain,
Cometh sely John, and with him cometh Alein.
"Alas," quod John, "the day that I was borne!
Now are we driven til hething and til scorne.
Our corn is stolne, men wol us fonnes calle,
Both the wardein, and eke our felawes alle,
And namely the miller, wala wa!"
Thus plaineth John, as he goth by the way
Toward the mille, and bayard in his hond.
The miller sitting by the fire he fond,
For it was night, and forther might they nought,
But for the love of God they him besought
Of herberwe and of ese, as for hir peny.
The miller saide agen, "If ther be any,
Swiche as it is, yet shull ye have your part.
Myn hous is streit, but ye have lerned art;
Ye can by arguments maken a place
A mile brode, of twenty foot of space.
Let see now if this place may suffice,
Or make it roume with speche, as is your gise."
"Now, Simond," said this John, "by Seint Cuthberd
Ay is thou mery, and that is faire answerd.
I have herd say, man sal take of twa thinges,
Sike as he findes, or slike as he bringes.
But specially I pray thee, hoste dere,
Gar us have mete and drinke, and make us chere,
And we sal paien trewely at the full:
With empty hand, men may na haukes tull.
Lo here our silver redy for to spend."
This miller to the toun his doughter send
For ale and bred, and rosted hem a goos,
And bond hir hors, he shuld no more go loos:
And in his owen chambre hem mad a bedde,
With shetes and with chalons faire yspredde,

Nat from his owen bed ten foot or twelve:
His doughter had a bed all by hireselve,
Right in the same chambre by and by:
It mighte be no bet, and cause why,
Ther was no roumer herberwe in the place.
They soupen, and they speken of solace,
And drinken ever strong ale at the best.
Abouten midnight wente they to rest.
Wel hath this miller vernished his hed.
Ful pale he was, for-dronken, and nought red.
He yoxeth, and he speketh thurgh the nose,
As he were on the quakke, or on the pose.
To bed he goth, and with him goth his wif:
As any jay she light was and jolif,
So was hire joly whistle wel ywette.
The cradel at hire beddes feet was sette,
To rocken, and to yeve the child to souke.
And whan that dronken was all in the crouke
To bedde went the doughter right anon,
To bedde goth Alein, and also John.
Ther n'as no more; nedeth hem no dwale.
This miller hath so wisly bibbed ale,
That as an hors he snorteth in his slepe,
Ne of his tail behind he toke no kepe.
His wif bare him a burdon a ful strong;
Men might hir routing heren a furlong.
The wenche routeth eke *par compagnie*.
Alein the clerk that herd this melodie,
He poketh John, and sayde: "Slepest thou?
Herdest thou ever slike a song er now?
Lo whilke a complin is ymell hem alle.
A wilde fire upon hir bodies falle,
Wha herkned ever slike a ferly thing?
Ye, they shall have the flour of yvel ending.
This lange night ther tides me no reste.
But yet na force, all shal be for the beste.
For, John," sayd he, "as ever mote I thrive,
If that I may, yon wenche wol I swive.
Some esement has lawe yshapen us.
For, John, ther is a lawe that saieth thus,
That if a man in o point be agreved,
That in another he shal be releved.
Our corn is stolne, sothly it is na nay,
And we han had an yvel fit to-day.
And sin I shal have nan amendement
Again my losse. I wol have an esement:
By Godde's saule, it shal nan other be."
This John answered; "Alein, avise thee:
The miller is a perilous man," he sayde.
"And if that he out of his slepe abraide,
He mighte don us bathe a vilanie."
Alein answered; "I count him nat a flie."
And up he rist, and by the wenche he crept.
This wenche lay upright, and faste slept,
Til he so nigh was, er she might espie,
That it had ben to late for to crie:
And shortly for to say, they were at on.
Now play, Alein, for I wol speke of John.
This John lith still a furlong way or two,
And to himself he maketh routh and wo.
"Alas!" quod he, "this is a wicked jape;
Now may I say, that I is but an ape.
Yet has my felaw somwhat for his harme;
He has the miller's doughter in his arme:
He auntred him, and hath his nedes spedde,
And I lie as a draf-sak in my bedde;
And whan this jape is tald another day,
I shal be halden a daffe or a cokenay:
I wol arise, and auntre it by my fay:
Unhardy is unsely, thus men say."

And up he rose, and softely he went
Unto the cradel, and in his hand it hent,
And bare it soft unto his beddes fete.
Sone after this the wif hire routing lete,
And gan awake, and went hire out to pisse,
And came again, and gan the cradel misse,
And groped here and ther, but she fond non.
"Alas!" quod she, "I had almost misgon.
I had almost gon to the clerkes bedde.
Ey *benedicite*, than had I foule yspedde."
And forth she goth, til she the cradel fond.
She gropeth alway forther with hire hond,
And fond the bed, and thoughte nat but good,
Because that the cradel by it stood,
And n'iste wher she was, for it was derk,
But faire and wel she crept in by the clerk,
And lith ful still, and wold han caught a slepe.
Within a while this John the clerk up lepe,
And on this goode wif he laieth on sore;
So mery a fit ne had she nat ful yore.
He priketh hard and depe, as he were mad.
This joly lif han these two clerkes lad,
Til that the thridde cok began to sing.
Alein wex werie in the morwening,
For he had swonken all the longe night,
And sayd; "Farewel, Malkin, my swete wight.
The day is come, I may no longer bide,
But evermo, wher so I go or ride,
I is thin awen clerk, so have I hele."
"Now, dere lemman," quoth she, "go farewele:
But or thou go, o thing I wol thee tell.
Whan that thou wendest homeward by the mell,
Right at the entree of the dore behind
Thou shalt a cake of half a bushel find,
That was ymaked of thin owen mele,
Which that I halpe my fader for to stele.
And goode lemman, God thee save and kepe."
And with that word she gan almost to wepe.
Alein uprist and thought, er that it daw
I wol go crepen in by my felaw:
And fond the cradel at his hand anon.
By God," thought he, "all wrang I have misgon;
My hed is tottie of my swink to night,
That maketh me that I go nat aright.
I wot wel by the cradel I have misgo;
Here lith the miller and his wif also.
And forth he goth a twenty divel way
Unto the bed, ther as the miller lay.
He wend have cropen by his felaw John,
And by the miller in he crept anon,
And caught him by the nekke, and gan him shake,
And sayd; "Thou John, thou swineshed, awake
For Cristes saule, and here a noble game:
For by that lord that called is Seint Jame,
As I have thries as in this short night
Swived the millers dougnter bolt-upright,
While thou hast as a coward ben agast."
"Ye, false harlot," quod the miller, "hast?
A false traitour, false clerk," quod he,
"Thou shalt be ded by Godde's dignitee,
Who dorste be so bold to disparage
My doughter, that is come of swiche linage.
And by the throte-bolle he caught Alein,
And he him hent despitously again,
And on the nose he smote him with his fist;
Doun ran the blody streme upon his brest:
And in the flore with nose and mouth to-brok
They walwe, as don two pigges in a poke.
And up they gon, and doun again anon,
Til that the miller spornèd at a ston,
And doun he fell backward upon his wif,
That wiste nothing of this nice strif:
For she was fall aslepe a litel wight
With John the clerk, that waked had all night:
And with the fall out of hire slepe she braide.
"Helpe, holy crois of Broneholme," she sayde,
"*In manus tuas*, Lord, to thee I call.
Awake, Simond, the fend is on me fall;
Myn herte is broken; helpe; I n'am but ded;
Ther lith on up my wombe, and up myn hed.
Helpe, Simkin, for the false clerkes fight."
This John stert up as fast as ever he might,
And graspeth by the walles to and fro
To find a staf, and she stert up also,
And knew the estres bet than did this John,
And by the wall she toke a staf anon:
And saw a litel shemering of a light,
For at an hole in shone the Mone bright,
And by that light she saw hem bothe two,
But sikerly she n'iste who was who,
But as she saw a white thing in hire eye.
And whan she gan this white thing espie,
She wend the clerk had wered a volupere;
And with the staf she drow ay nere and nere,
And wend han hit this Alein atte full,
And smote the miller on the pilled skull,
That doun he goth, and cried, "Harrow! I die."
Thise clerkes bete him wel, and let him lie,
And greithen hem, and take hir hors anon,
And eke hir mele, and on hir way they gon:
And at the mille dore eke they toke hir cake
Of half a bushel flour, ful wel ybake.
Thus is the proude miller wel ybete,
And hath ylost the grinding of the whete,
And paied for the souper every del
Of Alein and of John, that bete him wel;
His wif is swived, and his doughter als;
Lo, swiche it is a miller to be fals.
And therfore this proverbe is sayd ful soth,
Him thar not winnen wel that evil doth;
A gilour shal himself begiled be:
And God that siteth hie in magestee
Save all this compagnie, gret and smale.
Thus have I quit the miller in my tale.

THE COKE'S PROLOGUE.

The Coke of London, while the Reve spake,
For joye (him thought) he clawed him on the bak:
"A ha," quod he, "for Cristes passion,
This miller had a sharpe conclusion,
Upon this argument of herbergage.
Wel sayde Salomon in his langage,
Ne bring not every man into thin hous,
For herberwing by night is perilous.
Wel ought a man avised for to be
Whom that he brought into his privetee.
I prayto God so yeve me sorwe and care,
If ever, sithen I highte Hodge of Ware,
Herd I a miller bet ysette a-werk;
He had a jape of malice in the derk.
"But God forbede that we stinten here,
And therfore if ye vouchen sauf to here
A tale of me that am a poure man,
I wol you tell as wel as ever I can
A litel jape that fell in our citee."
Our Hoste answerd and sayde; "I grant it thee:

Now tell on, Roger, and loke that it be good,
For many a pastee hast thou letten blood,
And many a Jacke of Dover hast thou sold,
That hath been twies hot and twies cold.
Of many a pilgrim hast thou Cristes curse,
For of thy perselee yet fare they the werse,
That they han eten in thy stoble goos:
For in thy shop goth many a flie loos.
Now tell on, gentil Roger by thy name,
But yet I pray thee be not wroth for game;
A man may say ful soth in game and play."
"Thou sayst ful soth," quod Roger, "by my fay;
But soth play *quade spel*, as the Fleming saith;
And therfore, Herry Bailly, by thy faith,
Be thou not wroth, or we departen here,
Though that my tale be of an hostelere.
But natheles, I wol not telle it yet,
But er we part, ywis thou shalt be quit."
And therwithal he lough and made chere,
And sayd his tale, as ye shul after here.

THE COKE'S TALE.

A PRENTIS whilom dwelt in our citee,
And of a craft of vitaillers was he:
Gaillard he was, as goldfinch in the shawe,
Broune as a bery, a propre short felawe:
With lokkes blake, kembed ful fetisly.
Dancen he coude so wel and jolily,
That he was cleped Perkin Revelour.
He was as ful of love and paramour,
As is the hive ful of hony swete;
Wel was the wenche with him mighte mete.
At every bridale would he sing and hoppe;
He loved bet the taverne than the shoppe.
For whan ther any riding was in Chepe,
Out of the shoppe thider wold he lepe,
And til that he had all the sight ysein,
And danced wel, he wold not come agein;
And gadred him a meinie of his sort,
To hoppe and sing, and maken swiche disport:
And ther they setten steven for to mete
To plaien at the dis in swiche a strete.
For in the toun ne was ther no prentis,
Than fairer coude caste a pair of dis
Than Perkin coude, and therto he was fre
Of his dispence, in place of privetee.
That fond his maister wel in his chaffare,
For often time he fond his box ful bare.
For sothly, a *prentis*, a revelour,
That hanteth dis, riot and paramour,
His maister shal it in his shoppe abie,
Al have he no part of the minstralcie.
For theft and riot they ben convertible,
Al can they play on giterne or ribible.
Revel and trouth, as in a low degree,
They ben ful wroth all day, as men may see.
This joly prentis with his maister abode,
Til he was neigh out of his prentishode,
Al were he snibbed bothe erly and late,
And somtime lad with revel to Newgate.
But at the last his maister him bethought
Upon a day, whan he his paper sought,
Of a proverbe, that saith this same word;
Wel bet is roten appel out of hord,
Than that it rote alle the remenant:
So fareth it by a riotous servant;
It is wel lasse harm to let him pace,
Than he shende all the servants in the place.
Therfore his maister yaf him a quitance,
And bad him go, with sorwe and with meschance,
And thus this joly prentis had his leve:
Now let him riot all the night or leve.
And for ther n'is no thefe without a louke,
That helpeth him to wasten and to souke
Of that he briben can, or borwe may,
Anon he sent his bed and his array
Unto a compere of his owen sort,
That loved dis, and riot, and disport;
And had a wif, that held for contenance
A shoppe, and swived for hire sustenance.

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THE
MAN OF LAWES PROLOGUE.

OUR Hoste saw wel, that the brighte Sonne
The ark of his artificial day had ronne
The fourthe part, and half an houre and more;
And though he were not depe expert in lore,
He wiste it was the eighte and twenty day
Of April, that is messager to May;
And saw wel that the shadow of every tree
Was as in lengthe of the same quantitee
That was the body erect, that caused it;
And therfore by the shadow he toke his wit,
That Phebus, which that shone so clere and bright,
Degrees was five and fourty clombe on hight;
And for that day, as in that latitude,
It was ten of the clok, he gan conclude;
And sodenly he plight his hors aboute.
"Lordings," quod he, "I warne you all this route,
The fourthe partie of this day is gon.
Now for the love of God and of Seint John
Leseth no time, as ferforth as ye may.
Lordings, the time it wasteth night and day,
And steleth from us, what prively sleping,
And what thurgh negligence in our waking,
As doth the streme, that turneth never again,
Descending fro the montagne into a plain.
Wel can Senek and many a philosophre
Bewailen time, more than gold in coffre.
'For losse of catel may recovered be,
But losse of time shendeth us,' quod he.
It wol not come again withouten drede,
No more than wol Malkins maidenhede,
Whan she hath lost it in hire wantonnesse.
Let us not moulen thus in idlenesse.
"Sire man of Lawe," quod he, "so have ye blis,
Tell us a tale anon, as forword is.
Ye ben submitted thurgh your free assent
To stonde in this cas at my jugement.
Acquiteth you now, and holdeth your behest;
Than have ye don your devoir at the lest."
"Hoste," quod he, "*de par dieux jeo assente*,
To breken forword is not min entente.
Behest is dette, and I wold hold it fayn
All my behest, I can no better sayn.
For swiche lawe as man yeveth another wight,
He shuld himselven usen it by right.
Thus wol our text: but natheles certain
I can right now no thrifty tale sain,
But Chaucer (though he can but lewedly
On metres and on riming craftily)

Hath sayd hem, in swiche English as he can,
Of olde time, as knoweth many a man.
And if he have not sayd hem, leve brother,
In o book, he hath sayd hem in another.
For he hath told of lovers up and doun,
Mo than Ovide made of mentioun
In his *Epistolis*, that ben ful olde.
What shuld I tellen hem, sin they ben tolde?
In youthe he made of Ceys and Alcyon,
And sithen hath he spoke of everich on
Thise noble wives, and thise lovers eke.
Who so that wol his large volume seke
Cleped the Seintes Legende of Cupide:
Ther may he se the large woundes wide
Of Lucrece, and of Babylon Thisbe;
The swerd of Dido for the false Enee;
The tree of Phillis for hire Demophon;
The plaint of Deianire, and Hermion,
Of Adriane, and Ysiphilee;
The barreine ile stonding in the see;
The dreint Leandre for his fayre Hero;
The teres of Heleine, and eke the wo
Of Briseide, and of Ladomia;
The crueltee of thee, quene Medea,
Thy litel children hanging by the hals,
For thy Jason, that was of love so fals.
O Hipermestra, Penelope, Alceste,
Your wifhood he commendeth with the beste.
" But certainly no word ne writeth he
Of thilke wicke ensample of Canace,
That loved hire owen brother sinfully;
(Of all swiche cursed stories I say fy)
Or elles of Tyrius Appolonius,
How that the cursed king Antiochus
Beraft his doughter of hire maidenhede,
That is so horrible a tale for to rede,
Whan he hire threw upon the pavement.
And therfore he of ful avisement
N'old never write in non of his sermons
Of swiche unkinde abhominations;
Ne I wol non reherse, if that I may.
But of my tale how shal I don this day?
Me were loth to be likened douteles
To Muses, that men clepe Pierides,
(*Metamorphoseos* wote what I mene)
But natheles I recche not a bene,
Though I come after him with hawebake,
I speke in prose, and let him rimes make."
And with that word, he with a sobre chere
Began his tale, and sayde, as ye shull here.

THE

MAN OF LAWES TALE.

O SCATHFUL harm, condition of poverte,
With thirst, with cold, with hunger so confounded,
To asken helpe thee shameth in thin herte,
If thou non ask, so sore art thou ywounded,
That veray nede unwrappeth al thy wound hid.
Maugre thin hed thou must for indigence
Or stele, or begge, or borwe thy dispence.

Thou blamest Crist, and sayst ful bitterly,
He misdeparteth richesse temporal;
Thy neighebour thou witest sinfully,
And sayst, thou hast a litel, and he hath all:
Parfay (sayst thou) somtime he reken shalt,
Whan that his tayl shal brennen in the glede,
For he nought helpeth needful in hir nede.

Herken what is the sentence of the wise,
Bet is to dien than have indigence.
Thy selve neighebour wol thee despise,
If thou be poure, farewel thy reverence.
Yet of the wise man take this sentence,
Alle the dayes of poure men ben wicke,
Beware therfore or thou come to that pricke.

If thou be poure, thy brother hateth thee,
And all thy frendes fleen fro thee, alas!
O riche marchants, ful of wele ben ye,
O noble, o prudent folk, as in this cas,
Your bagges ben not filled with ambes as,
But with sis cink, that renneth for your chance;
At Cristenmasse mery may ye dance.

Ye seken lond and see for your winninges,
As wise folk ye knowen all th' estat
Of regnes, ye ben fathers of tidinges,
And tales, both of pees and of debat:
I were right now of tales desolat,
N'ere that a marchant, gon in many a yere,
Me taught a tale, which that ye shull here.

In Surrie whilom dwelt a compagnie
Of chapmen rich, and therto sad and trewe,
That wide where senten hir spicerie,
Clothes of gold, and satins riche of hewe.
Hir chaffare was so thriftly and so newe,
That every wight hath deintee to chaffare
With hem, and eke to sellen hem hir ware.

Now fell it, that the maisters of that sort
Han shapen hem to Rome for to wende,
Were it for chapmanhood or for disport,
Non other message wold they thider sende,
But comen hemself to Rome, this is the ende:
And in swiche place as thought hem avantage
For hir entente, they taken hir herbergage.

Sojourned han these marchants in that toun
A certain time, as fell to hir plesance:
And so befell, that the excellent renoun
Of the emperoures doughter dame Custance
Reported was, with every circumstance,
Unto these Surrien marchants, in swiche wise
Fro day to day, as I shal you devise.

This was the commun vois of every man:
" Our emperour of Rome, God him se,
A doughter hath, that sin the world began,
To reken as wel hire goodnesse as beaute,
N'as never swiche another as is she:
I pray to God in honour hire sustene,
And wold she were of all Europe the quene.

" In hire is high beaute withouten pride,
Youthe, withouten grenehed or folie:
To all hire werkes vertue is hire guide;
Humblesse hath slaien in hire tyrannie:
She is mirrour of alle curtesie,
Hire herte is veray chambre of holinesse,
Hire hond ministre of fredom for almesse."

And al this vois was soth, as God is trewe,
But now to purpos let us turne agein.
These marchants han don fraught hir shippes newe,
And whan they han this blisful maiden sein,
Home to Surrie ben they went ful fayn,
And don hir nedes, as they han don yore,
And liven in wele, I can say you no more.

Now fell it, that these marchants stood in grace
Of him that was the soudan of Surrie:
For whan they came from any strange place
He wold of his benigne curtesie
Make hem good chere, and besily espie
Tidings of sundry regnes, for to lere
The wonders that they mighte seen or here.

Amonges other thinges specially
These marchants han him told of dame Custance
So gret noblesse, in ernest seriously,
That this soudan hath caught so gret plesance
To han hire figure in his remembrance,
That all his lust, and all his besy cure
Was for to love hire, while his lif may dure.

Paraventure in thilke large book,
Which that men clepe the Heven, ywriten was
With sterres, whan that he his birthe took,
That he for love shuld han his deth, alas!
For in the sterres, clerer than is glas,
Is writen, God wot, who so coud it rede,
The deth of every man withouten drede.

In sterres many a winter therbeforn
Was writ the deth of Hector, Achilles,
Of Pompey, Julius, or they were born;
The strif of Thebes; and of Hercules,
Of Sampson, Turnus, and of Socrates
The deth; but mennes wittes ben so dull,
That no wight can wel rede it at the full.

This soudan for his prive councel sent,
And shortly of this matere for to pace,
He hath to hem declared his entent,
And sayd hem certain, but he might have grace
To han Custance, within a litel space,
He n'as but ded, and charged hem in hie
To shapen for his lif som remedie.

Diverse men, diverse thinges saiden;
They argumentes casten up and doun;
Many a subtil reson forth they laiden;
They speken of magike, and abusion;
But finally, as in conclusion,
They cannot seen in that non avantage,
Ne in non other way, save mariage.

Than saw they therin swiche difficultee
By way of reson, for to speke all plain,
Because ther was swiche diversitee
Betwene hir bothe lawes, that they sayn,
They trowen that no Cristen prince wold fayn
Wedden his child under our lawe swete,
That us was yeven by Mahound our prophete.

And he answered: "Rather than I lese
Custance, I wol be cristened douteles:
I mote ben hires, I may non other chese,
I pray you hold your arguments in pees,
Saveth my lif, and beth not recchceles
To geten hire that hath my lif in cure,
For in this wo I may not long endure."

What nedeth greter dilatation?
I say, by tretise and ambassatrie,
And by the popes mediation,
And all the chirche, and all the chevalrie,
That in destruction of Maumetrie,
And in encrese of Cristes lawe dere,
They ben accorded so as ye may here;

How that the soudan and his baronage,
And all his lieges shuld yeristened be,
And he shal han Custance in mariage,
And certain gold, I n'ot what quantitee,
And hereto findlen suffisant suretee.
The same accord is sworne on eyther side;
Now, fair Custance, almighty God thee gide.

Now wolden som men waiten, as I gesse,
That I shuld tellen all the purveiance,
The which that the emperour of his noblesse
Hath shapen for his doughter dame Custance.
Wel may men know that so gret ordinance
May no man tellen in a litel clause,
As was arraied for so high a cause.

Bishopes ben shapen with hire for to wende,
Lordes, ladies, and knightes of renoun,
And other folk ynow, this is the end.
And notified is thurghout al the toun,
That every wight with gret devotioun
Shuld prayen Crist, that he this mariage,
Receive in gree, and spede this viage.

The day is comen of hire departing,
I say the woful day fatal is come,
That ther may be no longor tarying,
But forward they hem dressen all and some.
Custance, that was with sorwe all overcome,
Ful pale arist, and dresseth hire to wende,
For wel she seth ther n'is non other ende.

Alas! what wonder is it though she wept?
That shal be sent to straunge nation
Fro frendes, that so tendrely hire kept,
And to be bounde under subjection
Of on, she knoweth not his condition.
Housbondes ben all good, and han ben yore,
That knowen wives, I dare say no more.

"Fader," she said, "thy wretched child Custance,
Thy yonge doughter, fostered up so soft,
And ye, my moder, my soveraine plesance
Over all thing, (out taken Crist on loft)
Custance your child hire recommendeth oft
Unto your grace; for I shal to Surrie,
Ne shal I never seen you more with eye.

"Alas! unto the Barbare nation
I muste gon, sin that it is your will:
But Crist, that starfe for our redemption,
So yeve me grace his hestes to fulfill,
I wretched woman no force though I spill;
Women arn borne to thraldom and penance,
And to ben under mannes governance."

I trow at Troye whan Pirrus brake the wall,
Or Ilion brent, or Thebes the citee,
Ne at Rome for the harm thurgh Hanniball,
That Romans hath venqueshed times three,
N'as herd swiche tendre weping for pitee,
As in the chambre was for hire parting,
But forth she mote, wheder she wepe or sing.

O firste moving cruel firmament,
With thy diurnal swegh that croudest ay,
And hurtlest all from est til occident,
That naturally wold hold another way;
Thy crouding set the Heven in swiche array
At the beginning of this fierce viage,
That cruel Mars hath slain this marriage.

Infortunat ascendent tortuous,
Of which the lord is helpeles fall, alas!
Out of his angle into the derkest hous.
O Mars, o Atyzar, as in this cas;
O feble Mone, unhappy ben thy pas,
Thou knittest thee ther thou art not received,
Ther thou were wel fro thennes art thou weived.

Imprudent emperour of Rome, alas!
Was ther no philosophre in al thy toun?
Is no time bet than other in swiche cas?
Of viage is ther non electioun,
Namely to folk of high conditioun,
Nat whan a rote is of a birth yknowe?
Alas! we ben to lewed, or to slow.

To ship is brought this woful faire maid
Solempnely, with every circumstance:
"Now Jesu Crist be with you all," she said.
Ther n'is no more, but "Farewel, fair Custance."
She peineth hire to make good countenance,
And forth I let hire sayle in this manere,
And turne I wol againe to my matere.

The mother of the soudan, well of vices,
Espied hath hire sones pleine entente,
How he wol lete his olde sacrifices:
And right anon she for her conseil sente,
And they ben comen, to know what she mente,
And when assembled was this folk in fere,
She set hire doun, and sayd as ye shul here.

"Lordes," she sayd, "ye knowen everich on,
How that my sone in point is for to lete
The holy lawes of our Alkaron,
Yeven by Goddes messager Mahomete:
But on avow to grete God I hete,
The lif shal rather out of my body sterte,
Than Mahometes lawe out of myn herte.

"What shuld us tiden of this newe lawe
But thraldom to our bodies and penance,
And afterward in Helle to ben drawe,
For we reneied Mahound our creance?
But, lordes, wol ye maken assurance,
As I shal say, assenting to my lore?
And I shal make us sauf for evermore."

They sworen, and assented every man
To live with hire and die, and by hire stond:
And everich on, in the best wise he can,
To strengthen hire shal all his frendes fond.
And she hath this emprise ytaken in hond,
Which ye shull heren that I shal devise,
And to hem all she spake right in this wise.

"We shul first feine us Cristendom to take;
Cold water shal not greve us but a lite:
And I shal swiche a feste and revel make,
That, as I trow, I shal the soudan quite.
For tho his wif be cristened never so white,
She shal have nede to wash away the rede,
Though she a font of water with hire lede."

O soudannesse, rote of iniquitee,
Virago thou Semyramee the second,
O serpent under femininitee,
Like to the serpent depe in Helle ybound:
O feined woman, all that may confound
Vertue and innocence, thurgh thy malice,
Is bred in thee, as nest of every vice.

O Sathan envious, sin thilke day
That thou were chased from our heritage,
Wel knowest thou to woman the olde way.
Thou madest Eva bring us in servage,
Thou wolt fordon this cristen mariage:
Thin instrument so (wala wa the while!)
Makest thou of women whan thou wolt begile.

This soudannesse, whom I thus blame and warrie,
Let prively hire conseil gon hir way:
What shuld I in this tale longer tarie?
She rideth to the soudan on a day,
And sayd him, that she wold reneie hire lay,
And Cristendom of prestes hondes fong,
Repenting hire she hethen was so long;

Beseching him to don hire that honour,
That she might han the Cristen folk to fest:
"To plesen hem I wol do my labour."
The soudan saith, "I wol don at your hest,"
And kneling, thanked hire of that request;
So glad he was, he n'iste not what to say,
She kist hire sone, and home she goth hire way.

Arrived ben these Cristen folk to londe
In Surrie, with a gret solempne route,
And hastily this soudan sent his sonde,
First to his mother, and all the regne aboute,
And sayd, his wif was comen out of doute,
And praide hem for te riden again the quene,
The honour of his regne to sustene.

Gret was the presse, and riche was th' array
Of Surriens and Romanes met in fere.
The mother of the soudan riche and gay
Received hire with all so glad a chere,
As any mother might hire doughter dere:
And to the nexte citee ther beside
A softe pas solempnely they ride.

Nought trow I, the triumph of Julius,
Of which that Lucan maketh swiche a bost,
Was realler, or more curious,
Than was th' assemblee of this blisful host:
Butte this scorpion, this wicked gost,
The soudannesse, for all hire flattering
Cast under this ful mortally to sting.

The soudan cometh himself sone after this
So really, that wonder is to tell:
And welcometh hire with alle joye and blis.
And thus in mirth and joye I let hem dwell,
The fruit of this matere is that I tell.
Whan time came, men thought it for the best
That revel stint, and men go to hir rest.

The time come is, this olde soudannesse
Ordeined hath the feste of which I tolde,
And to the feste Cristen folk hem dresse
In general, ya bothe yonge and olde.
Ther may men fest and realtee beholde,
And deintees mo than I can you devise,
But all to dere they bought it or they rise.

O soden wo, that ever art successour
To worldly blis, spreint is with bitternesse
Th' ende of the joye of our worldly labour:
Wo occupieth the fyn of our gladnesse.
Herken this conseil for thy sikernesse:
Upon thy glade day have in thy minde
The unware wo of harm, that cometh behinde.

For shortly for to tellen at a word,
The soudan and the Cristen everich on
Ben all to-hewe, and stiked at the bord,
But it were only dame Custance alone.
This olde soudanesse, this cursed crone,
Hath with hire frendes don this cursed dede,
For she hireself wold all the contree lede.

Ne ther was Surrien non that was converted,
That of the conseil of the soudan wot,
That he n'as all to-hewe, er he asterted:
And Custance han they taken anon fote-hot,
And in a ship all stereles (God wot)
They han hire set, and bidden hire lerne sayle
Out of Surrie againward to Itaille.

A certain tresor that she thither ladde,
And soth to sayn, vitaille gret plentee,
They han hire yeven, and clothes eke she hadde,
And forth she sayleth in the salte see:
O my Custanee, ful of benignitee,
O emperoures yonge doughter dere,
He that is lord of fortune be thy stere.

She blesseth hire, and with ful pitous vois
Unto the crois of Crist thus sayde she.
"O clere, o weleful auter, holy crois,
Red of the lambes blood ful of pitee,
That wesh the world fro the old iniquitee,
Me fro the feude, and fro his clawes kepe,
That day that I shal drenchen in the depe.

"Victorious tree protection of trewe,
That only worthy were for to bere
The king of Heven, with his woundes newe,
The white lamb, that hurt was with a spere;
Flemer of fendes, out of him and here
On which thy limmes faithfully extenden,
Me kepe, and yeve me might my lif to amenden."

Yeres and dayes fleet this creature
Thurghout the see of Greece, unto the straite
Of Maroc, as it was hire aventure:
On many a sory mele now may she baite;
After hire deth ful often may she waite,
Or that the wilde waves wol hire drive
Unto the place ther as she shal arive.

Men mighten asken, why she was not slain?
Eke at the feste who might hire body save?
And I answer to that demand again,
Who saved Daniel in the horrible cave,
Ther every wight, save he, master or knave,
Was with the leon frette, or he asterte?
No wight but God, that he bare in his herte.

God list to shew his wonderful miracle
In hire, for we shuld seen his mighty werkes:
Crist, which that is to every harm triacle,
By certain menes oft, as knowen clerkes,
Doth thing for certain ende, that ful derke is
To mannes wit, that for our ignorance
Ne can nat know his prudent purveiance.

Now sith she was not at the feste yslawe,
Who kepte hire fro the drenching in the see?
Who kepte Jonas in the fishes mawe,
Til he was spouted up at Ninivee?
Wel may men know, it was no wight but he
That kept the peple Ebraike fro drenching,
With drye feet thurghout the see passing.

Who bade the foure spirits of tempest,
That power han to anoyen lond and see,
Both north and south, and also west and est,
Anoyen neyther see, ne lond, ne tree?
Sothly the commander of that was he
That fro the tempest ay this woman kepte,
As wel whan she awoke as whan she slepte.

Wher might this woman mete and drinke have?
Three yere and more, how lasteth hire vitaille?
Who fed the Egyptian Mary in the cave
Or in desert? no wight but Crist *sans faille*.
Five thousand folk it was as gret marvaille
With loves five and fishes two to fede:
God sent his foyson at hire grete nede.

She driveth forth into our ocean
Thurghout our wide see, til at the last
Under an hold, that nempnen I ne can,
Fer in Northumberlond, the wave hire cast,
And in the sand hire ship stiked so fast,
That thennes wolde it not in all a tide:
The wille of Crist was that she shulde abide.

The constable of the castle doun is fare
To seen this wrecke, and al the ship he sought,
And fond this wery woman ful of care;
He fond also the tresour that she brought:
In hire langage mercy she besought,
The lif out of hire body for to twinne,
Hire to deliver of wo that she was inne.

A maner Latin corrupt was hire speche,
But algate therby was she understonde.
The constable, whan him list no lenger seche,
This woful woman brought he to the londe.
She kneleth doun, and thanketh Goddes sonde;
But what she was, she wolde no man seye
For foule ne faire, though that she shulde deye.

She said, she was so mased in the see,
That she forgate hire minde, by hire trouth.
The constable hath of hir so gret pitee
And eke his wif, that they wepen for routh:
She was so diligent withouten slouth
To serve and plesen everich in that place,
That all hire love, that loken in hire face.

The constable and dame Hermegild his wif
Were payenes, and that contree every wher;
But Hermegild loved Custance as hire lif;
And Custance hath so long sojourned ther
In orisons, with many a bitter tere,
Til Jesu hath converted thurgh his grace
Dame Hermegild, constablesse of that place.

In all that lond no Cristen dorste route;
All Cristen folk ben fled fro that contree
Thurgh payenes, that conquereden all aboute
The plages of the north by lond and see.
To Wales fled the Cristianitee
Of olde Bretons, dwelling in this ile;
Ther was hir refuge for the mene while.

But yet n'ere Cristen Bretons so exiled,
That ther n'ere som which in hir privitee
Honoured Crist, and hethen folk begiled;
And neigh the castle swiche ther dwelten three:
That on of hem was blind, and might not see,
But it were with thilke eyen of his minde,
With which men mowen see whan they ben blinde.

Bright was the Sonne, as in that sommers day,
For which the constable and his wif also
And Custance, han ytake the righte way
Toward the see, a furlong way or two,
To plaien, and to romen to and fro;
And in hir walk this blinde man they mette,
Croked and olde, with eyen fast yshette.

" In the name of Crist," cried this blinde Breton,
" Dame Hermegild, yeve me my sight again."
This lady wexe afraied of that soun,
Lest that hire husbond, shortly for to sain,
Wold hire for Jesu Cristes love have slain,
Til Custance made hire bold, and bad hire werche
The will of Crist, as doughter of holy cherche.

The constable wexe abashed of that sight,
And sayde; " What amounteth all this fare?"
Custance answerd; " Sire, it is Cristes might,
That helpeth folk out of the fendes snare:"
And so ferforth she gan our lay declare,
That she the constable, er that it were eve,
Converted, and on Crist made him beleve.

This constable was not lord of the place
Of which I speke, ther as he Custance fond,
But kept it strongly many a winter space,
Under Alla, king of Northumberlond,
That was ful wise, and worthy of his hond
Againe the Scottes, as men may wel here;
But tourne I wol againe to my matere.

Sathan, that ever us waiteth to begile,
Saw of Custance all hire perfectioun,
And cast anon how he might quite hire while,
And made a yonge knight, that dwelt in that toun,
Love hire so hote of foule affectioun,
That verayly him thought that he shuld spille,
But he of hire might ones han his wille.

He woeth hire, but it availeth nought,
She wolde do no sinne by no wey:
And for despit, he compassed his thought
To maken hire on shameful deth to dey.
He waiteth whan the constable is away,
And prively upon a night he crepte
In Hermegildes chambre while she slepte.

Wery, forwaked in hire orisons,
Slepeth Custance, and Hermegilde also.
This knight, thurgh Sathanas temptations,
All softely is to the bed ygo,
And cut the throte of Hermegilde atwo,
And layd the blody knif by dame Custance,
And went his way, ther God yeve him mischance.

Sone after cometh this constable home again,
And eke Alla, that king was of that lond,
And saw his wife despitously yslain,
For which ful oft he wept and wrong his hond;
And in the bed the blody knif he fond
By dame Custance, alas! what might she say?
For veray wo hire wit was all away.

To king Alla was told all this mischance,
And eke the time, and wher, and in what wise,
That in a ship was fonden this Custance,
As here before ye han herd me devise:
The kinges herte of pitee gan agrise,
Whan he saw so benigne a creature
Falle in disese and in misaventure.

For as the lamb toward his deth is brought,
So stant this innocent beforn the king:
This false knight, that hath this treson wrought,
Bereth hire in hond that she hath don this thing:
But natheles ther was gret murmuring
Among the peple, and sayn they cannot gesse
That she had don so gret a wickednesse.

For they han seen hire ever so vertuous,
And loving Hermegild right as hire lif:
Of this bare witnesse everich in that hous,
Save he that Hermegild slow with his knif:
This gentil king hath caught a gret motif
Of this witness, and thought he wold enquere
Deper in this cas, trouthe for to lere.

Alas! Custance, thou hast no champion,
Ne fighten canst thou not, so wala wa!
But he that starf for our redemption,
And bond Sathan, and yet lith ther he lay,
So be thy stronge champion this day:
For but if Crist on thee miracle kithe,
Withouten gilt thou shalt be slaine as swithe.

She set hire doun on knees, and thus she sayde;
" Immortal God, that savedest Susanne
Fro false blame, and thou merciful mayde,
Mary I mene, doughter to seint Anne,
Beforn whos child angels singen Osanne,
If I be gilteles of this felonie,
My socour be, or elles shal I die."

Have ye not seen somtime a pale face
(Among a prees) of him that hath ben lad
Toward his deth, wher as he geteth no grace,
And swiche a colour in his face hath had,
Men mighten know him that was so bestad,
Amonges all the faces in that route,
So stant Custance, and loketh hire aboute.

O quenes living in prosperitee,
Duchesses, and ye ladies everich on,
Haveth som routhe on hire adversitee;
An emperoures doughter stant alone;
She hath no wight to whom to make hire mone;
O blood real, that stondest in this drede,
Fer ben thy frendes in thy grete nede.

This Alla king hath swiche compassioun,
As gentil herte is fulfilled of pitee,
That fro his eyen ran the water doun.
" Now hastily do fecche a book," quod he;
" And if this knight wol sweren, how that she
This woman slow, yet wol we us avsie,
Whom that we wol that shal ben our justice."

A Breton book, written with Evangiles,
Was fet, and on this book he swore anon
She giltif was, and in the mene whiles
An hond him smote upon the nekke bone,
That doun he fell at ones as a stone:
And both his eyen brost out of his face
In sight of every body in that place.

A vois was herd, in general audience,
That sayd; " Thou hast desclandred gilteles
The doughter of holy chirche in high presence;
Thus hast thou don, and yet hold I my pees."
Of this mervaille agast was all the prees,
As mased folk they stonden everich on
For drede of wreche, save Custance alone.

Gret was the drede and eke the repentance
Of hem that hadden wronge suspection
Upon this sely innocent Custance;
And for this miracle, in conclusion,
And by Custances meditation,
The king, and many another in that place,
Converted was, thanked be Cristes grace.

This false knight was slain for his untrouthe
By jugement of Alla hastily;
And yet Custance had of his deth gret routhe;
And after this Jesus of his mercy
Made Alla wedden ful solempnely
This holy woman, that is so bright and shene,
And thus hath Crist ymade Custance a quene.

But who was woful (if I shal not lie)
Of this wedding but Donegild and no mo,
The kinges mother, ful of tyrannie?
Hire thoughte hire cursed herte brast atwo;
She wolde not that hire sone had do so;
Hire thoughte a despit, that he shulde take
So strange a creature unto his make.

Me list not of the chaf ne of the stre
Maken so long a tale, as of the corn.
What shulde I tellen of the realtee
Of this mariage, or which cours goth beforn,
Who bloweth in a trompe or in an horn?
The fruit of every tale is for to say;
They ete and drinke, and dance, and sing, and play.

They gon to bed, as it was skill and right,
For though that wives ben ful holy thinges,
They mosten take in patience a night
Swiche maner necessaries, as ben plesinges
To folk that han ywedded hem with ringes,
And lay a lite hir holinssse aside
As for the time, it may no bet betide.

On hire he gat a knave childe anon,
And to a bishop, and his constable eke
He tooke his wif to kepe, whan he is gon
To Scotland ward, his fomen for to seke.
Now faire Custance, that is so humble and meke,
So long is gon with childe til that still
She halt hire chambre, abiding Cristes will.

The time is come, a knave child she bere;
Mauricius at the fontstone they him calle.
This constable doth forth come a messager,
And wrote unto his king that cleped was Alle,
How that this blisful tiding is befalle,
And other tidings spedeful for to say.
He hath the lettre, and forth he goth his way.

This messager, to don his avantage,
Unto the kinges mother rideth swithe,
And saluteth hire ful faire in his langage.
"Madame," quod he, "ye may be glad and blithe,
And thanken God an hundred thousand sithe;
My lady quene hath child, withouten doute,
To joye and blisse of all this regne aboute.

"Lo here the lettre seled of this thing,
That I most bere in all the hast I may.
If ye wol ought unto your sone the king,
I am your servant bothe night and day."
Donegilde answerd, "As now at this time nay;
But here I wol all night thou take thy rest,
To-morwe wol I say thee what me lest."

This messager drank sadly ale and wine,
And stolen were his lettres prively
Out of his box, while he slept as a swine;
And contrefeted was ful subtilly
Another lettre, wrought ful sinfully,
Unto the king directe of this matere
Fro his constable, as ye shal after here.

This lettre spake, the quene delivered was
Of so horrible a fendliche creature,
That in the castle non so hardy was
That any while dorste therein endure:
The mother was an elfe by aventure
Ycome, by charmes or by sorcerie,
And everich man hateth hire compagnie.

Wo was this king whan he this lettre had sein,
But to no wight he told his sorwes sore,
But of his owen hand he wrote again;
"Welcome the sonde of Crist for evermore
To me, that am now lerned in this lore:
Lord, welcome be thy lust and thy plesance,
My lust I put all in thyn ordinance.

"Kepeth this child, or be it foule or faire,
And eke my wif, unto min home coming:
Crist whan him list may senden me an heire,
More agreable than this to my liking."
This lettre he seled, prively weping,
Which to the messager was taken sone,
And forth he goth, ther is no more to done.

O messager, fulfilled of dronkenesse,
Strong is thy breth, thy limmes faltren ay,
And thou bewreiest alle secrenesse;
Thy mind is lorne, thou janglest as a jay;
Thy face is tourned in a new array;
Ther dronkenesse regneth in any route,
Ther is no conseil hid withouten doute.

O Donegild, I ne have non English digne
Unto thy malice, and thy tirannie:
And therfore to the fende I thee resigne,
Let him enditen of thy traitorie.
Fy mannish, fy; o nay by God I lie;
Fy fendliche spirit, for I dare wel telle,
Though thou here walke, thy spirit is in Helle.

This messager cometh fro the king again,
And at the kinges modres court he light,
And she was of this messager ful fayn,
And plesed him in all that ever she might.
He dranke, and wel his girdel underpight;
He slepeth, and he snoreth in his gise
All night, until the Sonne gan arise.

Eft were his lettres stolen everich on,
And conterfeted lettres in this wise.
The king commanded his constable anon
Up peine of hanging and of high jewise,
That he ne shulde soffren in no wise
Custance within his regne for to abide
Three daies, and a quarter of a tide;

But in the same ship as he hire fond,
Hire and hire yonge sone, and all hire gere,
He shulde put, and croude hire fro the lond,
And charge hire, that she never eft come there.
O my Custance, wel may thy ghost have fere,
And sleping in thy dreme ben in penance,
Whan Donegild cast all this ordinance.

This messager on morwe whan he awoke,
Unto the castel halt the nexte way;
And to the constable he the lettre toke;
And whan that he this pitous lettre sey,
Ful oft he sayd "Alas, and wala wa;
Lord Crist," quod he, "how may this world endure?
So ful of sinne is many a creature.

"O mighty God, if that it be thy will,
Sin thou art rightful juge, how may it be
That thou wolt soffren innocence to spill,
And wicked folk regne in Prosperitee?
A! good Custance, alas! so wo is me,
That I mote be thy turmentour, or dey
On shames deth, ther is non other wey."

Wepen both yong and old in al that place,
Whan that the king this cursed lettre sent:
And Custance with a dedly pale face
The fourthe day toward the ship she went:
But natheles she taketh in good entent
The will of Crist, and kneling on the strond
She sayde, "Lord, ay welcome be thy sond.

"He that me kepte fro the false blame,
While I was in the lond amonges you,
He can me kepe fro harme and eke fro shame
In the salt see, although I se not how:
As strong as ever he was, he is yet now,
In him trust I, and in his mother dere,
That is to me my sail and eke my stere."

Hire litel child lay weping in hire arm,
And kneling pitously to him she said,
"Pees, litel sone, I wol do thee no harm:"
With that hire couverchief of hire hed she braid,
And over his litel eyen she it laid,
And in hire arme she lulleth it ful fast,
And into the Heven hire eyen up she cast.

"Mother," quod she, "and mayden bright Marie,
Soth is, that thurgh womannes eggement
Mankind was lorne, and damned ay to die,
For which thy child was on a crois yrent:
Thy blisful eyen saw all his turment,
Than is ther no comparison betwene
Thy wo, and any wo man may sustene.

"Thou saw thy child yslain before thin eyen,
And yet now liveth my litel child parfay:
Now, lady bright, to whom all woful crien,
Thou glory of womanhed, thou faire May,
Thou haven of refute, bright sterre of day,
Rew on my child, that of thy gentillesse
Rewest on every rewful in distresse.

"O litel child, alas! what is thy gilt,
That never wroughtest sinne as yet parde?
Why wol thin harde father have thee spilt?
O mercy, dere constable," quod she,
"As let my litel child dwell here with thee:
And if thou darst not saven him fro blame,
So kisse him ones in his faders name."

Therwith she loketh backward to the lond,
And saide;—"Farewel, housbond routheless!"
And up she rist, and walketh doun the strond
Toward the ship, hire foloweth all the prees:
And ever she praieth hire child to hold his pees,
And taketh hire leve, and with an holy entent
She blesseth hire, and into the ship she went.

Vitailled was the ship, it is no drede,
Habundantly for hire a ful long space:
And other necessaries that shuld nede
She had ynow, heried be Goddes grace:
For wind and wether, Almighty God purchace,
And bring hire home, I can no better say,
But in the see she driveth forth hire way.

Alla the king cometh home sone after this
Unto his castel, of the which I told,
And asketh wher his wif and his child is;
The constable gan about his herte cold,
And plainly all the matere he him told
As ye han herd, I can tell it no better,
And shewed the king his sele and his letter;

And sayde; "Lord, as ye commanded me
Up peine of deth, so have I don certain."
This messager tormented was, til he
Moste beknowe, and tellen plat and plain,
Fro night to night in what place he had lain:
And thus by wit and subtil enquering
Imagined was by whom this harm gan spring.

The hand was knowen that the lettre wrote,
And all the venime of this cursed dede;
But in what wise, certainly I n'ot.
The effect is this, that Alla out of drede
His mother slew, that moun men plainly rede,
For that she traitour was to hire ligeance:
Thus endeth this old Donegild with meschance.

The sorwe that this Alla night and day
Maketh for his wif and for his child also,
Ther is no tonge that it tellen may.
But now wol I agen to Custance go,
That fleteth in the see in peine and wo
Five yere and more, as liked Cristes sonde,
Or that hire ship approched to the londe.

Under an hethen castel at the last,
(Of which the name in my text I not find)
Custance and eke hire child the see up cast.
Almighty God, that saved all mankind,
Have on Custance and on hire child som mind,
That fallen is in hetlen hond eftsone
In point to spill, as I shal tell you sone.

Doun fro the castel cometh ther many a wight
To gauren on this ship, and on Custance:
But shortly fro the castel on a night,
The lordes steward (God yeve him meschance)
A theef, that had reneyed our creance,
Came into the ship alone, and said, he wolde
Hire lemman be, whether she wolde or n'olde.

Wo was this wretched woman tho begon,
Hire childe cried, and she cried pitously:
But blisful Mary halpe hire right anon,
For with hire strogling wel and mightily
The theef fell over bord al sodenly,
And in the see he drenched for vengeance,
And thus hath Crist unwemmed kept Custance.

O foule lust of luxurie, lo thin ende,
Nat only that thou faintest mannes mind,
But verraily thou wolt his body shende.
Th' ende of thy werk, or of thy lustes blind,
Is complaining: how many may men find,
That not for werk somtime, but for th' entent
To don this sinne, ben other slain or shent.

How may this weke woman han the strength
Hire to defend again this renegate?
O Golias, unmesurable of length,
How mighte David maken thee so mate?
So yonge, and of armure so desolate,
How dorst he loke upon thy dredful face?
Wel may men seen it was but Goddes grace.

Who yaf Judith corage or hardinesse
To sleen him Holofernes in his tent,
And to deliver out of wretchednesse
The peple of God? I say for this entent,
That right as God spirit of vigour sent
To hem, and saved hem out of meschance,
So sent he might and vigour to Custance.

Forth goth hire ship thurghout the narwe mouth
Of Jubaltare and Septe, driving alway,
Somtime west, and somtime north and south,
And somtime est, ful many a wery day;
Til Cristes moder (blessed be she ay)
Hath shapen thurgh hire endeles goodnesse
To make an end of all hire hevinesse.

Now let us stint of Custance but a throw,
And speke we of the Romane emperour,
That out of Surrie hath by lettres knowe
The slaughter of Cristen folk, and dishonour
Don to his doughter by a false traitour,
I mene the cursed wicked soudanesse,
That at the fest let sleen both more and lesse.

For which this emperour hath sent anon
His senatour, with real ordinance,
And other lordes, God wote, many on,
On Surriens to taken high vengeance:
They brennen, sleen, and bring hem to meschance
Ful many a day: but shortly this is th' ende,
Homward to Rome they shapen hem to wende.

This senatour repaireth with victorie
To Rome ward, sayling ful really,
And met the ship driving, as saith the storie,
In which Custance sitteth ful pitously:
Nothing ne knew he what she was, ne why
She was in swiche array, ne she wil sey
Of hire estat, though that she shulde dey.

He bringeth hire to Rome, and to his wif
He yaf hire, and hire yonge sone also:
And with the senatour she lad hire lif.
Thus can our lady bringen out of wo
Woful Custance, and many another mo:
And longe time dwelled she in that place,
In holy werkes ever, as was hire grace.

The senatoures wif hire aunte was,
But for all that she knew hire never the more:
I wol no longer tarien in this cas,
But to king Alla, which I spake of yore,
That for his wif wepeth and siketh sore,
I wol returne, and let I wol Custance
Under the senatoures governance.

King Alla, which that had his moder slain,
Upon a day fell in swiche repentance,
That if I shortly tellen shal and plain,
To Rome he cometh to receive his penance,
And putte him in the popes ordinance
In high and low, and Jesu Crist besought,
Foryeve his wicked werkes that he had wrought.

The fame anon thurghout the toun is born,
How Alla king shal come on pilgrimage,
By herbergeours that wenten him beforn,
For which the senatour, as was usage,
Rode him againe, and many of his linage,
As wel to shewen his high magnificence,
As to don any king a reverence.

Gret chere doth this noble senatour,
To king Alla, and he to him also;
Everich of hem doth other gret honour;
And so befell, that in a day or two
This senatour is to king Alla go
To fest, and shortly, if I shal not lie,
Custances sone went in his compagnie.

Som men wold sain at requeste of Custance
This senatour hath lad this child to feste:
I may not tellen every circumstance,
Be as be may, ther was he at the leste:
But soth is this, that at his mothers heste
Beforn Alla, during the metes space,
The child stood, loking in the kinges face.

This Alla king hath of this child gret wonder,
And to the senatour he said anon,
"Whos is that faire child that stondeth yonder?"
"I n'ot," quod he, "by God and by Seint John;
A moder he hath, but fader hath he non,
That I of wote:" but shortly in a stound
He told Alla how that this child was found.

"But God wot," quod this senatour also,
"So vertuous a liver in all my lif
Ne saw I never, as she, ne herd of mo
Of worldly woman, maiden, widewe or wif:
I dare wel sayn hire hadde lever a knif
Thurghout hire brest, than ben a woman wikke,
Ther is no man conde bring hire to that prikke."

Now was this child as like unto Custance
As possible is a creature to be:
This Alla hath the face in remembrance
Of dame Custance, and theron mused he,
If that the childes moder were aught she
That is his wif, and prively he sighte,
And sped him fro the table that he mighte.

"Parfay," thought he, "fantome is in min hed.
I ought to deme of skilful jugement,
That in the salte see my wif is ded."
And afterward he made his argument;
"What wot I, if that Crist have hider sent
My wif bysee, as wel as he hire lent
To my contree, fro thennes that she went?"

And after noon home with the senatour
Goth Alla, for to see this wonder chance.
This senatour doth Alla gret honour,
And hastily he sent after Custance:
But trusteth wel, hire luste not to dance.
Whan that she wiste wherfore was that sonde,
Unnethe upon hire feet she mighte stonde.

Whan Alla saw his wif, faire he hire grette,
And wept, that it was routhe for to see,
For at the firste look he on hire sette
He knew wel verily that it was she:
And she for sorwe, as domb stant as a tree:
So was hire herte shette in hire distresse,
Whan she remembered his unkindenesse.

Twies she swouneth in his owen sight,
He wepeth and him excuseth pitously:
"Now God," quod he, "and all his halwes bright
So wisly on my soule as have mercy,
That of youre harme as gilteles am I,
As is Maurice my sone, so like your face,
Elles the fend me fetche out of this place."

Long was the sobbing and the bitter peine,
Or that hir woful hertes mighten cese,
Gret was the pitee for to here hem pleine,
Thurgh whiche pleintes gan hir wo encrese.
I pray you all my labour to relese,
I may not tell hir wo until to-morwe,
I am so wery for to speke of sorwe.

But finally, whan that the soth is wist,
That Alla gilteles was of hire wo,
I trow an hundred times han they kist,
And swiche a blisse is ther betwix hem two,
That save the joye that lasteth evermo,
Ther is non like, that any creature
Hath seen or shal, while that the world may dure.

Tho praied she hire husbond mekely
In releef of hire longe pitous pine,
That he wold pray hire fader specially,
That of his magestee he wold encline
To vouchesauf som day with him to dine:
She praied him eke, he shulde by no way
Unto hire fader no word of hire say.

Some men wold sayn, how that the child Maurice
Doth this message until this emperour:
But as I gesse, Alla was not so nice,
To him that is so soveraine of honour,
As be that is of Cristen folk the flour,
Send any child, but it is bet to deme
He went himself, and so it may wel seme.

This emperour hath granted gentilly
To come to dinner, as he him besoughte:
And wel rede I, he loked besily
Upon this child, and on his doughter thought.
Alla goth to his inne, and as him ought
Arraied for this feste in every wise,
As ferforth as his conning may suffice.

The morwe came, and Alla gan him dresse,
And eke his wif, this emperour to mete:
And forth they ride in joye and in gladnesse,
And whan she saw hire fader in the strete,
She light adoun and falleth him to fete.
"Fader," quod she, "your yonge child Custance
Is now ful clene out of your remembrance.

"I am your doughter, your Custance," quod she,
"That whilom ye han sent into Surrie;
It am I, fader, that in the salte see
Was put alone, and dampned for to die.
Now, goode fader, I you mercy crie,
Send me no more into non hethenesse,
But thanketh my lord here of his kindenesse."

Who can the pitous joye tellen all
Betwix hem thre, sin they ben thus ymette?
But of my tale make an ende I shal,
The day goth fast, I wol no longer lette.
Thise glade folk to dinner ben ysette,
In joy and blisse at mete I let hem dwell,
A thousand fold wel more than I can tell.

This child Maurice was sithen emperour
Made by the pope, and lived Cristenly,
To Cristes chirche did he gret honour:
But I let all his storie passen by,
Of Custance is my tale specially,
In the olde Romane gestes men may find
Maurices lif, I bere it not in mind.

This king Alla, whan he his time sey,
With his Custance, his holy wif so swete,
To Englond ben they come the righte wey,
Ther as they live in joye and in quiete.
But litel while it lasteth I you hete,
Joye of this world for time wol not abide,
Fro day to night it changeth as the tide.

Who lived ever in swiche delite o day,
That him ne meved other conscience,
Or ire, or talent, or som kin affray,
Envie, or pride, or passion, or offence?
I ne say but for this end this sentence,
That litel while in joye or in plesance
Lasteth the blisse of Alla with Custance.

For Deth, that taketh of hie and low his rente,
Whan passed was a yere, even as I gesse,
Out of this world this king Alla he hente,
For whom Custance hath ful gret bevinesse.
Now let us praien God his soule blesse:
And dame Custance, finally to say,
Toward the toun of Rome goth hire way.

To Rome is come this holy creature,
And findeth ther hire frendes hole and sound:
Now is she scaped all hire aventure:
And whan that she hire fader hath yfound,
Doun on hire knees falleth she to ground,
Weping for tendernesse in herte blithe
She herieth God an hundred thousand sithe.

In vertue and in holy almesse dede
They liven alle, and never asonder wende;
Till deth departeth hem, this lif they lede:
And fareth now wel, my tale is at an ende.
Now Jesu Crist, that of his might may sende
Joye after wo, governe us in his grace,
And kepe us alle that ben in this place,

THE

WIF OF BATHES PROLOGUE.

"Experience, though non auctoritee
Were in this world, is right ynough for me
To speke of wo that is in mariage:
For, lordings, sin I twelf yere was of age,
(Thanked be God that is eterne on live)
Husbondes at chirche dore have I had five,
(If I so often might han wedded be)
And all were worthy men in hir degree.
"But me was told, not longe time agon is,
That sithen Crist ne went never but onis
To wedding, in the Cane of Galilee,
That by that ilke ensample taught he me,
That I ne shulde wedded be but ones.
Lo, herke eke, which a sharpe word for the nones,

Beside a welle Jesu, God and man,
Spake in reprefe of the Samaritan:
" Thou hast yhadde five husbonds, sayde he;
And thilke man, that now hath wedded thee,
Is not thyn husbond: "thus said he certain;
What that he ment therby, I can not sain,
But that I aske, why that the fifthe man
Was non husbond to the Samaritan?
How many might she have in mariage?
Yet herd I never tellen in min age
Upon this noumbre diffinitioun;
Men may devine, and glosen up and doun.
" But wel I wot, expresse withouten lie
God bad us for to wex and multiplie;
That gentil text can I wel understond.
Eke wel I wot, he sayd, that min husbond
Shuld leve fader and moder, and take to me;
But of no noumbre mention made he,
Of bigamie or of octogamie;
Why shuld men than speke of it vilanie?
" Lo here the wise king dan Salomon,
I trow he hadde wives mo than on,
(As wolde God it leful were to me
To be refreshed half so oft as he)
Which a gift of God had he for alle his wives?
No man hath swiche, that in this world on live is.
God wot, this noble king, as to my witte,
The firste night had many a mery fitte
With eche of hem, so wel was him on live.
Blessed be God that I have wedded five,
Welcome the sixthe whan that ever he shall.
For sith I wol not kepe me chaste in all,
Whan min husbond is fro the world ygon,
Som Cristen man shal wedden me anon.
For than the apostle saith, that I am fre
To wedde, a' Goddes half, wher it liketh me.
He saith that to be wedded is no sinne;
Better is to be wedded than to brinne.
" What rekketh me though folk say vilanie
Of shrewed Lamech, and his bigamie?
I wot wel Abraham was an holy man,
And Jacob eke, as fer as ever I can,
And eche of hem had wives mo than two,
And many another holy man also.
Wher can ye seen in any maner age
That highe God defended mariage
By expresse word? I pray you telleth me,
Or wher commanded he virginitee?
" I wot as wel as ye, it is no drede,
The apostle, whan he spake of maidenhede,
He said, that precept therof had he non:
Men may conseille a woman to ben on,
But conseilling is no commandement;
He put it in our owen jugement.
" For hadde God commanded maidenhede,
Than had he dampned wedding out of drede;
And certes, if ther were no sede ysowe,
Virginitee than wherof shuld it growe?
" Poule dorste not commanden at the lest
A thing, of which his maister yaf non hest.
The dart is sette up for virginitee,
Catch who so may, who renneth best let see.
But this word is not take of every wight,
But ther as God wol yeve it of his might.
I wot wel that the apostle was a maid,
But natheles, though that he wrote and said,
He wol that every wight were swiche as he,
All n'is but conseil to virginitee.
And for to ben a wif he yaf me leve,
Of indulgence, so n'is it non repreve
To wedden me, if that my make die,
Withoute exception of bigamie;
All were it good no woman for to touche,
(He ment as in his bed or in his couche)
For peril is both fire and tow to assemble;
Ye know what this ensample may resemble.
" This is all and som, he held virginitee
More prafit than wedding in freeltee:
(Freeltee clepe I, but if that he and she
Wold lede hir lives all in chastitee)
I graunt it wel, I have of non envie,
Who maidenhed preferre to bigamie;
It liketh hem to be clene in body and gost:
Of min estat I wol not maken bost.
" For wel ye know, a lord in his houshold
Ne hath nat every vessell all of gold:
Som ben of tree; and don hir lord service.
God clepeth folk to him in sondry wise,
And everich hath of God a propre gift,
Som this, som that, as that him liketh shift.
Virginitee is gret perfection,
And continence eke with devotion:
But Crist, that of perfection is welle,
Ne bade not every wight he shulde go selle
All that he had, and yeve it to the poure,
And in swiche wise folow him and his lore:
He spake to hem that wold live parfitly,
And, lordings, (by your leve) that am nat I;
I wol bestow the flour of all myn age
In th' actes and the fruit of mariage.
" Tell me also, to what conclusion
Were membres made of generation,
And of so parfit wise a wight ywrought?
Trusteth me wel, they were nat made for nought.
Glose who so wol, and say bothe up and doun,
That they were made for purgatioun
Of urine, and of other thinges smale,
And eke to know a female from a male:
And for non other cause? sayye no?
The experience wot wel it is not so.
So that the clerkes be not with me wroth,
I say this that they maken ben for both,
This is to sayn, for office, and for ese
Of engendrure, ther we not God displese.
Why shuld men elles in hir bookes sette,
That man shal yelden to his wif hire dette?
Now wherwith shuld he make his payement,
If he ne used his sely instrument?
Than were they made upon a creature
To purge urine, and eke for engendrure.
" But I say not that every wight is hold,
That hath swiche harneis as I to you told,
To gon and usen hem in engendrure;
Than shuld men take of chastitee no cure.
Crist was a maide, and shapen as a man,
And many a seint, sith that this world began,
Yet lived they ever in parfit chastitee.
I n'ill envie with no virginitee.
Let hem with bred of pured whete be fed,
And let us wives eten barly bred.
And yet with barly bred, Mark tellen can,
Our Lord Jesu refreshed many man.
In swiche estat as God hath cleped us,
I wol persever, I n'am not precious,
In wifhode wol I use min instrument
As frely as my maker hath it sent.
If I be dangerous God yeve me sorwe,
Min husbond shal it have both even and morwe,
Whan that him list come forth and pay his dette.
An husbond wol I have, I wol not lette,

Which shal be both my dettour and my thrall,
And have his tribulation withall
Upon his flesh, while that I am his wif.
I have the power during all my lif
Upon his propre body and nat he;
Right thus the apostle told it unto me,
And bad our husbonds for to love us wel;
All this sentance me liketh every del."

Up stert the pardoner, and that anon;
"Now dame," quod he, "by God and by Seint John,
Ye ben a noble prechour in this cas.
I was about to wed a wif, alas!
What? shuld I bie it on my flesh so dere?
Yet had I lever wed no wif to-yere."

"Abide," quod she, "my tale is not begonne.
Nay, thou shalt drinken of another tonne
Er that I go, shal savour worse than ale.
And whan that I have told thee forth my tale
Of tribulation in mariage,
Of which I am expert in all min age,
(This is to sayn, myself hath ben the whippe)
Than maiest thou chesen wheder thou wolt sippe
Of thilke tonne, that I shal abroche.
Beware of it, er thou to neigh approche.
For I shal tell ensamples mo than ten:
'Who so that n'ill beware by other men
By him shal other men corrected be:'
Thise same wordes writeth Ptholomee,
Rede in his Almageste, and take it there."

"Dame, I wol pray you, if your will it were,"
Sayde this pardoner, "as ye began,
Tell forth your tale, and spareth for no man,
And techeth us yonge men of your practike."

"Gladly," quod she, "sin that it may you like.
But that I pray to all this compagnie,
If that I speke after my fantasie,
As taketh not a greefe of that I say,
For min entente is not but for to play.

"Now sires; than wol I tell you forth my tale.
As ever mote I drinken win or ale
I shal say soth, the hosbondes that I had
As three of them were good, and two were bad.
The three were goode men and riche and olde.
Unethes mighten they the statute holde,
In which that they were bounden unto me.
Ye wot wel what I mene of this parde.
As God me helpe, I laugh whan that I thinke,
How pitously a-night I made hem swinke,
But by my fay, I tolde of it no store:
They had me yeven hir lond and hir tresore,
Me neded not do lenger diligence
To win hir love, or don hem reverence.
They loved me so wel by God above,
That I ne tolde no deintee of hir love.
A wise woman wol besie hire ever in on
To geten hir love, ther as she hath non.
But sith I had hem holly in min hond,
And that they hadde yeven me all hir lond;
What shuld I taken kepe hem for to plese,
But it were for my profit, or min ese?
I set hem so a-werke by may fay,
That many a night they songen "Wala wa."
The bacon was not fit for hem, I trow,
That som men have in Essex at Dunmow.
I governed hem so wel after my lawe,
That eche of hem ful blisful was and fawe
To bringen me gay thinges fro the feyre.
They were ful glade whan I spake hem fayre.
For God it wot, I chidde hem spitously.
Now herkeneth how I bare me proprely.

"Ye wise wives, that can understond,
Thus shul ye speke, and bere hem wrong on hond,
For half so boldely can ther no man
Sweren and lien as a woman can.
(I say not this by wives that ben wise,
But if it be whan they hem misavise.)
A wise wif if that she can hire good,
Shal beren hem on hond the cow is wood,
And taken witnesse of hire owen mayd
Of hir assent: but herkeneth how I sayd.

"'Sire olde kaynard, is this thin aray?
Why is my neigheboures wif so gay?
She is honoured over al wher she goth,
I sit at home, I have no thrifty cloth.
What dost thou at my neigheboures hous?
Is she so faire? art thou so amorous?
What rownest thou with our maide? *benedicite*,
Sire olde lechour, let thy japes be.

"'And if I have a gossib, or a frend,
(Withouten gilt) thou chidest as a fend,
If that I walke or play unto his hous.

"'Thou comest home as dronken as a mous,
And prechest on thy benche, with evil prefe:
Thou sayst to me, it is a gret meschiefe
To wed a poure woman, for costage:
And if that she be riche of high parage,
Than sayst thou, that it is a tourmentrie
To soffre hire pride and hire melancolie.
And if that she be faire, thou veray knave,
Thou sayst that every holour wol hire have.
She may no while in chastitee abide,
That is assailled upon every side.
Thou sayst som folk desire us for richesse,
Som for our shape, and som for our fairnesse,
And som, for she can other sing or dance,
And som for gentillesse and daliance,
Some for hire hondes and hire armes smale:
Thus geth all to the devil by thy tale.
Thou sayst, men may not kepe a castel wal,
It may so long assailled be over al.
And if that she be foul, thou sayst, that she
Coveteth every man that she may see;
For as a spaniel, she wol on him lepe,
Til she may finden som man hire to chepe.
Ne non so grey goos goth ther in the lake,
(As sayst thou) that wol den withoute a make.
And sayst, it is an hard thing for to welde
A thing, that no man wol, his thankes, helde.

"'Thus sayst thou, lorel, whan thou gost to bed,
And that no wise man nedeth for to wed,
Ne no man that entendeth unto Heven.
With wilde thonder dint and firy leven
Mote thy welked nekke be to-broke. [smoke,

"'Thou sayst, that dropping houses, and eke
And chiding wives maken men to flee
Out of hir owen hous; a, *benedicite*,
What aileth swiche an old man for to chide?

"'Thou sayst, we wives wol our vices hide,
Til we be fast, and than we wol hem shewe.
Wel may that be a proverbe of a shrewe.

"'Thou sayst, that oxen, asses, hors, and houndes,
They ben assaied at diverse stoundes,
Basins, lavoures, or that men hem bie,
Spones, stooles, and all swiche husbondrie,
And so ben pottes, clothes, and aray,
But folk of wives maken non assay,
Til they ben wedded, olde dotard shrewe!
And than, sayst thou, we wol our vices shewe.

"'Thou sayst also, that it displeseth me,
But if that thou wolt preisen my beautee,

And but thou pore alway upon my face,
And clepe me faire dame in every place;
And but thou make a feste on thilke day
That I was borne, and make me fresh and gay;
And but thou do to my norice honour,
And to my chamberere within my bour,
And to my faders folk, and myn allies;
Thus sayst thou, olde barel ful of lies.

" ' And yet also of our prentis Jankin,
For his crispe here, shining as gold so fin,
And for he squiereth me both up and doun,
Yet hast thou caught a false suspection:
I wol him nat, though thou were ded to-morwe.

" ' But tell me this, why hidest thou with sorwe
The keies of thy chest away fro me?
It is my good as wel as thin parde,
What, wenest thou make an idiot of our dame?
Now by that lord that cleped is Seint Jame,
Thou shalt nat bothe, though that thou were wood,
Be maister of my body and of my good,
That on thou shalt forgo maugre thin eyen.
What helpeth it of me to enquere and spien?
I trow thou woldest locke me in thy cheste.
Thou shuldest say, fayr wif, go wher thee leste;
Take your disport; I wol nat leve no tales;
I know you for a trewe wif, dame Ales.

" ' We love no man, that taketh keye or charge
Wher that we gon, we wol be at our large.
Of alle men yblessed mote he be
The wise astrologien dan Ptholomee,
That sayth this proverbe in his Almageste:
' Of alle men his wisdom is higheste,
That rekketh nat who hath the world in hond.'

" ' By this proverbe thou shalt wel understond,
Have thou ynough, what thar thee rekke or care
How merily that other folkes fare?
For certes, olde dotard, by your leve,
Ye shullen have queint right ynough at eve.
He is to gret a nigard that wol werne
A man to light a candel at his lanterne;
He shall have never the lesse light parde.
Have thou ynough, thee thar not plainen thee.

" ' Thou say also, if that we make us gay
With clothing and with precious array,
That it is peril of our chastitee.
And yet, with sorwe, thou enforcest thee,
And sayst thise wordes in the apostles name:
' In habit made with chastitee and shame
Ye women shul appareile you,' (quod he)
' And nat in trassed here, and gay perrie,
As perles, ne with gold, ne clothes riche.'

" ' After thy text, ne after thy rubriche
I wol not work as mochel as a gnat.

" ' Thou sayst also, I walke out like a cat;
For who so wolde senge the cattes skin,
Than wol the cat wel dwellen in hire in;
And if the cattes skin be sleke and gay,
She wol nat dwellen in hous half a day,
But forth she wol, or any day be dawed,
To shew hire skin, and gon a caterwawed.
This is to say, if I be gay, sire shrewe,
I wol renne out, my borel for to shewe.
Sire olde fool, what helpeth thee to spien?
Though thou pray Argus with his hundred eyen
To be my wardecorps, as he can best,
In faith he shal not kepe me but me lest:
Yet coude I make his berd, so mote I the.

" ' Thou sayest eke, that ther ben thinges three,
Which thinges gretly troublen all this erthe,
And that no wight ne may endure the ferthe:
O lefe sire shrewe, Jesu short thy lif.

" ' Yet prechest thou, and sayst, an hateful wif
Yrekened is for on of thise meschances.
Be ther non other maner resemblances
That ye may liken your parables to,
But if a sely wif be on of tho?

" ' Thou likenest eke womans love to Helle,
To barrein lond, ther water may not dwelle.

" ' Thou likenest it also to wilde fire;
The more it brenneth, the more it hath desire
To consume every thing, that brent wol be.

" ' Thou sayest, right as wormes shende a tre,
Right so a wif destroieth hire husbond;
This knowen they that ben to wives bond.'

" ' Lordings, right thus, as ye han understond,
Bare I stifly min old husbondes on hond,
That thus they saiden in hir dronkennesse;
And all was false, but as I toke witnesse
On Jankin, and upon my nece also.
O Lord, the peine I did hem, and the wo,
Ful giltelès, by Goddes swete pine;
For as an hors, I coude bite and whine;
I coude plain, and I was in the gilt,
Or elles oftentime I had ben spilt.
Who so first cometh to the mill, first grint;
I plained first, so was our werre ystint.
They were ful glad to excusen hem ful blive
Of thing, the which they never agilt hir live.
Of wenches wold I beren hem on hond,
Whan that for sike unmethes might they stond,
Yet tikeled I his herte for that he
Wend that I had of him so gret chiertee:
I swore that all my walking out by night
Was for to espien wenches that he dight:
Under that colour had I many a mirth;
For all swiche wit is yeven us in our birth;
Deceite, weping, spinning, God hath yeven
To woman kindly, while that they may liven.
And thus of o thing I may avaunten me,
At th' ende I had the beter in eche degree,
By sleight or force, or by som maner thing,
As by continual murmur or grutching,
Namely a-bed, ther hadden they meschance,
Ther wold I chide, and don hem no plesance:
I wold no lenger in the bed abide,
If that I felt his arme over my side,
Til he had made his raunson unto me,
Than wold I soffre him to do his nicetee.
And therfore every man this tale I tell,
Winne who so may, for all is for to sell:
With empty hond men may no haukes lure,
For winning wold I all his lust endure,
And maken me a feined appetit,
And yet in bacon had I never delit:
That maked me that ever I wold hem chide.
For though the pope had sitten hem beside,
I wold not spare hem at hir owen bord,
For by my trouthe I quitte hem word for word.
As helpe me veray God omnipotent,
Tho I right now shuld make my testament,
I ne owe hem not a word, that it n'is quit,
I brought it so abouten by my wit,
That they must yeve it up, as for the best,
Or elles had we never ben in rest.
For though he loked as a wood leon,
Yet shuld he faille of his conclusion.

" Than wold I say, ' Now, goode lefe, take kepe.
How mekely loketh Wilkin oure shepe!
Come ner my spouse, and let me ba thy cheke.
Ye shulden be al patient and meke,

And han a swete spiced conscience,
Sith ye so preche of Jobes patience.
Suffreth alway, sin ye so wel can preche,
And but ye do, certain we shal you teche
That it is faire to han a wif in pees.
On of us two moste bowen doutelees:
And, sith a man is more resonable
Than woman is, ye mosten ben suffrable.
What aileth you to grutchen thus and grone?
Is it for ye wold have my queint alone?
Why take it all: lo, have it every del.
Peter, I shrew you but ye love it wel.
For if I wolde sell my *belle chose*,
I coude walke as freshe as is a rose,
But I wol kepe it for your owen toth.
Ye be to blame, by God, I say you soth.'
" Swiche maner wordes hadden we on hond.
Now wol I speken of my fourthe husbond.
" My fourthe husbonde was a revellour,
This is to sayn, he had a paramour,
And I was yonge and ful of ragerie,
Stibborne and strong, and joly as a pie.
Tho coude I dancen to an harpe smale,
And sing ywis as any nightingale,
Whan I had dronke a draught of swete wine.
Metellius, the foule cherle, the swine,
That with a staf beraft his wif hire lif
For she drank wine, though I had ben his wif,
Ne shuld he not have daunted me fro drinke:
And after wine of Venus most I thinke.
For al so siker as cold engendreth hayl,
A likerous mouth most han a likerous tayl.
In woman vinolent is no defence,
This knowen lechours by experience.
" But, Lord Crist, whan that it remembreth me
Upon my youth, and on my jolitee,
It tikleth me about myn herte-rote.
Unto this day it doth myn herte bote,
That I have had my world as in my time.
But age, alas! that all wol envenime,
Hath me beraft my beautee and my pith:
Let go, farewel, the devil go therwith.
The flour is gon, ther n'is no more to tell,
The bren, as I best may, now moste I sell.
But yet to be right mery wol I fond,
Now forth to tellen of my fourthe husbond,
" I say, I had in herte gret despit,
That he of any other had delit;
But he was quit by God and by Seint Joce:
I made him of the same wood a croce,
Not of my body in no foule manere,
But certainly I made folk swiche chere,
That in his owen grese I made him frie
For anger and for veray jalousie.
By God, in earth I was his purgatorie,
For which I hope his soule be in glorie.
For, God it wote, he sate ful oft and songe,
Whan that his sho ful bitterly him wronge.
Ther was no wight, save God and he, that wiste
In many a wise how sore that I him twiste.
He died whan I came fro Jerusalem,
And lith ygrave under the rode-beem:
All is his tombe not so curious
As was the sepulcre of him Darius,
Which that Appelles wrought so sotelly.
It is but wast to bury hem preciously.
Let him farewel, God give his soule rest,
He is now in his grave and in his chest.
" Now of my fifthe husbonde wol I telle:
God let his soule never come in Helle.
And yet was he to me the moste shrew,
That fele I on my ribbes all by rew,
And ever shal, unto min ending day.
But in our bed he was so fresh and gay,
And therwithall he coude so wel me glose,
Whan that he wolde han my *belle chose*,
That, though he had me bet on every bon,
He coude win agen my love anon.
I trow, I love him the bet, for he
Was of his love so dangerous to me.
We wimmen han, if that I shal not lie,
In this matere a queinte fantasie.
Waite, what thing we may nat lightly have,
Therafter wol we cry all day and crave.
Forbede us thing, and that desiren we;
Prese on us fast, and thanne wol we flee.
With danger uttren we all our chaffare;
Gret prees at market maketh dere ware,
And to gret chepe is holden at litel prise;
This knoweth every woman that is wise.
" My fifthe husbonde, God his soule blesse,
Which that I toke for love and no richesse,
He somtime was a clerk of Oxenforde,
And had left scole, and went at home at borde
With my gossib, dwelling in our toun:
God have hire soule, hire name was Alisoun.
She knew my herte and all my privetee,
Bet than our parish preest, so mote I the.
To hire bewried I my conseil all;
For had my husbond pissed on a wall,
Or don a thing that shuld have cost his lif,
To hire, and to another worthy wif,
And to my nece, which that I loved wel,
I wold have told his conseil every del.
And so I did ful often, God it wote,
That made his face ful often red and hote
For veray shame, and blamed himself, for he
Had told to me so gret a privetee.
" And so befell that ones in a Lent,
(So often times I to my gossib went,
For ever yet I loved to be gay,
And for to walke in March, April, and May
From hous to hous, to heren sondry tales)
That Jankin clerk, and my gossib dame Ales,
And I myself, into the feldes went.
Myn husbond was at London all that Lent;
I had the better leiser for to pleie,
And for to see, and eke for to be seie
Of lusty folk; what wist I wher my grace
Was shapen for to be, or in what place?
Therfore made I my visitations
To vigilies, and to processions,
To prechings eke, and to thise pilgrimages,
To playes of miracles, and mariages,
And wered upon my gay skarlet gites.
Thise wormes, ne thise mothes, ne thise mites
Upon my parailе frete hem never a del,
And wost thou why? for they were used wel.
" Now wol I tellen forth what happed me:
I say, that in the feldes walked we,
Till trewely we had swiche daliance
This clerk and I, that of my purveance
I spake to him, and said him how that he,
If I were widewe, shulde wedden me.
For certainly, I say for no bobance,
Yet was I never without purveance
Of mariage, ne of other thinges eke:
I hold a mouses wit not worth a leke,
That hath but on hole for to sterten to,
And if that faille, than is all ydo.

" I hare him on hond, he hath enchanted me;
(My dame taughte me that subtiltee)
And eke I sayd, I mette of him all night,
He wold han slain me, as I lay upright,
And all my bed was full of veray blood;
But yet I hope that ye shuln do me good:
For blood betokeneth gold, as me was taught.
And al was false, I dremed of him right naught,
But as I folwed ay my dames lore,
As wel of that as of other thinges more.
" But now, sire, let me see, what shall I sain?
A ha, by God I have my tale again.
Whan that my fourthe husbonde was on bere,
I wept algate and made a sory chere,
As wives moten, for it is the usage;
And with my coverchefe covered my visage;
But, for that I was purveyed of a make,
I wept but smal, and that I undertake.
To chirche was myn husbond born a-morwe
With neigheboures that for him maden sowre,
And Jankin oure clerk was on of tho:
As helpe me God, whan that I saw him go
After the bere, me thought he had a paire
Of legges and of feet, so clene and faire,
That all my herte I yave unto his hold.
He was, I trow, a twenty winter old,
And I was fourty, if I shal say soth,
But yet I had alway a coltes toth.
Gat-tothed I was, and that became me wele,
I had the print of seinte Venus sele.
As helpe me God, I was a lusty on,
And faire, and riche, and yonge, and wel begon:
And trewely, as min husbondes tolden me,
I had the beste queint that mighte be.
For certes I am all venerian
In feling, and my herte is marcian:
Venus me yave my lust and likerousnesse,
And Mars yave me my sturdy hardinesse.
Min ascendent was Taure, and Mars therinne:
Alas, alas, that ever love was sinne!
I folwed ay min inclination
By vertue of my constellation:
That made me that I coude nat withdraw
My chambre of Venus from a good felaw.
Yet have I Martes merke upon my face,
And also in another privee place.
For God so wisly be my salvation,
I loved never by no discretion,
But ever folwed min appetit,
All were he shorte, longe, blake, or white,
I toke no kepe, so that he liked me,
How poure he was, ne eke of what degree.
" What shuld I saye? but at the monthes ende
This jolly clerk Jankin, that was so hende,
Hath wedded me with gret solempnitee,
And to him yave I all the lond and fee,
That ever was me yeven therbefore:
But afterward repented me ful sore.
He n'olde suffre nothing of my list.
By God he smote me ones with his fist,
For that I rent out of his book a lefe,
That of the stroke myn ere wex al defe.
Stibborn I was, as is a leonesse,
And of my tonge a veray jangleresse,
And walk I wold, as I had don beforn,
Fro hous to hous, although he had it sworn:
For which he oftentimes wolde preche,
And me of olde Romaine gestes teche.
" How he Sulpitius Gallus left his wif,
And hire forsoke for terme of all his lif,
Not but for open-heded he hire say
Loking out at his dore upon a day.
" Another Romaine told he me by name,
That, for his wif was at a sommer game
Without his weting, he forsoke hire eke.
" And than wold he upon his Bible seke
That ilke proverbe of Ecclesiaste,
Wher he commandeth, and forbedeth faste,
Man shal not suffer his wif go route aboute.
" Than wold he say right thus withouten doute:
' Who so that bildeth his hous all of salwes,
And pricketh his blind hors over the falwes,
And suffereth his wif to go seken halwes,
Is worthy to be honged on the galwes.'
" But all for nought, I sette not an hawe
Of his proverbes, ne of his olde sawe;
Ne I wold not of him corrected be.
I hate hem that my vices tellen me,
And so do mo of us (God wote) than I.
This made him wood with me all utterly;
I n'olde not forbere him in no cas.
" Now wol I say you soth by Seint Thomas,
Why that I rent of his book a lefe,
For which he smote me, so that I was defe.
" He had a book, that gladly night and day
For his disport he wolde it rede alway,
He cleped it Valerie, and Theophrast,
And with that book he lough alway ful fast.
And eke ther was a clerk somtime at Rome,
A cardinal, that highte Seint Jerome,
That made a book against Jovinian,
Which book was ther, and eke Tertullian,
Crisippus, Tortula, and Helowis,
That was abbesse not fer fro Paris;
And eke the paraboles of Salomon,
Ovides art, and bourdes many on;
And alle thise were bonden in o volume.
And every night and day was his custume
(Whan he had leiser and vacation
From other worldly occupation)
To reden in this book of wikked wives.
He knew of hem mo legendes and mo lives,
Than ben of goode wives in the Bible.
" For trusteth wel, it is an impossible,
That any clerk wol spoken good of wives,
(But if it be of holy seintes lives)
Ne of non other woman never the mo.
Who peinted the leon, telleth me, who?
By God, if wimmen hadden written stories,
As clerkes han, within hir oratories,
They wold have writ of men more wikkednesse,
Than all the merke of Adam may redresse.
The children of Mercury and of Venus
Ben in hir werking ful contrarious.
Mercury loveth wisdom and science,
And Venus loveth riot and dispence.
And for hir divers disposition,
Eche falleth in others exaltation.
As thus, God wote, Mercury is desolat
In Pisces, wher Venus is exaltat,
And Venus falleth wher Mercury is reised.
Therfore no woman of no clerk is preised.
The clerk whan he is old, and may nought do
Of Venus werkes not worth his old sho,
Than siteth he doun, and writeth in his dotage,
That wimmen cannot kepe hir mariage.
But now to purpos, why I tolde thee,
That I was beten for a book parde.
" Upon a night Jankin, that was our sire,
Red on his book, as he sate by the fire,

Of Eva first, that for hire wikkednesse
Was all mankind brought to wretchednesse,
For which that Jesu Crist himself was slain,
That bought us with his herte-blood again.
" Lo here expresse of wimmen may ye find,
That woman was the losse of all mankind.
" Tho redde he me how Sampson lost his heres
Sleping, his lemman kitte hem with hire sheres,
Teurgh whiche treson lost he both his eyen.
" Tho redde he me, if that I shal not lien,
Of Hercules, and of his Deianire,
That caused him to set himself a-fire.
" Nothing forgat he the care and the wo,
That Socrates had with his wives two;
How Xantippa cast pisse upon his hed.
This sely man sat still, as he were ded,
He wiped his hed, no more dorst he sain,
But, er the thonder stint ther cometh rain.
" Of Pasiphae, that was the quene of Crete,
For shrewednesse him thought the tale swete.
Fie, speke no more (it is a grisely thing)
Of hire horrible lust and hire liking.
" Of Clitemnestra for hire lecherie
That falsely made hire husbond for to die,
He redde it with ful good devotion.
" He told me eke, for what occasion
Amphiorax at Thebes lost his lif:
My husbond had a legend of his wif
Eriphile, that for an ouche of gold
Hath prively unto the Grekes told,
Wher that hire husbond hidde him in a place,
For which he had at Thebes sory grace.
" Of Lima told he me, and of Lucie:
They bothe made hir husbondes for to die,
That on for love, that other was for hate.
Lima hire husbond on an even late
Enpoysoned hath, for that she was his fo:
Lucia likerous loved hir husbond so,
That for he shuld alway upon hire thinke,
She yave him swiche a maner love-drinke,
That he was ded er it was by the morwe:
And thus algates husbondes hadden sorwe.
" Than told he me, how on Latumeus
Complained to his felaw Arius,
That in his garden growed swiche a tree,
On which he said how that his wives three
Honged hemself for hertes despitous.
'O leve brother,' quod this Arius,
'Yeve me a plant of thilke blessed tree,
And in my gardin planted shal it be.'
" Of later date of wives hath he redde,
That som han slain hir husbonds in hir bedde,
And let hir lechour dight hem all the night,
While that the corps lay in the flore upright:
And som han driven nailes in hir brain,
While that they slepe, and thus they han hem slain:
Som han hem yeven poyson in hir drink:
He spake more harm than herte may bethinke.
" And therwithall he knew of mo proverbes,
Than in this world their growen gras or herbes.
" 'Bet is' (quod he) 'thin habitation
Be with a leon, or a foule dragon,
Than with a woman using for to chide.
" 'Bet is' (quod he) 'high in the roof abide,
Than with an angry woman doun in the hous,
They ben so wikked and contrarious:
They haten, that hir husbonds loven ay.'
" He sayd, a woman cast hire shame away,
Whan she cast of hire smock; and forthermo,
A faire woman, but she be chast also,
Is like a gold ring in a sowes nose.
" Who coude wene, or who coude suppose
The wo that in min herte was, and the pine?
And whan I saw he n'olde never fine
To reden on this cursed book all night,
Al sodenly three leves have I plight
Out of his book, right as he redde, and eke
I with my fist so toke him on the cheke,
That in oure fire he fell bakward adoun.
And he up sterte, as doth a wood leoun,
And with his fist he smote me on the hed,
That in the flore I lay as I were ded.
And whan he saw how stille that I lay,
He was agast, and wold have fled away,
Til at the last out of my swough I brayde.
'O, hast thou slain me, false theef?' I sayde,
'And for my lond thus hast thou mordred me?
Er I be ded, yet wol I kissen thee.'
And nere he came, and kneled faire adoun,
And sayde; 'Dere suster Alisoun,
As helpe me God I shall thee never smite:
That I have don it is thyself to wite,
Foryeve it me, and that I thee beseke.'
And yet eftsones I hitte him on the cheke,
And sayde; 'Theef, thus much am I awreke.
Now wol I die, I may no longer speke.'
" But at the last, with mochel care and wo
We fell accorded by ourselven two:
He yaf me all the bridel in min hond
To han the governance of hous and lond,
And of his tonge, and of his hond also,
And made him brenne his book anon right tho.
" And whan that I had getten unto me
By maistrie all the soverainetee,
And that he sayd, 'Min owen trewe wif,
Do as thee list, the terme of all thy lif,
Kepe thin honour, and kepe eke min estat;'
After that day we never had debat.
God helpe me so, I was to him as kinde,
As any wif fro Denmark unto Inde,
And al so trewe, and so was he to me:
I pray to God that sit in majestee
So blisse his soule; for his mercy dere.
Now wol I say my tale if ye wol here."
The Frere lough whan he herd all this:
"Now dame," quod he, "so have I joye and blis,
This is a long preamble of a tale."
And whan the Sompnour herd the Frere gale,
"Lo" (quod this Sompnour) "Goddes armes two,
A frere wol entermit him everemo:
Lo, goode men, a flie and eke a frere
Wol fall in every dish and eke matere.
What spekest thou of preambulatioun?
What? amble or trot; or pees, or go sit doun:
Thou lettest our disport in this matere." [*Frere;*
"Ye, wolt thou so, sire Sompnour?" quod the
"Now by my faith I shal, er that I go,
Tell of a sompnour swiche a tale or two,
That all the folk shal laughen in this place."
"Now elles, Frere, I wol beshrewe thy face,"
(Quod this Sompnour) "and I beshrewe me,
But if I telle tales two or three
Of freres, or I come to Sidenborne,
That I shal make thin herte for to morne:
For wel I wot thy patience is gon."
Our Hoste cried; "Pees, and that anon;"
And sayde; "Let the woman tell hire tale.
Ye fare as folk that dronken ben of ale.
Do, dame, tell forth your tale, and that is best."
"Alredy, sire," quod she, "right as you lest,

If I have licence of this worthy frere." [here."
"Yes, dame," quod he, "tell forth, and I wol

THE WIF OF BATHES TALE.

In olde dayes of the king Artour,
Of which that Bretons speke gret honour,
All was this lond ful filled of faerie;
The elf-quene, with her joly compagnie,
Danced ful oft in many a grene mede.
This was the old opinion as I rede;
I speke of many hundred yeres ago;
But now can no man see non elves mo,
For now the grete charitee and prayeres
Of lim-toures and other holy freres,
That serchen every land and every streme,
As thikke as motes in the sonne-beme,
Blissing halles, chambres, kichenes, and boures,
Citees and burghes, castles highe and toures,
Thropes and bernes, shepenes and dairies,
This maketh that ther ben no faeries:
For ther as wont to walken as an elf,
Ther walketh now the limitour himself,
In undermeles and in morweninges,
And sayth his matines and his holy thinges,
As he goth in his limitatioun.
Women may now go safely up and doun,
In every bush, and under every tree,
Ther is non other incubus but he,
And he ne will don hem no dishonour.
And so befell it, that this king Artour
Had in his hous a lusty bacheler,
That on a day came riding fro river,
And happed, that, alone as she was borne,
He saw a maiden walking him beforne,
Of which maid he anon, maugre hire hed,
By veray force beraft hire maidenhed:
For which oppression was swiche clamour,
And swiche pursuite unto the king Artour,
That damned was this knight for to be ded
By course of lawe, and shuld have lost his hed,
(Paraventure swiche was the statute tho,)
But that the quene and other ladies mo
So longe praieden the king of grace,
Til he his lif him granted in the place,
And yaf him to the quene, all at hire will
To chese whether she wold him save or spill.
The quene thanked the king with al hire might;
And after this thus spake she to the knight,
Whan that she saw hire time upon a day.
"Thou standest yet" (quod she) "in swiche array,
That of thy lif yet hast thou no seuretee;
I grant the lif, if thou canst tellen me,
What thing is it that women most desiren:
Beware, and kepe thy nekke-bone from yren.
And if thou canst not tell it me anon,
Yet wol I yeve thee leve for to gon
A twelvemonth and a day, to seke and lere
An answer suffisant in this matere.
And seuretee wol I have, or that thou pace,
Thy body for to yelden in this place."
Wo was the knight, and sorwefully he siketh;
But what? he may not don all as him liketh.
And at the last he chese him for to wende,
And come agen right at the yeres ende
With swiche answer, as God wold him purvay:
And taketh his leve, and wendeth forth his way.

He seketh every hous and every place,
Wher as he hopeth for to finden grace,
To lernen what thing women loven moste:
But he ne conde arriven in no coste,
Where as he mighte find in this matere
Two creatures according in fere.
Som saiden, women loven best richesse,
Som saiden honour, som saiden jolinesse,
Som riche array, som saiden lust a-bedde,
And oft time to be widewe and to be wedde.
Some saiden, that we ben in herte most esed
Whan that we ben yflatered and ypreised.
He goth ful nigh the sothe, I wol not lie;
A man shal winne us best with flaterie;
And with attendance, and with besinesse
Ben we ylimed bothe more and lesse.
And som men saiden, that we loven best
For to be free, and do right as us lest,
And that no man repreve us of our vice,
But say that we ben wise and nothing nice.
For trewely ther n'is non of us all,
If any wight wol claw us on the gall,
That we n'ill kike, for that he saith us soth:
Assay, and he shal find it, that so doth.
For be we never so vicious withinne,
We wol be holden wise and clene of sinne.
And som saiden, that gret delit han we
For to be holden stable and eke secre,
And in o purpos stedfastly to dwell,
And not bewreyen thing that men us tell.
But that tale is not worth a rake-stele.
Parde we women connen nothing hele,
Witnesse on Mida; wol ye here the tale?
Ovide, amonges other thinges smale,
Said, Mida had under his longe heres
Growing upon his hed two asses eres;
The whiche vice he hid, as he best might,
Ful subtilly from every mannes sight,
That, save his wif, ther wist of it no mo;
He loved hire most, and trusted hire also;
He praied hire, that to no creature
She n'olde tellen of his disfigure.
She swore him, nay, for all the world to winne,
She n'olde do that vilanie, ne sinne,
To make hire husbond han so foule a name:
She n'olde not tell it for hire owen shame.
But natheles hire thoughte that she dide,
That she so longe shuld a conseil hide;
Hire thought it swal so sore aboute hire herte,
That nedely som word hire must asterte;
And sith she dorst nat telle it to man,
Doun to a mareis faste by she ran,
Til she came ther, hire herte was a-fire:
And as a bitore bumbleth in the mire,
She laid hire mouth unto the water doun.
"Bewrey me not, thou water, with thy soun,"
Quod she, "to thee I tell it, and no mo,
Min husbond hath long asses eres two.
Now is min herte all hole, now is it out,
I might no lenger kepe it out of dout."
Here may ye see, though we a time abide,
Yet out it moste, we can no conseil hide.
The remenant of the tale, if ye wol here,
Redeth Ovide, and ther ye may it lere.
This knight, of which my tale is specially,
Whan that he saw he might not come therby,
(This is to sayn, what women loven most)
Within his brest ful sorweful was his gost.
But home he goth, he mighte not sojourne,
The day was come, that homward must he turne.

And in his way, it happed him to ride
In all his care, under a forest side,
Wheras he saw upon a dance go
Of ladies foure and twenty, and yet mo.
Toward this ilke dance he drow ful yerne,
In hope that he som wisdom shulde lerne;
But certainly, er he came fully there,
Yvanished was this dance, he n'iste not wher;
No creature saw he that bare lif,
Save on the grene he saw sitting a wif,
A fouler wight ther may no man devise.
Againe this knight this olde wif gan arise,
And said; "Sire knight, here forth ne lith no way.
Tell me what that ye seken by your fay,
Paraventure it may the better be:
Thise olde folk con mochel thing," quod she.
"My leve mother," quod this knight, "certain,
I n'am but ded, but if that I can sain,
What thing it is that women most desire:
Coude ye me wisse, I wold quite wel your hire."
"Plight me thy trouthe here in myn hond," quod she,
"The nexte thing that I requere of thee
Thou shalt it do, if it be in thy might,
And I wol fell it you or it be night."
"Have here my trouthe," quod the knight, "I graunte."
"Thanne," quod she, "I dare me wel avaunte,
Thy lif is sauf, for I wol stond therby,
Upon my lif the quene wol say as I:
Let see, which is proudest of hem alle,
That wereth on a kerchef or a calle,
That dare sayn nay of that I shal you teche.
Let us go forth withouten lenger speche."
Tho rowned she a pistel in his ere,
And bad him to be glad, and have no fere.
Whan they ben comen to the court, this knight
Said, he had hold his day, as he had hight,
And redy was his answere, as he saide.
Ful many a noble wif, and many a maide,
And many a widewe, for that they ben wise,
(The quene hireself sitting as a justice)
Assembled ben his answer for to here,
And afterward this knight was bode appere.
To every wight commanded was silence,
And that the knight shuld tell in audience,
What thing that worldly women loven best.
This knight ne stood not still, as doth a best,
But to this question anon answerd
With manly vois, that all the court it herd.
"My liege lady, generally," quod he,
"Women desiren to han soverainetee,
As well over hir husbond as hir love,
And for to ben in maistrie him above.
This is your most desire, though ye me kille,
Doth as you list, I am here at your wille."
In all the court ne was ther wif ne maide,
Ne widewe, that contraried that he saide,
But said, he was worthy to han his lif.
And with that word up stert this olde wif,
Which that the knight saw sitting on the grene,
"Mercy," quod she, "my soveraine lady quene,
Er that your court depart, as doth me right.
I taughte this answere unto this knight,
For which he plighte me his trouthe there,
The firste thing I wold of him requere,
He wold it do, if it lay in his might.
Before this court than pray I thee, sire knight,"
Quod she, "that thou me take unto thy wif,
For wel thou wost, that I have kept thy lif:
If I say false, say nay upon thy fay."
This knight answered, "Alas and wala wa!
I wot right wel that swiche was my behest.
For Goddes love as chese a new request:
Take all my good, and let my body go."
"Nay then," quod she, "I shrewe us bothe two.
For though that I be olde, foule, and pore,
I n'olde for all the metal ne the ore,
That under erthe is grave, or lith above,
But if thy wif I were and eke thy love."
"My love?" quod he, "nay my dampnation.
Alas! that any of my nation
Shuld ever so foule disparage be."
But all for nought; the end is this, that he
Constrained was, he nedes must hire wed,
And taketh this olde wif, and goth to bed.
Now wolden som men sayn paraventure,
That for my negligence I do no cure
To tellen you the joye and all the array,
That at the feste was that ilke day.
To which thing shortly answeren I shal:
I say ther was no joy no feste at al,
Ther n'as but hevinesse and mochel sorwe,
For prively he wedded hire on the morwe,
And all day after hid him as an oule,
So wo was him, his wif loked so foule.
Gret was the wo the knight had in his thought
Whan he was with his wif a-bed ybrought,
He walweth, and he turneth to and fro.
This olde wif lay smiling evermo,
And said: "O dere husbond, *benedicite*,
Fareth every knight thus with his wif as ye?
Is this the law of king Artoures hous?
Is every knight of his thus dangerous?
I am your owen love, and eke your wif,
I am she, which that saved hath your lif,
And certes yet did I you never unright.
Why fare ye thus with me this firste night?
Ye faren like a man had lost his wit.
What is my gilt? for Goddes love tell it,
And it shal ben amended, if I may."
"Amended?" quod this knight, "alas! nay, nay,
It wol not ben amended never mo;
Thou art so lothly, and so olde also,
And therto comen of so low a kind,
That litel wonder is though I walwe and wind;
So wolde God, min herte wolde brest."
"Is this" quod she, "the cause of your unrest?"
"Ye certainly," quod he, "no wonder is."
"Now sire," quod she, "I coude amend all this,
If that me list, ere it were dayes three,
So wel ye mighten bere you unto me.
"But for ye speken of swiche gentillesse,
As is descended out of old richesse,
That therfore shullen ye be gentilmen;
Swiche arrogance n'is not worth an hen.
"Loke who that is most vertuous alway,
Prive and apert, and most entendeth ay
To do the gentil dedes that he can,
And take him for the gretest gentilman.
Crist wol we claime of him our gentillesse,
Not of our elders for hir old richesse.
For though they yeve us all hir heritage,
For which we claim to ben of high parage,
Yet may they not bequethen, for no thing,
To non of us, hir vertuous living,
That made hem gentilmen called to be,
And bade us folwen hem in swiche degree.
"Wel can the wise poet of Florence,
That highte Dant, speken of this sentence:
Lo, in swiche maner rime is Dantes tale.
"Ful selde up riseth by his branches smale

Prowesse of man, for God of his goodnesse
Wol that we claime of him our gentillesse:
For of our elders may we nothing claime
But temporel thing, that man may hurt and maime.
"Eke every wight wot this as wel as I,
If gentillesse were planted naturelly
Unto a certain linage doun the line,
Prive and apert, than wol they never fine
To don of gentillesse the faire office,
They mighten do no vilanie or vice.
"Take fire and bere it into the derkest hous
Betwix this and the mount of Caucasus,
And let men shette the dores, and go thenne,
Yet wol the fire as faire lie and brenne
As twenty thousand men might it behold;
His office natural ay wol it hold,
Up peril of my lif, til that it die.
"Here may ye see wel, how that genterie
Is not annexed to possession,
Sith folk ne don hir operation
Alway, as doth the fire, lo, in his kind.
For God it wot, men moun ful often find
A lordes sone do shame and vilanie.
And he that wol han pris of his genterie,
For he was boren of a gentil hous,
And had his elders noble and vertuous,
And n'ill himselven do no gentil dedes,
Ne folwe his gentil auncestrie, that ded is,
He n'is not gentil, be he duk or erl;
For vilains sinful dedes make a cherl.
For gentillesse n'is but the renomee
Of thin auncestres, for hir high bountee,
Which is a strange thing to thy persone:
Thy gentillesse cometh fro God alone.
Than cometh our veray gentillesse of grace,
It was no thing bequethed us with our place.
"Thinketh how noble, as saith Valerius,
Was thilke Tullius Hostilius,
That out of poverte rose to high noblesse.
Redeth Senek, and redeth eke Boece,
Ther shull ye seen expresse, that it no dred is,
That he is gentil that doth gentil dedis.
And therfore, leve husbond, I thus conclude,
Al be it that my auncestres weren rude,
Yet may the highe God, and so hope I,
Granten me grace to liven vertuously:
Than am I gentil, whan that I beginne
To liven vertuously, and weiven sinne.
"And ther as ye of poverte me repreve,
The highe God, on whom that we beleve,
In wilful poverte chese to lede his lif:
And certes, every man, maiden, or wif
May understond that Jesus Heven king
Ne wold not chese a vicious living.
"Glad poverte is an honest thing certain.
This wol Senek and other clerkes sain.
Who so that halt him paid of his poverte,
I hold him rich, al had he not a sherte.
He that coveiteth is a poure wight,
For he wold han that is not in his might.
But he that nought hath, ne coveiteth to have,
Is riche, although ye hold him but a knave.
Veray poverte is sinne proprely.
"Juvenal saith of poverte merily:
The poure man whan he goth by the way,
Before the theves he may sing and play.
Poverte is hateful good; and, as I gesse,
A ful gret bringer out of besinesse;
A gret amender eke of sapience
To him, that taketh it in patience.
Poverte is this, although it seme elenge,
Possession that no wight wol challenge.
Poverte ful often, whan a man is low,
Maketh his God and eke himself to know:
Poverte a spectakel is, as thinketh me,
Thurgh which he may his very frendes see.
And therfore, sire, sin that I you not greve,
Of my poverte no more me repreve.
"Now, sire, of elde, that ye repreven me:
And certes, sire, though non auctoritee
Were in no book, ye gentiles of honour
Sain, that men shuld an olde wight honour,
And clepe him fader, for your gentillesse;
And auctours shal I finden, as I gesse.
"Now ther ye sain that I am foule and old,
Than drede ye not to ben a cokewold.
For filthe, and elde also, so mote I the,
Ben grete wardeins upon chastitee.
But natheles, sin I know your delit,
I shal fulfill your worldly appetit.
"Chese now" (quod she) "on of these thinges twey,
To han me foule and old til that I dey,
And be to you a trewe humble wif,
And never you displese in all my lif:
Or elles wol ye han me youge and faire,
And take your aventure of the repaire,
That shal be to your hous because of me,
Or in som other place it may wel be?
Now chese yourselven whether that you liketh."
This knight aviseth him, and sore siketh,
But at the last he said in this manere;
"My lady and my love, and wif so dere,
I put me in your wise governance,
Cheseth yourself which may be most plesance
And most honour to you and me also,
I do no force the whether of the two:
For as you liketh, it sufficeth me."
"Than have I got the maisterie," quod she,
"Sin I may chese and governe as me lest."
"Ye certes, wif," quod he, "I hold it best."
"Kisse me," quod she, "we be no lenger wrothe,
For by my trouth I wol be to you bothe,
This is to sayn, ye bothe faire and good.
I pray to God that I mote sterven wood,
But I to you be al so good and trewe,
As ever was wif, sin that the world was newe;
And but I be to-morwe as faire to seen,
As any lady, emperice, or quene,
That is betwix the est and eke the west,
Doth with my lif and deth right as you lest,
Cast up the curtein, loke how that it is."
And whan the knight saw verraily all this,
That she so faire was, and so yonge therto,
For joye he hent hire in his armes two:
His herte bathed in a bath of blisse,
A thousand time a-row he gan hire kisse:
And she obeyed him in every thing,
That mighte don him plesance or liking.
And thus they live unto hir lives ende
In parfit joye, and Jesu Crist us sende
Husbondes meke and yonge, and fressh a-bed,
And grace to overlive hem that we wed.
And eke I pray Jesus to short hir lives,
That wol not be governed by hir wives.
And old and angry nigards of dispence,
God send hem sone a veray pestilence.

THE FRERES PROLOGUE.

THIS worthy limitour, this noble Frere,
He made alway a manere louring chere
Upon the Sompnour, but for honestee
No vilains word as yet to him spake he:
But at the last he said unto the wif;
"Dame," (quod he) "God yeve you right good lif,
Ye have here touched, all so mote I the,
In scole matere a ful gret difficultee.
Ye han said mochel thing right wel, I say:
But, dame, here as we riden by the way,
Us nedeth not to speken but of game,
And let auctoritees in Goddes name
To preching, and to scole eke of clergie.
"But if it like unto this compagnie,
I wol you of a sompnour tell a game;
Parde ye may wel knowen by the name,
That of sompnour may no good be said;
I pray that non of you be evil apaid;
A sompnour is a renner up and doun
With mandements for fornicatioun,
And is ybete at every tounes ende."
Tho spake our Hoste; "A, sire, ye shuld ben hende
And curteis, as a man of your estat,
In compagnie we wiln have no debat:
Tellen your tale, and let the sompnour be."
"Nay," quod the Sompnour, "let him say by me
What so him lst; whan it cometh to my lot,
By God I shal him quiten every grot.
I shal him tellen which a gret honour
It is to be a flatering limitour,
And eke of many another maner crime,
Which nedeth not rehersen at this time,
And his office I shal him tell ywis."
Our Hoste answered; "Pees, no more of this."
And afterward he said unto the Frere,
Tell forth your tale, min owen maister dere.

THE FRERES TALE.

WHILOM ther was dwelling in my contree
An archedeken, a man of high degree,
That boldely did execution
In punishing of fornication,
Of witchecraft, and eke of bauderie,
Of defamation, and avouterie,
Of chirche-reves, and of testaments,
Of contracts, and of lack of sacraments,
Of usure, and of simonie also;
But certes lechoures did he gretest wo;
They shulden singen, if that they were hent;
And smale titheres weren foule yshent,
If any persone wold upon hem plaine,
Ther might a-tert hem no pecunial peine.
For smale tithes, and smale offering,
He made the peple pitously to sing;
For er the bishop hent hem with his crook
They weren in the archedekens book;
Than had he thurgh his jurisdiction
Power to don on hem correction.
He had a sompnour redy to his hond,
A slier boy was non in Englelond;
For subtilly he had his espiaille,
That taught him wel wher it might ought availle.
He coude spare of lechours on or two,
To techen him to foure and twenty mo.
For though this sompnour wood be as an hare,
To tell his harlotrie I wol not spare,
For we ben out of hir correction,
They han of us no jurisdiction,
Ne never shul have, terme of all hir lives.
"Peter, so ben the women of the stives,"
Quod this Sompnour, "yput out of our cure."
"Pees, with mischance and with misaventure,"
Our Hoste said, "and let him tell his tale.
Now telleth forth, and let the Sompnour gale,
Ne spareth not, min owen maister dere."
This false theef, this sompnour, quod the Frere,
Had alway baudes redy to his hond,
As any hauke to lure in Englelond,
That told him all the secree that they knewe,
For hir acquaintance was not come of newe;
They weren his approvers prively.
He tooke himself a gret profit therby:
His maister knew not alway what he wan.
Withouten mandement, a lewed man
He coude sompne, up peine of Cristes curse,
And they were inly glad to fille his purse,
And maken him gret festes at the ale.
And right as Judas hadde purses smale
And was a theef, right swiche a theef was he,
His master hadde but half his duetee.
He was (if I shal yeven him his laud)
A theef, and eke a sompnour, and a baud.
He had eke wenches at his retenue,
That whether that sire Robert or sire Hue,
Or Jakke, or Rauf, or who so that it were
That lay by hem, they told it in his ere.
Thus was the wenche and he of on assent.
And he wold fecche a feined mandement,
And sompne hem to the chapitre bothe two,
And pill the man, and let the wenche go.
Than wold he say; "Frend, I shal for thy sake
Do strike thee out of oure lettres blake;
Thee thar no more as in this cas travaille;
I am thy frend ther I may thee availle."
Certain he knew of briboures many mo,
Than possible is to tell in yeres two:
For in this world n'is dogge for the bowe,
That can an hurt dere from an hole yknowe,
Bet than this sompnour knew a slie lechour,
Or an avoutrer, or a paramour:
And for that was the fruit of all his rent,
Therfore on it he set all his entent.
And so befell, that ones on a day
This sompnour, waiting ever on his pray,
Rode forth to sompne a widewe an olde ribibe,
Feining a cause, for he wold han a bribe.
And happed that he saw beforn him ride
A gay yeman under a forest side:
A bow he bare, and arwes bright and kene,
He had upon a courtepy of grene,
An hat upon his hed with frenges blake. [atake."
"Sire," quod this sompnour, "haile and wel
"Welcome," quod he, "and every good felaw;
Whider ridest thou under this grene shaw?"
(Saide this yeman) "wolt thou fer to-day?"
This sompnour him answerd, and saide, "Nay,
Here fast by" (quod he) "is min entent
To riden, for to reisen up a rent,
That longeth to my lordes duetee."
"A, art thou than a baillif?" "Ye," quod he.
(He dorste not for veray filth and shame
Say that he was a sompnour, for the name.)
"*De par dieux*," quod this yeman, "leve brother,
Thou art a baillif, and I am another.

I am unknowen, as in this contree.
Of thin acquaintance I wol prayen thee,
And eke of brotherhed, if that thee list.
I have gold and silver lying in my chist;
If that thee hap to come into our shire,
Al shal be thin, right as thou wolt desire." [faith."
"*Grand mercy*," quod this sompnour, "by my
Everich in others hond his trouthe laith,
For to be sworne brethren til they dey.
In daliaunce they riden forth and pley.
This sompnour, which that was as ful of jangles,
As ful of venime ben thise wariangles,
And ever enquering upon every thing,
"Brother," quod he, "wher is now your dwelling,
Another day if that I should you seche?"
This yeman him answerd in softe speche;
"Brother," quod he, "fer in the north contree,
Wheras I hope somtime I shal thee see.
Or we depart I shal thee so wel wisse,
That of min hous ne shalt thou never misse."
"Now brother," quod this sompnour, "I you pray,
Teche me, while that we riden by the way,
(Sith that ye ben a baillif as am I)
Som subtilteé and tell me faithfully
In min office how I may moste winne.
And spareth not for conscience or for sinne,
But, as my brother, tell me how do ye."
"Now by my trouthe, brother min," said he,
"As I shal tellen thee a faithful tale.
My wages ben ful streit and eke ful smale;
My lord is hard to me and dangerous,
And min office is ful laborious;
And therfore by extortion I leve,
Forsoth I take all that men wol me yeve.
Algates by sleighte or by violence
Fro yere to yere I win all my dispence;
I can no better tellen faithfully."
"Now certes," (quod this sompnour) "so fare I;
I spare not to taken, God it wote,
But if it be to hevy or to hote.
What I may gete in conseil prively,
No maner conscience of that have I.
N'ere min extortion, I might not liven,
Ne of swiche japes wol I not be shriven.
Stomak ne conscience know I non;
I shrew thise shrifte-faders everich on.
Wel be we met by God and by Seint Jame.
But leve brother, tell me than thy name,"
Quod this sompnour. Right in this mene while
This yeman gan a litel for to smile.
"Brother," quod he, "wolt thou that I thee telle?
I am a fend, my dwelling is in Helle,
And here I ride about my pourchasing,
To wote wher men wol give me any thing.
My pourchas is th' effect of all my rente.
Loke how thou ridest for the same entente
To winnen good, thou rekkest never how,
Right so fare I, for riden wol I now
Unto the worldes ende for a praye." [ye?
"A," quod this sompnour, "*benedicite*, what say
I wend ye were a yeman trewely.
Ye have a mannes shape as wel as I.
Have ye than a figure determinat
In Helle, ther ye ben in your estat?"
"Nay certainly," quod he, "ther have we non,
But whan us liketh we can take us on,
Or elles make you wene that we ben shape
Somtime like a man, or like an ape;
Or like an angel can I ride or go;
It is no wonder thing though it be so,
A lousy jogelour can deceiven thee,
And parde yet can I more craft than he." [gon
"Why," quod the sompnour, "ride ye than or
In sondry shape, and not alway in on?"
"For we," quod he, "wol us swiche forme make,
As most is able our preye for to take."
"What maketh you to han all this labour?"
"Ful many a cause, leve sire sompnour,"
Saide this fend. "But alle thing hath time;
The day is short, and it is passed prime,
And yet ne wan I nothing in this day;
I wol entend to winning, if I may,
And not entend our thinges to declare:
For, brother min, thy wit is al to bare
To understand, although I told hem thee.
But for thou axest, why labouren we:
For somtime we be Goddes instruments,
And menes to don his commandements,
Whan that him *list*, upon his creatures,
In divers actes and in divers figures,
Withouten him we have no might certain,
If that him list to stonden theragain.
And somtime at our praiere han we leve,
Only the body, and not the soule to greve:
Witnesse on Job, whom that we diden wo.
And somtime han we might on bothe two,
This is to sain, on soule and body eke.
And somtime be we suffered for to seke
Upon a man, and don his soule unreste
And not his body, and all is for the beste.
Whan he withstandeth our temptation,
It is a cause of his salvation,
Al be it that it was not our entente
He shuld be sauf, but that we wold him hente.
And somtime be we servant unto man,
As to the archebishop Seint Dunstan,
And to the apostle servant eke was I."
"Yet tell me," quod this sompnour, "faithfully,
Make ye you newe bodies thus alway
Of elements?" The fend answered, "Nay:
Somtime we feine, and somtime we arise
With dede bodies, in ful sondry wise,
And speke as renably, and faire, and wel,
As to the phitonesse did Samuel:
And yet wol som men say it was not he.
I do no force of your divinitee.
But o thing warne I thee, I wol not jape,
Thou wolt algates wete how we be shape:
Thou shalt hereafterward, my brother dere,
Come, wher thee nedeth not of me to lere,
For thou shalt by thin owen experience
Conne in a chaiere rede of this sentence,
Bet than Virgile, while he was on live,
Or Dant also. Now let us riden blive,
For I wol holden compagnie with thee,
Til it be so that thou forsake me." [betide.
"Nay," quod this sompnour, "that shal never
I am a yeman knowen is ful wide;
My trouthe wol I hold, as in this case.
For though thou were the devil Sathanas,
My trouthe wol I hold to thee, my brother,
As I have sworne, and eche of us to other,
For to be trewe brethren in this cas,
And bothe we gon abouten our pourchas.
Take thou thy part, what that men wol thee yeve,
And I shal min, thus may we bothe leve.
And if that any of us have more than other,
Let him be trewe, and part it with his brother."
"I graunte," quod the devil, "by my fay."
And with that word they riden forth hir way,

And right at entring of the tounes ende,
To which this sompnour shope him for to wende,
They saw a cart, that charged was with hay,
Which that a carter drove forth on his way.
Deepe was the way, for which the carte stood:
The carter smote, and cried as he were wood,
"Heit scot, heit brok, what, spare ye for the stones?
The fend," quod he, "you fecche body and bones,
As ferforthly as ever ye were foled,
So mochel wo as I have with you tholed.
The devil have al, bothe hors, and cart, and hay."
The sompnour sayde, "Here shal we have a pray;"
And nere the fend he drow, as nought ne were,
Ful prively, and rouned in his ere:
"Herken my brother, herken, by thy faith,
Herest thou not, how that the carter saith?
Hent it anon, for he hath yeve it thee,
Both hay and cart, and eke his caples three."
"Nay," quod the devil, "God wot, never a del,
It is not his entente, trust thou me wel,
Axe him thyself, if thou not trowest me,
Or elles stint a while and thou shalt see."
This carter thakketh his hors upon the croupe,
And they begonne to drawen and to stoupe.
"Heit now," quod he, "ther Jesu Crist you blesse,
And all his hondes werk, both more and lesse:
That was wel twight, min owen liard boy,
I pray God save thy body and Seint Eloy.
Now is my cart out of the slough parde."
"Lo, brother," quod the fend, "what told I thee?
Here may ye seen, min owen dere brother,
The cherl spake o thing, but he thought another.
Let us go forth abouten our viage;
Here win I nothing upon this cariage."
Whan that they comen somwhat out of toun,
This sompnour to his brother gan to roune;
"Brother," quod he, "here woneth an old rebekke,
That had almost as lefe to lese hire nekke,
As for to yeve a peny of hire good.
I wol have twelf pens though that she be wood,
Or I wol somone hire to our office;
And yet, God wot, of hire know I no vice.
But for thou canst not, as in this contree,
Winnen thy cost, take here ensample of me."
This sompnour clappeth at the widewes gate;
"Come out," he sayd, "thou olde very trate;
I trow thou hast som frere or preest with thee."
"Who clappeth?" said this wife, "*Benedicite*,
"God save you, sire, what is your swete will?"
"I have," quod he, "of somons here a bill.
Up peine of cursing, loke that thou be
To-morwe before the archedekenes knee,
To answere to the court, of certain thinges."
"Now, Lord," quod she, "Crist Jesu, king of kinges,
So wisly helpe me, as I ne may:
I have ben sike, and that ful many a day.
I may not go so fer," quod she, "ne ride,
But I be ded, so priketh it in my side.
May I not axe a libel, sire sompnour,
And answere ther by my procuratour
To swiche thing as men wold apposen me?"
"Yes," quod this sompnour, "pay anon, let see,
Twelf pens to me, and I wol thee acquite.
I shal no profit han therby but lite:
My maister hath the profit and not I.
Come of, and let me riden hastily;
Yeve me twelf pens, I may no lenger tarie."
"Twelf pens," quod she, "now lady Seinte Marie
So wisly helpe me out of care and sinne,
This wide world though that I shuld it winne,
Ne have I not twelf pens within my hold.
Ye knowen wel that I am poure and old;
Kithe your almesse upon me poure wretche."
"Nay than," quod he, "the foule fend me fetche,
If I thee excuse, though thou shuldest be spilt."
"Alas!" quod she, "God wot, I have no gilt."
"Pay me," quod he, "or by the swete Seinte Anne
As I wol bere away thy newe panne
For dette, which thou owest me of old,
Whan that thou madest thyn husbond cokewold,
I paied at home for thy correction."
"Thou liest," quod she, "by my salvation,
Ne was I never or now, widew ne wif,
Sompned unto your court in all my lif;
Ne never I n'as but of my body trewe.
Unto the devil rough and blake of hewe
Yeve I thy body and my panne also."
And whan the devil herd hire cursen so
Upon hire knees, he sayd in this manere;
"Now, Mabily, min owen moder dere,
Is this your will in ernest that ye sey?"
"The devil," quod she, "so fetche him or he dey,
And panne and all, but he wol him repent."
"Nay, olde stot, that is not min entent,"
Quod this sompnour, "for to repenten me
For any thing that I have had of thee;
I wold I had thy smok and every cloth."
"Now brother," quod the devil, "be not wroth;
Thy body and this panne ben min by right.
Thou shalt with me to Helle yet to-night,
Where thou shalt knowen of our privetee
More than a maister of divinitee."
And with that word the foule fend him hent.
Body and soule, he with the devil went,
Where as thise sompnours han hir heritage;
And God that maked after his image
Mankinde, save and gide us all and some,
And lene this sompnour good man to become.
"Lordings, I coude have told you," quod this
"Had I had leiser for this Sompnour here, [Frere,
After the text of Crist, and Poule, and John,
And of oure other doctours many on,
Swiche peines, that your hertes might agrise,
Al be it so, that no tonge may devise,
Though that I might a thousand winter telle,
The peines of thilke cursed hous of Helle.
But for to kepe us fro that cursed place,
Waketh, and prayeth Jesu of his grace,
So kepe us fro the temptour Sathanas.
Herkneth this word, beware as in this cas.
The leon sit in his awaite alway
To sle the innocent, if that he may.
Disposeth ay your hertes to withstond
The fend, that you wold maken thral and bond;
He may not tempten you over your might,
For Crist wol be your champion and your knight;
And prayeth, that this Sompnour him repent
Of his misdedes, or that the fend him hent."

THE

SOMPNOURES PROLOGUE.

This Sompnour in his stirops high he stood,
Upon this Frere his herte was so wood,
That like an aspen leef he quoke for ire:
"Lordings," quod he, "but o thing I desire,
I you beseche, that of your curtesie,
Sin ye han herd this false Frere lie,

As suffereth me I may my tale telle.
" This frere bosteth that he knoweth Helle,
And, God it wot, that is but litel wonder,
Freres and fendes ben but litel asonder.
" For parde, ye han often time herd telle,
How that a frere ravished was to Helle
In spirit ones by a visioun,
And as an angel lad him up and doun,
To shewen him the peines that ther were,
In all the place saw he not a frere,
Of other folk he saw ynow in wo.
" Unto this angel spake the frere tho;
'Now, sire,' quod he, 'han freres swiche a grace,
That non of hem shal comen in this place?'
" 'Yes,' quoth this angel, 'many a millioun:'
And unto Sathanas he lad him doun.
'And now hath Sathanas,' saith he, 'a tayl
Broder than of a carrike is the sayl?
Hold up thy tayl, thou Sathanas,' quod he,
'Shew forth thin ers, and let the frere see
Wher is the nest of freres in this place.'
And er than half a furlong way of space,
Right so as bees out swarmen of an hive,
Out of the devils ers ther gonnen drive
A twenty thousand freres on a route.
And thurghout Hell they swarmed al aboute,
And com agen, as fast as they may gon,
And in his ers they crepen everich on:
He clapt his tayl agen, and lay ful still.
" This frere, whan he loked had his fill
Upon the turments of this sory place,
His spirit God restored of his grace
Into his body agen, and he awoke;
But natheles for fere yet he quoke,
So was the devils ers ay in his mind,
That is his heritage of veray kind.
" God save you alle, save this cursed Frere;
My prologue wol I end in this manere."

THE

SOMPNOURES TALE.

Lordings, ther is in Yorkshire, as I gesse,
A mersh contree ycalled Holdernesse,
In which ther went a limitour aboute
To preche, and eke to beg, it is no doute.
And so befell that on a day this frere
Had preched at a chirche in his manere,
And specially aboven every thing
Excited he the peple in his preching
To trentals, and to yeve for Goddes sake,
Wherwith men mighten holy houses make,
Ther as divine service is honoured,
Not ther as it is wasted and devoured,
Ne ther it needeth not for to be yeven,
As to possessioners, that mowen leven
(Thanked be God) in wele and abundance.
" Trentals," sayd he, " deliveren fro penance
Hir frendes soules, as wel olde as yonge,
Ye, whan that they ben hastily ysonge,
Not for to hold a preest jolif and gay,
He singeth not but o masse on a day.
Delivereth out," quod he, " anon the soules.
Ful hard it is, with fleshhook or with oules
To ben yclawed, or to bren or bake:
Now spede you hastily for Cristes sake."
And whan this frere had said all his entent,
With *qui cum patre* forth his way he went.
Whan folk in chirche had yeve him what hem lest,
He went his way, no lenger wold he rest,
With scrippe and tipped staf, ytucked hie:
In every hous he gan to pore and prie,
And begged mele and chese, or elles corn.
His felaw had a staf tipped with horn,
A pair of tables all of ivory,
And a pointel ypolished fetisly,
And wrote alway the names, as he stood,
Of alle folk that yave hem any good,
Askaunce that he wolde for hem preye.
" Yeve us a bushel whete, or malt, or reye,
A Goddes kichel, or a trippe of chese,
Or elles what you list, we may not chese;
A Goddes halfpeny, or a masse peny;
Or yeve us of your braun, if ye have any,
A dagon of your blanket, leve dame,
Our suster dere, (lo here I write your name)
Bacon or beef, or swiche thing as ye find."
A sturdy harlot went hem ay behind,
That was hir hostes man, and bare a sakke,
And what men yave hem, laid it on his bakke.
And whan that he was out at dore, anon
He planed away the names everich on,
That he before had written in his tables:
He served hem with nifles and with fables. [Frere.
" Nay, ther thou liest, thou Sompnour," quod the
" Pees," quod our Hoste, " for Cristes moder dere,
Tell forth thy tale, and spare it not at all."
" So thrive I," quod this Sompnour, " so I shall."
So long he went fro hous to hous, til he
Came to an hous, ther he was wont to be
Refreshed more than in a hundred places,
Sike lay the husbond man, whos that the place is,
Bedred upon a couche low he lay:
" *Deus hic*," quod he. " O Thomas, frend, good day,"
Sayde this frere all curtisly and soft.
" Thomas," quod he, " God yelde it you, ful oft
Have I upon this benche faren ful wele,
Here have I eten many a mery mele."
And fro the benche he drove away the cat,
And laied adoun his potent and his hat,
And eke his scrip, and set himself adoun:
His felaw was ywalked into toun
Forth with his knave, into that hostelrie,
Wher as he shope him thilke night to lie.
" O dere maister," quod this sike man,
" How have ye faren sin that March began?
I saw you not this fourtene night and more."
" God wot," quod he, " laboured have I ful sore,
And specially for thy salvation
Have I sayd many a precious orison,
And for our other frendes, God hem blesse.
I have this day ben at your chirche at messe,
And said a sermon to my simple wit,
Not all after the text of holy writ,
For it is hard to you, as I suppose,
And therefore wol I teche you ay the glose.
Glosing is a ful glorious thing certain,
For letter sleth, so as we clerkes sain.
Ther have I taught hem to be charitable,
And spend hir good ther it is resonable.
And ther I saw our dame, a, wher is she?"
" Yonder I trow that in the yard she be,"
Sayde this man, " and she wol come anon."
" Ey maister, welcome be ye by Seint John,"
Sayde this wif, " how fare ye hertily?"
This frere ariseth up ful curtisly,
And hire embraceth in his armes narwe,
And kisseth hire swete, and chirketh as a sparwe

With his lippes: "Dame," quod he, "right wel,
As he that is your servant every del.
Thanked be God, that you yaf soule and lif,
Yet saw I not this day so faire a wif
In all the chirche, God so save me."
"Ye, God amende defautes, sire," quod she,
"Algates welcome be ye, by my fay."
"*Grand mercy*, dame, that have I found alway.
But of your grete goodnesse, by your leve,
I wolde pray you that ye not you greve,
I wol with Thomas speke a litel throw:
Thise curates ben so negligent and slow
To gropen tendrely a conscience.
In shrift, in preching is my diligence
And study, in Peters wordes and in Poules,
I walke and fishe Cristen mennes soules,
To yeld our Lord Jesu his propre rent;
To sprede his word is sette all min entent."
"Now by your faith, o dere sire," quod she,
"Chideth him wel for Seinte Charitee.
He is ay angry as is a pissemire,
Though that he have all that he can desire,
Though I him wrie a-night, and make him warm,
And over him lay my leg and eke min arm,
He groneth as our bore, lith in our stie:
Other disport of him right non have I,
I may not plese him in no maner cas."
"O Thomas, *jeo vous die*, Thomas, Thomas,
This maketh the fend, this muste ben amended.
Ire is a thing that high God hath defended,
And therof wol I speke a word or two."
"Now, maister," quod the wif, "er that I go,
What wol ye dine? I wol go theraboute."
"Now, dame," quod he, "*jeo vous die sanz doute*,
Have I nat of a capon but the liver,
And of your white brede nat but a shiver,
And after that a rosted pigges hed,
(But I ne wolde for me no beest were ded)
Than had I with you homly suffisance.
I am a man of litel sustenance.
My spirit hath his fostring in the Bible.
My body is ay so redy and so penible
To waken that my stomak is destroied.
I pray you, dame, that ye be nought annoied,
Though I so frendly you my conseil shewe;
By God I n'old have told it but a fewe."
"Now, sire," quod she, "but o word er I go.
My child is ded within thise wekes two,
Sone after that ye went out of this toun."
"His deth saw I by revelatioun,"
Sayde this frere, "at home in our dortour.
I dare wel sain, that er than half an hour
After his deth, I saw him borne to blisse
In min avision, so God me wisse.
So did our sextein, and our fermerere,
That han ben trewe freres fifty yere;
They may now, God be thanked of his lone,
Maken hir jubilee, and walke alone.
And up I arose, and all our covent eke,
With many a tere trilling on our cheke,
Withouten noise or clatering of belles,
Te deum was our song, and nothing elles,
Save that to Crist I bade an orison,
Thanking him of my revelation,
For, sire and dame, trusteth me right wel,
Our orisons ben more effectuel,
And more we seen of Cristes secree thinges,
Than borel folk, although that they be kinges.
We live in poverte, and in abstinence,
And borel folk in richesse and dispence
Of mete and drinke, and in hir foule delit.
We han this worldes lust all in despit.
Lazar and Dives liveden diversely,
And divers guerdon hadden they therby.
Who so wol pray, he must fast and be clene,
And fat his soule, and make his body lene.
We fare, as sayth the apostle; cloth and food
Sufficeth us, though they be not ful good.
The clenenesse and the fasting of us freres,
Maketh that Crist accepteth our praieres.
"Lo, Moises forty daies and forty night
Fasted, er that the high God ful of might
Spake with him in the mountague of Sinay:
With empty wombe of fasting many a day,
Received he the lawe, that was writen
With Goddes finger; and Eli, wel ye witen,
In mount Oreb, er he had any speche
With highe God, that is our lives leche,
He fasted long, and was in contemplance.
"Aaron, that had the temple in governance,
And eke the other preestes everich on,
Into the temple whan they shulden gon
To praien for the peple, and do servise,
They n'olden drinken in no maner wise
No drinke, which that might hem dronken make,
But ther in abstinence pray and wake,
Lest that they deiden: take heed what I say—
But they be sobre that for the peple pray—
Ware that I say—no more: for it sufficeth.
Our Lord Jesu, as holy writ deviseth,
Yave us ensample of fasting and praieres:
Therfore we mendiants, we sely freres,
Ben wedded to poverte and continence,
To charitee, humblesse, and abstinence,
To persecution for rightwisnesse,
To weping, misericorde, and to clenenesse.
And therfore may ye see that our praieres
(I speke of us, we mendiants, we freres)
Ben to the highe God more acceptable
Than youres, with your festes at your table.
"Fro Paradis first, if I shal not lie,
Was man out chased for his glotonie,
And chast was man in Paradis certain.
But herken now, Thomas, what I shal sain,
I have no text of it, as I suppose,
But I shal find it in a maner glose;
That specially our swete Lord Jesus
Spake this by freres, whan he sayde thus,
Blessed be they that poure in spirit ben.
And so forth all the gospel may ye sen,
Whether it be liker our profession,
Or hirs that swimmen in possession,
Fie on hir pompe, and on hir glotonie,
And on hir lewednesse: I hem defie.
Me thinketh they ben like Jovinian,
Fat as a whale, and walken as a swan;
Al vinolent as botel in the spence;
Hir prayer is of ful gret reverence;
Whan they for soules say the Psalm of Davit,
Lo, buf they say, *Cor meum eructavit*.
"Who foloweth Cristes gospel and his lore
But we, that humble ben, and chast, and pore,
Workers of Goddes word, not auditours?
Therfore right as an hauke upon a sours
Up springeth into the aire, right so praieres
Of charitable and chast besy freres,
Maken hir sours to Goddes eres two.
Thomas, Thomas, so mote I ride or go,
And by that lord that cleped is Seint Ive,
N'ere thou our broder, shuldest thou not thrive.

In our chapitre pray we day and night
To Crist, that he thee sende hele and might
Thy body for to welden hastily."
"God wot," quod he, "nothing therof fele I,
As help me Crist, as I in fewe yeres
Have spended upon divers maner freres
Ful many a pound, yet fare I never the bet;
Certain my good have I almost beset;
Farewel my good, for it is al ago."
The frere answered, "O Thomas, dost thou so?
What nedeth you diverse freres to seche?
What nedeth him that hath a parfit leche,
To sechen other leches in the toun?
Your inconstance is your confusion.
Hold ye than me, or elles our covent,
To pray for you ben insufficient?
Thomas, that jape n'is not worth a mite;
Your maladie is for we han to lite.
A, yeve that covent half a quarter otes;
And yeve that covent four and twenty grotes;
And yeve that frere a peny, and let him go:
Nay, nay, Thomas, it may no thing be so.
What is a ferthing worth parted on twelve?
Lo, eche thing that is oned in himselve
Is more strong than whan it is yscatered.
Thomas, of me thou shalt not ben yflatered,
Thou woldest han our labour al for nought.
The highe God, that all this world hath wrought,
Saith, that the workman worthy is his hire.
Thomas, nought of your tresor I desire
As for myself, but that all our covent
To pray for you is ay so diligent:
And for to bilden Cristes owen chirche.
Thomas, if ye wol lernen for to wirche,
Of bilding up of chirches may ye finde
If it be good, in Thomas lif of linde.
"Ye liggen here ful of anger and of ire,
With which the Devil set your herte on fire,
And chiden here this holy innocent
Your wif, that is so good and patient.
And therfore trow me, Thomas, if thee lest,
Ne strive not with thy wif, as for the best.
And bere this word away now by thy faith,
Touching swiche thing, lo, what the wise saith:
"Within thy hous ne be thou no leon;
To thy suggets do non oppression;
Ne make thou not thin acquaintance to flee.
"And yet, Thomas, eftsones charge I thee,
Beware from ire that in thy bosom slepeth,
Ware fro the serpent, that so slily crepeth
Under the gras, and stingeth subtilly.
Beware, my sone, and herken patiently,
That twenty thousand men han lost hir lives
For striving with hir lemmans and hir wives.
Now sith ye han so holy and meek a wif,
What nedeth you, Thomas, to maken strif?
Ther n'is ywis no serpent so cruel,
Whan man tredeth on his tail, ne half so fel,
As woman is, whan she hath caught an ire;
Veray vengeance is than all hire desire.
"Ire is a sinne, on of the grete seven,
Abhominable unto the God of Heven,
And to himself it is destruction.
This every lewed vicar and parson
Can say, how ire engendreth homicide;
Ire is in soth executour of pride.
"I could of ire say so mochel sorwe,
My tale shulde lasten til to-morwe.
And therfore pray I God both day and night,
An irous man God send him litel might.
It is gret harm, and certes gret pitee
To sette an irous man in high degree.
"Whilom ther was an irous potestat,
As saith Senek, that during his estat
Upon a day out-riden knightes two:
And, as fortune wold that it were so,
That on of hem came home, that other nought.
Anon the knight before the juge is brought,
That saide thus; 'Thou hast thy felaw slain,
For which I deme thee to the deth certain.'
And to another knight commanded he;
'Go, lede him to the deth, I charge thee.'
And happed, as they wenten by the wey
Toward the place ther as he shulde dey,
The knight came, which men wenden had be dede.
Than thoughten they it was the beste rede
To lede hem bothe to the juge again.
They saiden, 'Lord, the knight ne hath not slain
His felaw, here he stondeth hol alive.'
"'Ye shull be ded,' quod he, 'so mot I thrive,
That is to say, both on, and two, and three.'
And to the firste knight right thus spake he.
"'I damned thee, thou must algate be ded:
And thou also must nedes lese thyn hed,
For thou art cause why thy felaw deyeth.'
And to the thridde knight right thus he seyeth,
'Thou hast not don that I commanded thee.'
And thus he did do slen hem alle three.
"Irous Cambises was eke dronkelew,
And ay delighted him to ben a shrew.
And so befell, a lord of his meinie,
That loved vertuous moralitee,
Sayd on a day betwix hem two right thus:
'A lord is lost, if he be vicious;
And dronkennesse is eke a foule record
Of any man, and namely of a lord.
Ther is ful many an eye and many an ere
Awaiting on a lord, and he n'ot wher.
For Goddes love drinke more attemprely:
Win maketh man to lesen wretchedly
His mind, and eke his limmes everich on.'
'The revers shalt thou see,' quod he, 'anon,
And preve it by thyn owen experience,
That win ne doth to folk no swiche offence.
Ther is no win bereveth me my might
Of hond, ne foot, ne of min eyen sight.'
And for despit he dranke mochel more
An hundred part than he had don before,
And right anon, this cursed irous wretche
This knightes sone let before him fetche,
Commanding him he shuld before him stond:
And sodenly he took his bow in hond,
And up the streng he pulled to his ere,
And with an arwe he slow the child right ther.
"'Now whether have I a siker hond or non?'
Quod he, 'is all my might and minde agon?
Hath win bereved me min eyen sight?'
"What shuld I tell the answer of the knight?
His son was slain, ther is no more to say.
Beth ware therfore with lordes for to play,
Singeth *Placebo*, and I shal if I can,
But if it be unto a poure man:
To a poure man men shuld his vices telle,
But not to a lord, though he shuld go to *Helle*.
"Lo, irous Cirus, thilke Persien,
How he destroyed the river of Gisen,
For that an hors of his was dreint therin,
Whan that he wente Babilon to win:
He made that the river was so smal,
That wimmen might it waden over al.

Lo, what" said he, " that so wel techen can?
Ne be no felaw to non irous man,
Ne with no wood man walke by the way,
Lest thee repent; I wol no forther say.
" Now, Thomas, leve brother, leve thin ire,
Thou shalt me find as just, as is a squire;
Hold not the devils knif ay to thin herte,
Thine anger doth thee all to sore smerte,
But shew to me all thy confession."
" Nay," quod the sike man, " by Seint Simon
I have ben shriven this day of my curat;
I have him told al holly min estat."
" Nedeth no mo to speke of it, sayth he,
But if me list of min humilitee.
" Yeve me than of thy gold to make our cloistre,"
Quod he, " for many a musele and many an oistre,
Whan other men han ben ful wel at ese,
Hath been our food, our cloistre for to rese:
And yet, God wot, uneth the fundament
Parfourmed is, ne of our pavement
N'is not a tile yet within our wones:
By God we owen fourty pound for stones.
Now help, Thomas, for him that harwed Helle,
For elles mote we oure bokes selle,
And if ye lacke oure predication,
Than goth this world all to destruction.
For who so fro this world wold us bereve,
So God me save, Thomas, by your leve,
He wold bereve out of this world the Sonne.
For who can teche and worken as we conne?
And that is not of litel time," (quod he)
" But sithen Elie was, and Elisee,
Han freres ben, that find I of record,
In charitee, ythonked be our Lord.
Now, Thomas, help for Seinte Charitee."
And doun anon he sette him on his knee.
This sike man woxe wel neigh wood for ire,
He wolde that the frere had ben a-fire
With his false dissimulation.
" Swiche thing as is in my possession,"
Quod he, " that may I yeve you and non other:
Ye sain me thus, how that I am your brother."
" Ye certes," quod this frere, " ye, trusteth wel;
I took our dame the letter of our sele."
" Now wel," quod he, " and somwhat shal I yeve
Unto your holy covent while I live;
And in thin hond thou shalt it have anon,
On this condition, and other non,
That thou depart it so, my dere brother,
That every frere have as moche as other:
This shalt thou swere on thy profession
Withouten fraud or cavilation."
" I swere it," quod the frere, " upon my faith."
And therwithall his hond in his he layth;
" Lo here my faith, in me shal be no lak."
" Than put thin hond adoun right by my bak,
Saide this man, " and grope wel behind,
Benethe my buttok, ther thou shalte find
A thing, that I have hid in privetee."
A, thought this frere, that shal go with me.
And doun his hond he launcheth to the clifte,
In hope for to finden ther a gifte.
And whan this sike man felte this frere
About his towel gropen ther and here,
Amid his hond he let the frere a fart;
Ther n'is no capel drawing in a cart,
That might han let a fart of swiche a soun.
The frere up sterte, as doth a wood leoun:
" A, false cherl," quod he, " for Goddes bones,
This hast thou in despit don for the nones:
Thou shalt abie this fart, if that I may."
His meinie, which that herden this affray,
Came leping in, and chased out the frere,
And forth he goth with a ful angry chere,
And set his felaw, ther as lay his store:
He loked as it were a wilde bore,
And grinte with his teeth, so was he wroth.
A sturdy pas doun to the court he goth,
Wher as ther woned a man of gret honour,
To whom that he was alway confessour:
This worthy man was lord of that village.
This frere came, as he were in a rage,
Wher as this lord sat eting at his bord:
Unnethes might the frere speke o word,
Til atte last he saide, " God you see."
This lord gan loke, and saide, " *Benedicite!*
What? frere John, what maner world is this?
I see wel that som thing ther is amis;
Ye loken as the wood were ful of theves.
Sit doun anon, and tell me what your grieve is,
And it shal ben amended, if I may.
" I have," quod he, " had a despit to day,
God yelde you, adoun in your village,
That in this world ther n'is so poure a page,
That he n'olde have abhominatioun
Of that I have received in youre toun:
And yet ne greveth me nothing so sore,
As that the olde cherl, with lokkes hore,
Blasphemed hath oure holy covent eke."
" Now, maister," quod this lord, " I you beseke."
" No maister, sire," quod he, " but servitour,
Though I have had in scole that honour.
God liketh not, that men us Rabi call,
Neither in market, ne in your large hall."
"No force," quod he, " but tell me all your grefe."
" Sire," quod this frere, " an odious meschefe
This day betid is to min ordre, and me,
And *so per consequens* to eche degree
Of holy chirche, God amende it sone."
" Sire," quod the lord, " ye wot what is to don:
Distempre you not, ye ben my confessour.
Ye ben the salt of the erthe, and the savour;
For Goddes love your patience now hold;
Telle me your grefe," And he anon him told
As ye han herd before, ye wot wel what.
The lady of the hous gy stille sat,
Til she had herde what the frere said.
" Ey, goddes moder," quod she, " blisful maid,
Is ther ought elles? tell me faithfully."
" Madame," quod he, " how thinketh you therby?"
" How that me thinketh?" quod she; " so God me
I say, a cherle hath don a cherles dede. [spede,
What shuld I say? God let him never thee;
His sike hed is ful of vanitee;
I hold him in a maner frenesie."
" Madame," quod he, " by God I shal not lie,
But I in other wise may ben awreke,
I shal diffame him over all, ther I speke;
This false blasphemour, that charged me
To parten that wol not departed be,
To every man ylike, with meschance."
The lord sat stille, as he were in a trance,
And in his herte he rolled up and doun,
" How had this cherl imaginatioun
To shewen swiche a probleme to the frere.
Never erst or now ne herd I swiche matere;
I trow the Devil put it in his mind.
In all Arsmetrike shal ther no man find
Before this day of swiche a question.
Who shulde make a demonstration,

That every man shuld han ylike his part
As of a soun or savour of a fart?
O nice proude cherl, I shrewe his face.
"Lo, sires," quod the lord, with harde grace,
"Who ever herd of swiche a thing or now?
To every man ylike? tell me how.
It is an impossible, it may not be.
Ey, nice cherl, God let him never the.
The rombling of a fart, and every soun,
N'is but of aire reverberatioun,
And ever it wasteth lite and lite away;
Ther n'is no man can demen, by my fay,
If that it were departed equally.
What? lo my cherl, lo yet how shrewedly
Unto my confessour to-day he spake;
I hold him certain a demoniake.
Now ete your mete, and let the cherl go play,
Let him go honge himself a devil way."
Now stood the lordes squier atte bord,
That carf his mete, and herde word by word
Of all this thing, of which I have you sayd.
"My lord," quod he, "be ye not evil apaid,
I coude telle for a goune-cloth
To you, sire frere, so that ye be not wroth,
How that this fart shuld even ydeled be
Amonge your covent, if it liked thee."
"Tell," quod the lord, "and thou shalt have anon
A goune-cloth, by God and by Seint John."? [faire,
"My lord," quod he, "whan that the weder is
Withouten winde, or pertourbing of aire,
Let bring a cart-whele here into this hall,
But loke that it have his spokes all;
Twelf spokes hath a cart-whele communly;
And bring me than twelf freres, wete ye why?
For threttene is a covent as I gesse:
Your confessour here for his worthinesse
Shal parfourme up the noumbre of his covent.
Than shull they knele adoun by on assent,
And to every spokes end in this manere
Ful sadly lay his nose shal a frere;
Your noble confessour, ther God him save,
Shal hold his nose upright under the nave.
Than shal this cherl, with bely stif and tought
As any tabour, hider ben ybrought;
And set him on the whele right of this cart
Upon the nave, and make him let a fart,
And ye shull seen, up peril of my lif,
By veray preef that is demonstratif,
That equally the soun of it wol wende,
And eke the stinke, unto the spokes ende,
Save that this worthy man, your confessour,
(Because he is a man of gret honour)
Shal han the firste fruit, as reson is.
The noble usage of freres yet it is,
The worthy men of hem shul first be served.
And certainly he hath it wel deserved;
He hath to-day taught us so mochel good,
With preching in the pulpit ther he stood,
That I may vouchesauf, I say for me,
He hadde the firste smel of fartes three,
And so wold all his brethren hardely,
He beteth him so faire and holyly."
The lord, the lady, and eche man, save the frere,
Sayden, that Jankin spake in this matere
As wel as Euclide, or elles Ptholomee.
Touching the cherl, they sayden, subtiltee
And highe wit made him speken as he spake;
He n'is no fool, ne no demoniake.
And Jankin hath ywonne a newe goune;
My tale is don, we ben almost at toune.

THE CLERKES PROLOGUE.

"Sire Clerk of Oxenforde," our Hoste said,
"Ye ride as stille and coy, as doth a maid,
Were newe spoused, sitting at the bord:
This day ne herd I of your tonge a word.
I trow ye studie abouten som sophime:
But Salomon saith, that every thing hath time.
For Goddes sake as beth of better chere,
It is no time for to studien here.
Tell us som mery tale by your fay;
For what man that is entred in a play,
He nedes most unto the play assent.
But precheth not, as freres don in Lent,
To make us for our olde sinnes wepe,
Ne that thy tale make us not to slepe.
"Tell us som mery thing of aventures,
Your termes, your colоures, and your figures,
Kepe hem in store, til so be ye endite
Hie stile, as whan that men to kinges write.
Speketh so plain at this time, I you pray,
That we may understonden what ye say."
This worthy Clerk benignely answerde;
"Hoste," quod he, "I am under your yerde,
Ye have of us as now the governance,
And therfore wolde I do you obeysance,
As fer as reson asketh hardely:
I wol you tell a tale, which that I
Lerned at Padowe of a worthy clerk,
As preved by his wordes and his werk.
He is now ded, and nailed in his cheste,
I pray to God so yeve his soule reste.
"Fraunceis Petrark, the laureat poete,
Highte this clerk, whos rethorike swete
Enlumined all Itaille of poetrie,
As Lynyan did of philosophie,
Or law, or other art particulere:
But Deth, that wol not suffre us dwellen here,
But as it were a twinkling of an eye,
Hem both hath slaine, and alle we shul dye.
"But forth to tellen of this worthy man,
That taughte me this tale, as I began,
I say that first he with hie stile enditeth
(Or he the body of his tale writeth)
A prohemie, in the which descriveth he
Piemont, and of Saluces the contree,
And speketh of Apennin the hilles hie,
That ben the boundes of west Lumbardie:
And of mount Vesulus in special,
Wher as the Poo out of a welle smal
Taketh his firste springing and his sours,
That estward ay encreseth in his cours
To Emelie ward, to Ferare, and Venise,
The which a longe thing were to devise.
And trewely, as to my jugement,
Me thinketh it a thing impertinent,
Save that he wol conveyen his matere:
But this is the tale which that ye mow here."

THE CLERKES TALE.

Ther is right at the west side of Itaille
Doun at the rote of Vesulus the cold,
A lusty plain, habundant of vitaille,
Ther many a toun and tour thou maist behold,
That founded were in time of fathers old,
And many another delitable sighte,
And Saluces this noble contree highte.

A markis whilom lord was of that lond,
As were his worthy elders him before,
And obeysant, ay redy to his hond,
Were all his lieges, bothe lesse and more:
Thus in delit he liveth, and hath don yore,
Beloved and drad, thurgh favour of fortune,
Both of his lordes, and of his commune.

Therwith he was, to speken of linage,
The gentilest yborne of Lumbardie,
A faire person, and strong, and yong of age,
And ful of honour and of curtesie:
Discret ynough, his contree for to gie,
Sauf in som thinges that he was to blame,
And Walter was this yonge lordes name.

I blame him thus, that he considered nought
In time coming what might him betide,
But on his lust present was all his thought,
And for to hauke and hunt on every side:
Wel neigh all other cures let he slide,
And eke he n'old (and that was worst of all)
Wedden no wif for ought that might befall.

Only that point his peple bare so sore,
That flockmel on a day to him they went,
And on hem that wisest was of lore,
(Or elles that the lord wold best assent
That he shuld tell him what the peple ment,
Or elles coud he wel shew swiche matere)
He to the markis said as ye shull here.

"O noble markis, your humanitee
Assureth us and yeveth us hardinesse,
As oft as time is of necessitee,
That we to you mow tell our hevinesse:
Accepteth, lord, than of your gentillesse,
That we with pitous herte unto you plaine,
And let your eres nat my vois disdaine.

"Al have I not to don in this matere
More than another man hath in this place,
Yet for as moch as ye, my lord so dere,
Han alway shewed me favour and grace,
I dare the better aske of you a space
Of audience, to shewen our request,
And ye, my lord, to don right as you lest.

"For certes, lord, so wel us liketh you
And all your werke, and ever have don, that we
Ne couden not ourself devisen how
We mighten live in more felicitee:
Save o thing, lord, if it your wille be,
That for to be a wedded man you lest,
Than were your peple in soverain hertes rest.

"Boweth your nekke under the blisful yok
Of soverainte, and not of servise,
Which that men clepen spousaile or wedlok:
And thinketh, lord, among your thoughtes wise,
How that our dayes passe in sondry wise;
For though we slepe, or wake, or rome, or ride,
Ay fleth the time, it wol no man abide.

And though your grene youthe floure as yet,
In crepeth age alway as still as ston,
And deth manaseth every age, and smit
In eche estat, for ther escapeth non:
And al so certain, as we knowe eche on
That we shul die, as uncertain we all
Ben of that day whan deth shal on us fall.

"Accepteth than of us the trewe entent,
That never yet refuseden your best,
And we wol, lord, if that ye wol assent,
Chese you a wife in short time at the mest,
Borne of the gentillest and of the best
Of all this lond, so that it oughte seme
Honour to God and you, as we can deme.

"Deliver us out of all this besy drede,
And take a wif, for highe Goddes sake:
For if it so befell, as God forbede,
That thurgh your deth your linage shulde slake,
And that a strange successour shuld take
Your heritage, o! wo were us on live:
Wherfore we pray you hastily to wive."

Hir meke praiere and hir pitous chere
Made the markis for to han pitee.
"Ye wol," quod he, "min owen peple dere,
To that I never er thought constrainen me.
I me rejoyced of my libertee,
That selden time is found in mariage;
Ther I was free, I moste ben in servage.

"But natheles I see your trewe entent,
And trust upon your wit, and have don ay:
Wherfore of my free will I wol assent
To wedden me, as sone as ever I may.
But ther as ye han profred me to-day
To chesen me a wif, I you relese
That chois, and pray you of that profer cese.

"For God it wot, that children often ben
Unlike hir worthy eldres hem before,
Bountee cometh al of God, not of the stren
Of which they ben ygendred and ybore:
I trust in Goddes bountee, and therfore
My marriage, and min estat, and rest
I him betake, he may don as him lest.

"Let me alone in chesing of my wif,
That charge upon my bak I wol endure:
But I you pray, and charge upon your lif,
That what wif that I take, ye me assure
To worship hire while that hire lif may dure,
In word and werk both here and elles where,
As she an emperoures doughter were.

"And forthermore this shuln ye swere, that ye
Again my chois shul never grutch ne strive.
For sith I shul forgo my libertee
At your request, as ever mote I thrive,
Ther as min herte is set, ther wol I wive:
And but ye wol assent in swiche manere,
I pray you speke no more of this matere."

With hertly will they sworen and assenten
To all this thing, ther saide not o wight nay:
Beseeching him of grace, or that they wenten,
That he wold granten hem a certain day
Of his spousaile, as sone as ever he may,
For yet alway the peple somwhat dred,
Lest that this markis wolde no wif wed.

He granted hem a day, swiche as him lest,
On which he wold be wedded sikerly,
And said he did all this at hir request;
And they with humble herte ful buxomly
Kneling upon hir knees ful reverently
Him thonken all, and thus they han an end
Of hir entente, and home agen they wend.

And hereupon he to his officeres
Commandeth for the feste to purvay,
And to his privee knightes and squieres
Swiche charge he yave, as him list on hem lay:
And they to his commandement obey,
And eche of hem doth al his diligence
To do unto the feste al reverence.

PARS SECUNDA.

Nought fer fro thilke paleis honourable,
Wher as this markis shope his mariage,
Ther stood a thorpe, of sighte delitable,
In which that poure folk of that village
Hadden hir bestes and hir herbergage,
And of hir labour toke hir sustenance,
After that the erthe yave hem habundance.

Among this poure folk ther dwelt a man,
Which that was holden pourest of hem all:
But highe God somtime senden can
His grace unto a litel oxes stall:
Janicola men of that thorpe him call.
A doughter had he, faire ynough to sight,
And Grisildis this yonge maiden hight.

But for to speke of vertuous beautee,
Than was she on the fairest under Sonne:
Ful pourely yfostred up was she:
No likerous lust was in hire herte yronne;
Wel ofter of the well than of the tonne
She dranke, and for she wolde vertue plese,
She knew wel labour, but non idel ese.

But though this mayden tendre were of age,
Yet in the brest of hire virginitee
Ther was enclosed sad and ripe corage:
And in gret reverence and charitee
Hire olde poure fader fostred she:
A few sheep spinning on the feld she kept,
She wolde not ben idel til she slept.

And whan she homward came she wolde bring
Wortes and other herbes times oft,
The which she shred and sethe for hire living,
And made hire bed ful hard, and nothing soft:
And ay she kept hire fadres lif on loft
With every obeisance and diligence,
That child may don to fadres reverence.

Upon Grisilde, this poure creature,
Ful often sithe this markis sette his eye,
As he on hunting rode paraventure:
And whan it fell that he might hire espie,
He not with wanton loking of folie
His eyen cast on hire, but in sad wise
Upon hire chere he wold him oft avise,

Commending in his herte hire womanhede,
And eke hire vertue, passing any wight
Of so yong age, as wel in chere as dede.
For though the people have no gret insight
In vertue, he considered ful right
Hire bountee, and disposed that he wold
Wedde hire only, if ever he wedden shold.

The day of wedding came, but no wight can
Tellen what woman that it shulde be,
For which mervaille wondred many a man,
And saiden, whan they were in privetee,
"Wol not our lord yet leve his vanitee?
Wol he not wedde? alas, alas the wnile!
Why wol he thus himself and us begile?"

But natheles this markis hath do make
Of gemmes, sette in gold and in asure,
Broches and ringes, for Grisildes sake,
And of hire clothing toke he the mesure
Of a maiden like unto hire stature,
And eke of other ornamentes all,
That unto swiche a wedding shulde fall.

The time of underne of the same day
Approcheth, that this wedding shulde be,
And all the paleis put was in array,
Both halle and chambres, eche in his degree,
Houses of office stuffed with plentee
Ther mayst thou see of deinteous vitaille,
That may be found, as fer as lasteth Itaille.

This real markis richely arraide,
Lordes and ladies in his compagnie,
The which unto the feste weren praide,
And of his retenue the bachelerie,
With many a soun of sondry melodie,
Unto the village, of the which I told,
In this array the righte way they hold.

Grisilde of this (God wot) ful innocent,
That for hire shapen was all this array,
To fetchen water at a welle is went,
And cometh home as sone as ever she may.
For wel she had herd say, that thilke day
The markis shulde wedde, and, if she might,
She wolde fayn han seen som of that sight.

She thought, "I wol with other maidens stond,
That ben my felawes, in our dore, and see
The markisesse, and therto wol I fond
To don at home, as sone as it may be,
The labour which that longeth unto me,
And than I may at leiser hire behold,
If she this way unto the castel hold."

And as she wolde over the threswold gon,
The markis came and gan hire for to call,
And she set doun hire water-pot anon
Beside the threswold in an oxes stall,
And doun upon hire knees she gan to fall.
And with sad countenance kneleth still,
Till she had herd what was the lordes will.

This thoughtful markis spake unto this maid
Ful soberly, and said in this manere:
"Wher is your fader, Grisildis?" he said.
And she with reverence in humble chere
Answered, "Lord, he is al redy here."
And in she goth withouten lenger lette,
And to the markis she hire fader fette.

He by the hond than toke this poure man,
And saide thus, whan he him had aside:
"Janicola, I neither may ne can
Lenger the plesance of min herte hide,
If that thou vouchesauf, what so betide,
Thy doughter wol I take or that I wend
As for my wife, unto hire lives end.

" Thou lovest me, that wot I wel certain,
And art my faithful liegeman ybore,
And all that liketh me, I dare wel sain
It liketh thee, and specially therfore
Tell me that point, that I have said before,
If that thou wolt unto this purpos drawe,
To taken me as for thy son in lawe."

This soden cas this man astoned so,
That red he wex, abaist, and al quaking
He stood, unnethes said he wordes mo,
But only thus; " Lord," quod he, " my willing
Is as ye wol, ne ageins your liking
I wol no thing, min owen lord so dere,
Right as you list, governeth this matere."

" Than wol I," quod this markis softely,
" That in thy chambre, I, and thou, and she,
Have a collation, and wost thou why?
For I wol ask hire, if it hire wille be
To be my wif, and reule hire after me:
And all this shal be don in thy presence,
I wol not speke out of thin audience."

And in the chambre, while they were aboute
The tretee, which as ye shul after here,
The peple came into the hous withoute,
And wondred hem, in how honest manere
Ententifly she kept hire fader dere:
But utterly Grisildis wonder might,
For never erst ne saw she swiche a sight.

No wonder is though that she be astoned,
To see so gret a gest come in that place,
She never was to non swiche gestes woned,
For which she loked with ful pale face.
But shortly forth this matere for to chace,
Thise arn the wordes that the markis said
To this benigne, veray, faithful maid.

" Grisilde," he said, " ye shuln wel understond,
It liketh to your fader and to me,
That I you wedde, and eke it may so stond
As I suppose, ye wol that it so be:
But thise demaundes aske I first," (quod he)
" That sin it shal be don in hasty wise,
Wol ye assent, or elles you avise?

" I say this, be ye redy with good herte
To all my lust, and that I freely may
As me best thinketh do you laugh or smerte,
And never ye to grutchen, night ne day,
And eke whan I say ya, ye say not nay,
Neither by word, ne frouning countenance?
Swere this, and here I swere our alliance."

Wondring upon this thing, quaking for drede,
She saide; " Lord, indigne and unworthy
Am I, to thilke honour, that ye me bede,
But as ye wol yourself, right so wol I:
And here I swere, that never willingly
In werk, ne thought, I ni'll you disobeie
For to be ded, though me were loth to deie."

" This is ynough, Grisilde min," quod he.
And forth he goth with a ful sobre chere,
Out at the dore, and after than came she,
And to the peple he said in this manere:
" This is my wif," quod he, " that stondeth here.
Honoureth her, and loveth hire, I pray,
Who so me loveth, ther n'is no more to say."

And for that nothing of hire olde gere
She shulde bring into his hous, he bad
That women shuld despoilen hire right there,
Of which thise ladies weren nothing glad
To handle hire clothes wherin she was clad:
But natheles this maiden bright of hew
Fro foot to hed they clothed han all new.

Hire heres han they kempt, that lay untressed
Ful rudely, and with hir fingres smal
A coroune on hire hed they han ydressed,
And sette hire ful of nouches gret and smal:
Of hire array what shuld I make a tale?
Unneth the peple hire knew for hire fairnesse,
Whan she transmewed was in swiche richesse.

This markis hath hire spoused with a ring
Brought for the same cause, and than hire sette
Upon an hors snow-white, and wel ambling,
And to his paleis, or he lenger lette,
(With joyful peple, that hire lad and mette)
Conveyed hire, and thus the day they spende
In revel, till the Sonne gan descende.

And shortly forth this tale for to chace,
I say, that to this newe markisesse
God hath swiche favour sent hire of his grace,
That it ne semeth not by likelinesse
That she was borne and fed in rudenesse,
As in a cote, or in an oxes stall,
But nourished in an emperoures hall.

To every wight she waxen is so dere,
And worshipful, that folk ther she was bore,
And fro hire birthe knew hire yere by yere,
Unnethes trowed they, but dorst han swore,
That to Janicle, of which I spake before,
She doughter n'as, for as by conjecture
Hem thoughte she was another creature.

For though that ever vertuous was she,
She was encresed in swiche excellence
Of thewes good, yset in high bountee,
And so discrete, and faire of eloquence,
So benigne, and so digne of reverence,
And coude so the peples herte embrace,
That eche hire loveth that loketh on hire face.

Not only of Saluces in the toun
Published was the bountee of hire name,
But eke beside in many a regioun,
If on saith wel, another saith the same:
So spredeth of hire hie bountee the fame,
That men and women, yong as wel as old,
Gon to Saluces upon hire to behold.

Thus Walter lowly, nay but really,
Wedded with fortunat honestetee,
In Goddes pees liveth ful esily
At home, and grace ynough outward had he:
And for he saw that under low degree
Was honest vertue hid, the peple him held
A prudent man, and that is seen ful seld.

Not only this Grisildis thurgh hire wit
Coude all the fete of wifly homlinesse,
But eke whan that the cas required it,
The comune profit coude she redresse:
Ther n'as discord, rancour, ne hevinesse
In all the lond, that she ne coude appese,
And wisely bring hem all in hertes ese.

Though that hire husbond absent were or non,
If gentilmen, or other of that contree
Were wroth, she wolde bringen hem at on,
So wise and ripe wordes hadde she,
And jugement of so gret equitee,
That she from Heven sent was, as men weend,
Peple to save, and every wrong to amend.

Not longe time after that this Grisilde
Was wedded, she a doughter hath ybore,
All had hire lever han borne a knave child:
Glad was the markis and his folk therfore,
For though a maiden childe come all before,
She may unto a knave child atteine,
By likelyhed, sin she n'is not barreine.

PARS TERTIA.

Ther fell, as it befalleth times mo,
Whan that this childe had souked but a throwe,
This markis in his herte longed so
To tempt his wif, hire sadnesse for to knowe,
That he ne might out of his herte throwe
This marveillous desir his wif to assay,
Needles, God wot, he thought hire to affray.

He had assaied hire ynough before,
And found hire ever good, what nedeth it
Hire for to tempt, and alway more and more?
Though som men praise it for a subtil wit,
But as for me, I say that evil it sit
To assay a wif whan that it is no nede,
And putten hire in anguish and in drede.

For which this markis wrought in this manere;
He came a-night alone ther as she lay
With sterne face, and with ful trouble chere,
And sayde thus; "Grisilde," (quod he) "that day
That I you toke out of your poure array,
And put you in estat of high noblesse,
Ye han it not forgotten, as I gesse.

"I say, Grisilde, this present dignitee,
In which that I have put you, as I trow,
Maketh you not forgetful for to be
That I you toke in poure estat ful low,
For ony wele ye mote yourselven know.
Take hede of every word that I you say;
Ther is no wight that hereth it but we tway.

"Ye wote yourself wel how that ye came here
Into this hous, it is not long ago,
And though to me ye be right lefe and dere,
Unto my gentils ye be nothing so;
They say, to hem it is gret shame and wo
For to be suggetes, and ben in servage
To thee, that borne art of a smal linage.

"And namely sin thy doughter was ybore,
Thise wordes han they spoken douteles,
But I desire, as I have don before,
To live my lif with hem in rest and pees:
I may not in this cas be recheles;
I mote do with thy doughter for the best,
Not as I wold, but as my gentils lest.

"And yet, God wote, this is ful loth to me:
But natheles withouten youre weting
I wol nought do, but thus wol I" (quod he)
"That ye to me assenten in this thing.
Shew now youre patience in youre werking,
That ye me right and swore in youre village
The day that maked was our mariage."

Whan she had herd all this, she not ameved
Neyther in word, in chere, ne countenance,
(For as it semed, she was not agreved)
She sayde: "Lord, all lith in your plesance,
My child and I, with hertely obeisance
Ben youres all, and ye may save or spill,
Your owen thing: werketh after your will.

Ther may no thing, so God my soule save,
Like unto you, that may displesen me:
Ne I desire nothing for to have,
Ne drede for to lese, sauf only ye:
This will is in myn herte, and ay shal be,
No length of time, or deth may this deface,
Ne change my corage to an other place."

Glad was this markis for hire answering,
But yet he feined as he were not so,
Al drery was his chere and his loking,
Whan that he shuld out of the chambre go.
Sone after this, a furlong way or two,
He prively hath told all his entent
Unto a man, and to his wif him sent.

A maner sergeant was this prive man,
The which he faithful often founden had
In thinges gret, and eke swiche folk wel can
Don execution on thinges bad:
The lord knew wel, that he him loved and drad.
And whan this sergeant wist his lordes will,
Into the chambre he stalked him ful still.

"Madame," he sayd, "ye mote foryeve it me,
Though I do thing, to which I am constreined:
Ye ben so wise, that right wel knowen ye,
That lordes hestes may not ben yfeined,
They may wel be bewailed and complained,
But men mote nedes to hir lust obey,
And so wol I, ther n'is no more to say.

"This child I am commanded for to take."
And spake no more, but out the child he hent
Despitously, and gan a chere to make,
As though he wold have slain it, or he went.
Grisildis most al suffer and al consent:
And as a lambe, she sitteth meke and still,
And let this cruel sergeant do his will.

Suspecious was the diffame of this man,
Suspect his face, suspect his word also,
Suspect the time in which he this began:
Alas! hire doughter, that she loved so,
She wende he wold han slaien it right tho,
But natheles she neither wept ne siked,
Conforming hire to that the markis liked.

But at the last to speken she began,
And mekely she to the sergeant praid
(So as he was a worthy gentil man)
That she might kisse hire child, or that it deid
And in hire barme this litel child she leid,
With ful sad face, and gan the child to blisse,
And lulled it, and after gan it kisse.

And thus she sayd in hire benigne vois:
"Farewel, my child, I shal thee never see,
But sin I have thee marked with the crois,
Of thilke fader yblessed mote thou be,
That for us died upon a crois of tree:
Thy soule, litel child, I him betake,
For this night shalt thou dien for my sake."

I trow that to a norice in this cas
It had ben hard this routhe for to see:
Wel might a moder than han cried "Alas,"
But natheles so sad stedfast was she,
That she endured all adversitee,
And to the sergeant mekely she sayde,
"Have here agen your litel yonge mayde.

"Goth now" (quod she) "and doth my lordes hest:
And o thing wold I pray you of your grace,
But if my lord forbade you at the lest,
Burieth this litel body in som place,
That bestes ne no briddes it to-race."
But he no word to that purpos wold say.
But toke the child and went upon his way.

This sergeant came unto his lord again,
And of Grisildes wordes and hire chere
He told him point for point, in short and plain,
And him presented with his doughter dere.
Somwhat this lord hath routhe in his manere,
But natheles his purpos held he still,
As lordes don, whan they wol have hir will.

And bad this sergeant that he prively
Shulde this child ful softe wind and wrappe,
With alle circumstances tendrely,
And carry it in a cofre, or in a lappe;
But upon peine his hed of for to swappe
That no man shulde know of his entent,
Ne whens he came, ne whider that he went;

But at Boloigne, unto his suster dere,
That thilke time of Pavie was countesse,
He shuld it take, and shew hire this matere.
Besecching hire to don hire besinesse
This child to fostren in all gentillesse,
And whos child that it was he bade hire hide
From every wight, for ought that may betide.

This sergeant goth, and hath fulfilde this thing.
But to this marquis now retorne we;
For now goth he ful fast imagining,
If by his wives chere he mighte see,
Or by hire wordes apperceive, that she
Were changed, but he never coud hire finde,
But ever in on ylike sad and kinde.

As glad, as humble, as besy in service
And eke in love, as she was wont to be,
Was she to him, in every maner wise;
Ne of hire doughter not a word spake she:
Non accident for non adversitee
Was seen in hire, ne never hire doughters name
Ne nevened she, for ernest ne for game.

PARS QUARTA.

In this estat ther passed ben foure yere
Er she with childe was, but, as God wold,
A knave childe she bare by this Waltere
Ful gracious, and fair for to behold:
And whan that folk it to his fader told,
Not only he, but all his contree mery
Was for this childe, and God they thonke and hery.

Whan it was two yere old, and from the brest
Departed of his norice, on a day
This markis caughte yet another lest
To tempte his wif yet ofter, if he may.
O! nedeles was she tempted in assay.
But wedded men ne connen no mesure,
Whan that they finde a patient creature.

"Wif," quod this markis, "ye han herd or this
My peple sikely beren our mariage,
And namely sin my sone yboren is,
Now is it werse than ever in all our age:
The murmur sleth myn herte and my corage,
For to myn eres cometh the vois so smerte,
That it wel nie destroyed hath myn herte.

"Now say they thus, 'Whan Walter is agon,
Than shal the blood of Janicle succede,
And ben our lord, for other han we non:'
Swiche wordes sayn my peple, it is no drede.
Wel ought I of swiche murmur taken hede,
For certainly I dred al swiche sentence,
Though they not plainen in myn audience.

"I wolde live in pees, if that I might:
Wherfore I am disposed utterly,
As I his suster served er by night,
Right so thinke I to serve him prively.
This warne I you, that ye not sodenly
Out of yourself for no wo shuld outraie,
Beth patient, and therof I you praie."

"I have," quod she, "sayd thus and ever shal,
I wol no thing, ne n'ill no thing certain,
But as you list: not greveth me at al,
Though that my doughter and my sone be slain
At your commandement: that is to sain,
I have not had no part of children twein,
But first sikenesse, and after wo and peine.

"Ye ben my lord, doth with your owen thing
Right as you list, asketh no rede of me:
For as I left at home al my clothing
Whan I came first to you, right so" (quod she)
"Left I my will and al my libertee,
And toke your clothing: wherfore I you prey,
Doth your plesance, I wol youre lust obey.

"And certes, if I hadde prescience
Your will to know, er ye your lust me told,
I wold it do withouten negligence:
But now I wote your lust, and what ye wold,
All your plesance ferme and stable I hold,
For wist I that my deth might do you ese,
Right gladly wold I dien, you to plese.

"Deth may not maken no comparisoun
Unto your love." And whan this markis say
The constance of his wif, he cast adoun
His eyen two, and wondreth how she may
In patience suffer al this array:
And forth he goth with drery contenance,
But to his herte it was ful gret plesance.

This ugly sergeant in the same wise
That he hire doughter caughte, right so he
(Or werse, if men can any werse devise)
Hath hent hire sone, that ful was of beautee:
And ever in on so patient was she,
That she no chere made of hevinesse,
But kist hire son and after gan it blesse.

Save this she praied him, if that he might,
Hire litel sone he wold in erthe grave,
His tendre limmes, delicat to sight,
Fro foules and fro bestes for to save.
But she non answer of him mighte have,
He went his way, as him no thing ne rought,
But to Bologne he tendrely it brought.

This markis wondreth ever lenger the more
Upon hire patience, and if that he
Ne hadde sothly knowen therbefore,
That parfitly hire children loved she,
He wold han wend that of som subtiltee
And of malice, or for cruel corage,
That she had suffred this with sad visage.

But wel he knew, that next himself, certain
She loved hire children best in every wise.
But now of women wold I asken fayn,
If thise assaies mighten not suffise;
What coud a sturdy husbond more devise
To preve hire wifhood, and hire stedfastnesse,
And he continuing ever in sturdinesse?

But ther ben folk of swiche condition,
That, whan they han a certain purpos take,
They can not stint of hir intention,
But, right as they were bounden to a stake,
They wol not of hir firste purpos slake:
Right so this markis fully hath purposed
To tempt his wif, as he was first disposed.

He waiteth, if by word or contenance
That she to him was changed of corage:
But never coud he finden variance;
She was ay on in herte and in visage,
And ay the further that she was in age,
The more trewe (if that it were possible)
She was to him in love, and more penible.

For which it semed thus, that of hem two
Ther was but o will; for as Walter lest,
The same lust was hire plesance also;
And God be thanked, all fell for the best.
She shewed wel, for no worldly unrest
A wif, as of hireself, no thing ne shoide
Wille in effect, but as hire husbond wolde.

The sclandre of Walter wonder wide spradde,
That of a cruel herte he wikkedly,
For he a poure woman wedded hadde,
Hath murdred both his children prively:
Swich murmur was among hem comunly.
No wonder is: for to the peples ere
Ther came no word, but that they murdred were.

For which ther as his peple therbefore
Had loved him wel, the sclandre of his diffame
Made hem that they him hateden therfore:
To ben a murdrour is an hateful name.
But natheles, for ernest ne for game,
He of his cruel purpos n'olde stente,
To tempt his wif was sette all his entente.

Whan that his doughter twelf yere was of age,
He to the court of Rome, in subtil wise
Enformed of his will, sent his message,
Commanding him, swiche billes to devise,
As to his cruel purpos may suffise,
How that the pope, as for his peples rest,
Bade him to wed another, if him lest.

I say he bade, they shulden contrefete
The popes bulles, making mention
That he hath leve his firste wif to lete,
As by the popes dispensation,
To stinten rancour and dissension
Betwix his peple and him: thus spake the bull,
The which they han published at the full.

The rude peple, as no wonder is,
Wenden ful wel, that it had ben right so:
But whan thise tidings came to Grisildis,
I deme that hire herte was ful of wo;
But she ylike sad for evermo
Disposed was, this humble creature,
The adversitee of fortune al to endure;

Abiding ever his lust and his plesance,
To whom that she was yeven, herte and al,
As to hire veray worldly suffisance.
But shortly if this storie tell I shal,
This markis writen hath in special
A lettre, in which he sheweth his entente,
And secretly he to Bologne it sente.

To the erl of Pavie, which that hadde tho
Wedded his suster, prayed he specially
To bringen home agein his children two
In honourable estat al openly:
But o thing he him prayed utterly,
That he to no wight, though men wold enquere,
Shulde not tell whos children that they were,

But say, the maiden shuld ywedded be
Unto the markis of Saluces anon:
And as this erl was prayed, so did he,
For at day sette he on his way is gon
Toward Saluces, and lordes many on
In rich arraie, this maiden for to gide,
Hire yonge brother riding hire beside.

Arraied was toward hire mariage
This freshe maiden, ful of gemmes clere,
Hire brother, which that seven yere was of age,
Arraied eke ful fresh in his manere:
And thus in gret noblesse and with glad chere
Toward Saluces shaping his journay
Fro day to day they riden in hir way.

PARS QUINTA.

Amonc al this, after his wicked usage,
This markis yet his wif to tempten more
To the uttereste prefe of hire corage,
Fully to have experience and lore,
If that she were as stedefast as before,
He on a day in open audience
Ful boistously hath said hire this sentence:

" Certes, Grisilde, I had ynough plesance
To han you to my wif, for your goodnesse,
And for your trouthe, and for your obeysance,
Not for your linage, ne for your richesse,
But now know I in very sothfastnesse,
That in gret lordship, if I me wel avise,
Ther is gret servitude in sondry wise.

" I may not don, as every ploughman may:
My peple me constreineth for to take
Another wif, and crien day by day;
And eke the pope rancour for to slake
Consenteth it, that dare I undertake:
And trewely, thus moche I wol you say,
My newe wif is coming by the way.

" Be strong of herte, and voide anon hire place,
And thilke dower that ye broughten me
Take it agen, I grant it of my grace.
Returneth to your fadres hous," (quod he)
" No man may alway have prosperitee.
With even herte I rede you to endure
The stroke of fortune, or of aventure."

And she agen answerd in patience:
" My lord," quod she, " I wote, and wist alway,
How that betwixen your magnificence
And my poverte no wight ne can ne may
Maken comparison, it is no nay;
I ne held me never digne in no manere
To be your wif, ne yet your chamberere.

" And in this hous, ther ye me lady made,
(The highe God take I for my witnesse,
And all so wisly he my soule glad)
I never held me lady ne maistresse,
But humble servant to your worthinesse,
And ever shal, while that my lif may dure,
Aboven every worldly creature.

" That ye so longe of your benignitee
Han holden me in honour and nobley,
Wheras I was not worthy for to be,
That thanke I God and you, to whom I prey
Foryelde it you, ther is no more to sey:
Unto my fader gladly wol I wende,
And with him dwell unto my lives ende;

" Ther I was fostred of a childe ful smal,
Til I be ded my lif ther wol I lede,
A widew clene in body, herte and al.
For sith I yave to you my maidenhede,
And am your trewe wif, it is no drede,
God shilde swiche a lordes wif to take
Another man to husbond or to make.

" And of your newe wif, God of his grace
So graunte you wele and prosperite:
For I wol gladly yelden hire my place,
In which that I was blisful wont to be.
For sith it liketh you, my lord," (quod she)
" That whilom weren all myn hertes rest,
That I shal gon, I wol go whan you lest.

" But ther as ye me profre swiche dowaire
As I first brought, it is wel in my mind,
It were my wretched clothes, nothing faire,
The which to me were hard now for to find.
O goode God! how gentil and how kind
Ye semed by your speche and your visage,
The day that maked was oure marriage!

" But soth is said, algate I find it trewe,
For in effect it preved is on me,
Love is not old, as whan that it is newe.
But certes, lord, for non adversitee
To dien in this cas, it shal not be
That ever in word or werke I shal repent,
That I you yave min herte in hole entent.

" My lord, ye wote, that in my fadres place
Ye dide me stripe out of my poure wede,
And richely ye clad me of your grace;
To you brought I nought elles out of drede,
But faith, and nakednesse, and maidenhede;
And here agen your clothing I restore,
And eke your wedding ring for evermore.

" The remenant of your jeweles redy be
Within your chambre, I dare it safly sain:
Naked out of my fadres hous" (quod she)
" I came, and naked I mote turne again.
All your plesance wolde I folwe fain:
But yet I hope it be not your entent,
That I smokles out of your paleis went.

" Ye conde not do so dishonest a thing,
That thilke wombe, in which your children lay,
Shulde before the peple, in my walking,
Be seen al bare: wherfore I you pray
Let me not like a worme go by the way:
Remembre you, min owen lord so dere,
I was your wif, though I unworthy were.

" Wherfore in guerdon of my maidenhede,
Which that I brought and not agen I bere,
As vouchesauf to yeve me to my mede
But swiche a smok as I was wont to were,
That I therwith may wrie the wombe of hire
That was your wif: and here I take my leve
Of you, min owen lord, lest I you greve."

" The smok," quod he, " that thou hast on thy bake,
Let it be still, and bere it forth with thee."
But wel unnethes thilke word he spake,
But went his way for routhe and for pitee.
Before the folk hireselven stripeth she,
And in hire smok, with foot and hed al bare,
Toward hire fadres hous forth is she fare.

The folk hire folwen weping in hir wey,
And fortune ay they cursen as they gon:
But she fro weping kept hire eyen drey;
Ne in this time word ne spake she non.
Hire fader, that this tiding herd anon,
Curseth the day and time, that nature
Shope him to ben a lives creature.

For out of doute this olde poure man
Was ever in suspect of hire mariage:
For ever he demed, sin it first began,
That whan the lord fulfilled had his corage,
Him wolde thinke it were a disparage
To his estat, so lowe for to alight,
And voiden hire as soone as ever he might.

Agein his doughter hastily goth he,
(For he by noise of folk knew hire coming)
And with hire olde cote, as it might be,
He covereth hire ful sorwefully weping:
But on hire body might he it not bring,
For rude was the cloth, and more of age
By daies fele than at hire mariage.

Thus with hire fader for a certain space
Dwelleth this flour of wifly patience,
That nother by hire wordes ne hire face,
Before the folk, ne eke in hir absence,
Ne shewed she that hire was don offence,
Ne of hire high estat no remembrance
Ne hadde she, as by hire contenance.

No wonder is, for in hire grct estat
Hire gost was ever in pleine humilitee;
No tendre mouth, no herte delicat,
No pompe, no semblant of realtee;
But ful of patient benignitee,
Discrete, and prideles, ay honourable,
And to hire husbond ever meke and stable.

Men speke of Job, and most for his humblesse,
As clerkes, whan hem list, can wel endite,
Namely of men, but as in sothfastnesse,
Though clerkes preisen women but a lite,
Ther can no man in humblesse him acquite
As woman can, ne can be half so trewe
As women ben, but it be falle of newe.

PARS SEXTA.

Fro Boloigne is this erl of Pavie come,
Of which the fame up sprang to more and lesse:
And to the peples eres all and some
Was couth eke, that a newe markisesse
He with him brought, in swiche pomp and richesse,
That never was ther seen with mannes eye
So noble array in al West Lumbardie.

The markis, which that shope and knew all this,
Er that this erl was come, sent his message
For thilke poure sely Grisildis;
And she with humble herte and glad visage,
Not with no swollen thought in hire corage,
Came at his best, and on hire knees hire sette,
And reverently and wisely she him grette.

"Grisilde," (quod he) "my will is utterly,
This maiden, that shal wedded be to me,
Received be to-morwe as really
As it possible is in myn hous to be:
And eke that every wight in his degree
Have his estat in sitting and service,
And high plesance, as I can best devise.

"I have no woman suffisant certain
The chambres for to array in ordinance
After my lust, and therfore wolde I fain,
That thin were all swiche manere governance:
Thou knowest eke of old all my plesance;
Though thin array be bad, and evil besey,
Do thou thy devoir at the leste wey."

"Not only, lord, that I am glad" (quod she)
"To don your lust, but I desire also
You for to serve and plese in my degree,
Withouten fainting, and shal evermo:
Ne never for no wele, ne for no wo,
Ne shal the gost within myn herte stente
To love you best with all my trewe entente."

And with that word she gan the hous to dight,
And tables for to sette, and beddes make,
And peined hire to don all that she might,
Praying the chambererers for Goddes sake
To hasten hem, and faste swepe and shake,
And she the moste serviceable of all
Hath every chambre arraied, and his hall.

Abouten undern gan this erl alight,
That with him brought thise noble children twey;
For which the peple ran to see the sight
Of hir array, so richely besey:
And than at erst amonges hem they sey,
That Walter was no fool, though that him lest
To change his wif; for it was for the best.

For she is fairer, as they demen all,
Than is Grisilde, and more tendre of age,
And fairer fruit betwene hem shuld fall,
And more plesant for hire high linage:
Hire brother eke so faire was of visage
That hem to seen the peple hath caught plesance,
Commending now the markis governance.

"O stormy peple, unsad and ever untrewe,
And undiscrete, and changing as a fane,
Delighting ever in rombel that is newe,
For like the Mone waxen ye and wane:
Ay ful of clapping, dere ynough a jane,
Your doune is fals, your constance evil preveth,
A ful gret fool is he that on you leveth."

Thus saiden sade folk in that citee,
Whan that the peple gased up and doun:
For they were glad, right for the noveltee,
To have a newe lady of hir toun.
No more of this make I now mentioun,
But to Grisilde agen I wol me dresse,
And telle hire constance and hire besinesse.

Ful besy was Grisilde in every thing,
That to the feste was appertinent;
Right naught was she abaist of hire clothing,
Though it were rude, and somdel eke to-rent,
But with glad chere to the yate is went
With other folk, to grete the markisesse,
And after that doth forth hire besinesse.

With so glad chere his gestes she receiveth,
And conningly everich in his degree,
That no defaute no man apperceiveth,
But ay they wondren what she might be,
That in so poure array was for to see,
And coude swiche honour and reverence,
And worthily they preisen hire prudence.

In all this mene while she ne stent
This maide and eke hire brother to commend
With all hire herte in ful benigne entent,
So wel, that no man coud hire preise amend:
But at the last whan that thise lordes wend
To sitten doun to mete, he gan to call
Grisilde, as she was besy in the hall.

"Grisilde," (quod he, as it were in his play)
"How liketh thee my wif, and hire beautee?"
"Right wel, my lord," quod she, "for in good fay,
A fairer saw I never non than she:
I pray to God yeve you prosperitee;
And so I hope, that he wol to you send
Plesance ynough unto your lives end.

" O thing beseche I you and warne also,
That ye ne prikke with no tormenting
This tendre maiden, as ye han do mo:
For she is fostred in hire norishing
More tendrely, and to my supposing
She mighte not adversitee endure,
As coude a poure fostred creature."

And whan this Walter saw hire patience,
Hire glade chere, and no malice at all,
And he so often hadde hire don offence,
And she ay sade and constant as a wall,
Continuing ever hire innocence over all,
This sturdy markis gan his herte dresse,
To rewe upon hire wifly stedefastnesse.

" This is ynough, Grisilde min," quod he,
" Be now no more agast, ne evil apaid,
I have thy faith and thy benignitee,
As wel as ever woman was, assaid
I gret estat, and pourelich arraied:
Now know I, dere wif, thy stedefastnesse,"
And hire in armes toke, and gan to kesse.

And she for wonder tooke of it no kepe;
She herde not what thing he to hire said:
She ferde as she had stert out of a slepe,
Til she out of hire masednesse abraid.
" Grisilde," quod he, " by God that for us deid,
Thou art my wif, non other I ne have,
Ne never had, as God my soule save."

" This is thy doughter, which thou hast supposed
To be my wif; that other faithfully
Shal be min heir, as I have ay disposed;
Thou bare hem of thy body trewely:
At Boloigne have I kept hem privily:
Take hem agen, for now maist thou not say,
That thou hast lorn non of thy children tway.

" And folk, that otherwise han said of me,
I warne hem wel, that I have don this dede
For no malice, ne for no crueltee,
But for to assay in thee thy womanhede:
And not to slee my children (God forbede)
But for to kepe hem prively and still,
Til I thy purpos knew, and all thy will."

Whan she this herd aswoune doun she falleth
For pitous joye, and after hire swouning
She both hire yonge children to hire calleth,
And in hire armes pitously weping
Embraceth hem, and tendrely kissing
Ful like a moder with hire salte teres
She bathed both hir visage and hir heres.

O, which a pitous thing it was to see
Hire swouning, and hire humble vois to here!
" *Grand mercy*, lord, God thank it you" (quod she)
" That ye han saved me my children dere:
Now rekke I never to be ded right here,
Sin I stond in your love, and in your grace
No force of deth, ne whan my spirit pace.

" O tendre, o dere, o yonge children mine,
Your woful mother wened stedfastly,
That cruel houndes, or som foul vermine
Had eten you; but God of his mercy,
And your benigne fader tendrely
Hath don you kepe:" and in that same stound
Al sodenly she swapt adoun to ground.

And in hire swough so sadly holdeth she
Hire children two, whan she gan hem embrace,
That with gret sleight and gret difficultee
The children from hire arm they gan arrace.
O! many a tere on many a pitous face
Doun ran of hem that stoden hire beside,
Unnethe abouten hire might they abide.

Walter hire gladeth, and hire sorwe slaketh,
She riseth up abashed from hire trance,
And every wight hire joye and feste maketh,
Til she hath caught agen hire contenance.
Walter hire doth so faithfully plesance,
That it was deintee for to seen the chere
Betwix hem two, sin they ben met in fere.

Thise ladies, whan that they hir time sey,
Han taken hire, and into chambre gon,
And stripen hire out of hire rude arrey,
And in a cloth of gold that brighte shone,
With a coroune of many a riche stone
Upon hire hed, they into hall hire broughte;
And ther she was honoured as hire ought.

Thus hath this pitous day a blisful end;
For every man, and woman, doth his might
This day in mirth and revel to dispend,
Til on the welkin shone the sterres bright:
For more solempne in every mannes sight
This feste was, and greter of costage,
Than was the revel of hire mariage.

Ful many a yere in high prosperitee
Liven thise two in concord and in rest,
And richely his doughter maried he
Unto a lord, on of the worthiest
Of all Itaille, and than in pees and rest
His wives fader in his court he kepeth,
Til that the soule out of his body crepeth.

His sone succedeth in his heritage,
In rest and pees, after his fadres day:
And fortunat was eke in mariage,
Al put he not his wif in gret assay:
This world is not so strong, it is no nay,
As it hath ben in olde times yore,
And herkneth, what this auctour saith therfore.

This story is said, not for that wives shuld
Folwe Grisilde, as in humilitee,
For it were importable, tho they wold;
But for that every wight in his degree
Shulde be constant in adversitee,
As was Grisilde, therfore Petrark writeth
This storie, which with high stile he enditeth.

For sith a woman was so patient
Unto a mortal man, wel more we ought
Receiven all in gree that God us sent.
For gret skill is he preve that he wrought:
But he ne tempteth no man that he bought,
As saith seint Jame, if ye his pistell rede;
He preveth folk al day, it is no drede:

And suffreth us, as for our exercise,
With sharpe scourges of adversitee
Ful often to be bete in sondry wise;
Not for to know our will, for certes he,
Or we were borne, knew all our freelete;
And for our best is all his governance;
Let us than live in vertuous suffrance.

But o word, lordings, herkeneth, or I go:
It were ful hard to finden now adayes
In all a toun Grisildes three or two:
For if that they were put to swiche assayes,
The gold of hem hath now so bad alayes
With bras, that though the coine be faire at eye,
It wolde rather brast atwo than plie.

For which here, for the wives love of Bathe,
Whos lif and al hire secte God maintene
In high maistrie, and elles were it scathe,
I wol with lusty herte freshe and grene,
Say you a song to gladen you, I wene:
And let us stint of ernestful matere.
Herkneth my song, that saith in this manere.

Grisilde is ded, and eke hire patience,
And both at ones buried in Itaille:
For which I crie in open audience,
No wedded man so hardy be to assaille
His wives patience, in trust to find
Grisildes, for in certain he shal faille.

O noble wives, ful of high prudence,
Let non humilitee your tonges naile:
Ne let no clerk have cause or diligence
To write of you a storie of swiche mervaille,
As of Grisildis patient and kinde,
Lest Chichevache you swalwe in hire entraille.

Folweth Ecco, that holdeth no silence,
But ever answereth at the countretaille:
Beth not bedaffed for your innocence,
But sharply taketh on you the governaille:
Empremteth wel this lesson in your minde,
For comun profit, sith it may availle.

Ye archewives, stondeth ay at defence,
Sin ye be strong, as is a gret camaille,
Ne suffreth not, that men do you offence.
And sclendre wives, feble as in bataille,
Beth egre as is a tigre yond in Inde:
Ay clappeth as a mill, I you counsaille.

Ne drede hem not, doth hem no reverence,
For though thin husbond armed be in maille,
The arwes of thy crabbed eloquence
Shal perce his brest, and eke his aventaille:
In jalousie I rede eke thou him binde,
And thou shalt make him couche as doth a quaille.

If thou be faire, ther folk ben in presence
Shew thou thy visage, and thin apparaille:
If thou be foule, be free of thy dispence,
To get thee frendes ay do thy travaille:
Be ay of chere as light as lefe on linde,
And let him care, and wepe, and wringe, and waille.

THE MARCHANTES PROLOGUE.

"Weping and wailing, care and other sorwe,
I have ynough, on even and on morwe,"
Quod the marchant, "and so have other mo,
That wedded ben; I trowe that it be so:
For wel I wot it fareth so by me.
I have a wif, the werste that may be,
For though the fend to hire ycoupled were,
She wolde him overmatche I dare wel swere.
What shulde I you reherse in special
Hire high malice? she is a shrew at al.
"Ther is a long and a large difference
Betwix Grisildes grete patience,
And of my wif the passing cruelitee.
Were I unbounden, all so mote I the,
I wolde never eft comen in the snare.
We wedded men live in sorwe and care,
Assay it who so wol, and he shal finde
That I say soth, by seint Thomas of Inde,
As for the more part, I say not alle;
God shilde that it shulde so befalle.
"A, good sire Hoste, I have ywedded be
Thise monethes two, and more not parde;
And yet I trowe that he, that all his lif
Wifes hath ben, though that men wolde him rife
Into the herte, ne coude in no manere
Tellen so much sorwe, as I you here
Coud tellen of my wives cursednesse." [blesse,
"Now," quod our hoste, "marchant, so God you
Sin ye so mochel knowen of that art,
Ful hertely I pray you tell us part."
"Gladly," quod he, "but of min owen sore
For sory herte I tellen may no more."

THE MARCHANTES TALE.

Whilom ther was dwelling in Lumbardie
A worthy knight, that born was at Pavie
In which he lived in gret prosperitee;
And sixty yere a wifles man was he,
And folwed ay his bodily delit
On women, ther as was his appetit,
As don thise fooles that ben seculere.
And whan that he was passed sixty yere,
Were it for holinesse or for dotage,
I cannot sain, but swiche a gret corage
Hadde this knight to ben a wedded man,
That day and night he doth all that he can
To espien, wher that he might wedded be;
Praying our lord to graunten him, that he
Mighte ones knowen of that blisful lif,
That is betwix an husbond and his wif,
And for to live under that holy bond,
With which God firste man and woman bond.
"Non other lif" (said he) "is worth a bene:
For wedlok is so esy and so clene,
That in this world it is a paradise."
Thus saith this olde knight, that was so wise.
And certainly, as soth as God is king,
To take a wif, it is a glorious thing,
And namely whan a man is old and hore,
Than is a wif the fruit of his tresore;
Than shuld he take a yong wif and a faire,
On which he might engendren him an heire,
And lede his lif in joye and in solas,
Wheras thise bachelers singen alas,
Whan that they finde any adversitee
In love, which n'is but childish vanitee.
And trewely it sit wel to be so,
That bachelers have often peine and wo:
On brotel ground they bilde, and brotelnesse
They finden, whan they wenen sikernesse:
They live but as a bird or as a beste,
In libertee and under non areste,
Ther as a wedded man in his estat
Liveth a lif blisful and ordinat,

Under the yoke of mariage ybound:
Wel may his herte in joye and blisse abound.
For who can be so buxom as a wif?
Who is so trewe and eke so ententif
To kepe him, sike and hole, as is his make?
For wele or wo she n'ill him not forsake:
She n'is not wery him to love and serve,
Though that he lie bedrede til that he sterve.
And yet som clerkes sain, it is not so,
Of which he Theophrast is on of tho:
What force though Theophrast list for to lie?
"Ne take no wif," quod he, "for husbondrie,
As for to spare in houshold thy dispence:
A trewe servant doth more diligence
Thy good to kepe, than doth thin owen wif,
For she wol claimen half part al hire lif.
And if that thou be sike, so God me save,
Thy veray frendes or a trewe knave
Wol kepe thee bet than she, that waiteth ay
After thy good, and hath don many a day."
This sentence, and an hundred thinges werse
Writeth this man ther God his bones curse.
But take no kepe of al swiche vanitee,
Defieth Theophrast, and herkeneth me.
A wif is Goddes yefte verayly;
All other maner yeftes hardely,
As londes, rentes, pasture, or commune,
Or mebles, all ben yeftes of fortune,
That passen as a shadow on the wall;
But drede thou not, if plainly speke I shal,
A wif wol last and in thin hous endure,
Wel lenger than thee list paraventure.
Mariage is a ful gret sacrament;
He which that hath no wif I hold him shent;
He liveth helples, and all desolat:
(I speke of folk in seculer estat)
And herkneth why, I say not this for nought,
That woman is for mannes helpe ywrought.
The highe God, whan he had Adam maked,
And saw him al alone belly naked,
God of his grete goodnesse saide than,
"Let us now make an helpe unto this man
Like to himself," and than he made him Eve.
Here may ye see, and hereby may ye preve,
That a wif is mannes helpe and his comfort,
His paradis terrestre and his disport:
So buxom and so vertuous is she,
They mosten nedes live in unitee:
O flesh they ben, and o flesh, as I gesse,
Hath but on herte in wele and in distresse.
A wif? a! seinte Marie, *benedicite*,
How might a man have any adversite
That hath a wif? certes I cannot seye.
The blisse the which that is betwix hem tweye
Ther may no tonge telle or herte thinke.
If he be poure, she helpeth him to swinke;
She kepeth his good, and wasteth never a del;
All that hire husbond doth, hire liketh wel;
She saith not ones nay, whan he saith ye;
"Do this," saith he; "al redy, sire," saith she.
O blisful ordre, o wedlok precious,
Thou art so mery, and eke so vertuous,
And so commended, and approved eke,
That every man that holt him worth a leke,
Upon his bare knees ought all his lif
Thanken his God, that him hath sent a wif,
Or elles pray to God him for to send
A wif, to last unto his lives end.
For than his lif is set in sikernesse,
He may not be deceived, as I gesse,
So that he werche after his wives rede;
Than may he boldly beren up his hede,
They ben so trewe, and therwithal so wise.
For which, if thou wilt werchen as the wise,
Do alway so, as women wol thee rede.
Lo how that Jacob, as thise clerkes rede,
By good conseil of his mother Rebekke
Bounde the kiddes skin about his nekke;
For which his fadres benison he wan.
Lo Judith, as the storie eke tell can,
By good conseil she Goddes peple kept,
And slow him Holofernes while he slept.
Lo Abigail, by good conseil how she
Saved hire husbond Nabal, whan that he
Shuld han be slain. And loke, Hester also,
By good conseil delivered out of wo
The peple of God, and made him Mardoches
Of Assuere enhaunsed for to be.
Ther n'is no thing in gree superlatif
(As saith Senek) above an humble wif.
Suffer thy wives tonge, as Caton bit,
She shal command, and thou shalt suffren it,
And yet she wol obey of curtesie.
A wif is keper of thin husbondrie:
Wel may the sike man bewaile and wepe,
Ther as ther is no wif the hous to kepe.
I warne thee, if wisely thou wilt werche,
Love wel thy wif, as Crist loveth his cherche:
If thou lovest thyself, love thou thy wif.
No man hateth his flesh, but in his lif
He fostreth it, and therfore bid I thee
Cherish thy wif, or thou shalt never the.
Husbond and wif, what so men jape or play,
Of worldly folk holden the siker way:
They ben so knit, ther may non harm betide,
And namely upon the wives side.
For which this January, of whom I told,
Considered hath within his dayes old
The lusty lif, the vertuous quiete,
That is in mariage hony-swete.
And for his frendes on a day he sent
To tellen hem th' effect of his entent.
With face sad, his tale he hath hem told:
He sayde, "Frendes, I am hore and old,
And almost (God wot) on my pittes brinke,
Upon my soule somwhat most I thinke.
I have my body folily dispended,
Blessed be God that it shal ben amended:
For I wol ben certain a wedded man,
And that anon in all the hast I can.
Unto som maiden, faire and tendre of age,
I pray you shapeth for my mariage
All sodenly, for I wol not abide:
And I wol fonde to espien on my side,
To whom I may be wedded hastily.
But for as moche as ye ben more than I,
Ye shullen rather swiche a thing espien
Than I, and wher me beste were to allien.
"But o thing warn I you, my frendes dere,
I wol non old wif han in no manere:
She shal not passen twenty yere certain.
Old fish and yonge flesh wold I have fain.
Bet is" (quod he) "a pike than a pikerel,
And bet than old beef is the tendre veel.
I wol no woman thirty yere of age,
It is but benestraw and gret forage,
And eke thise olde widewes (God it wote)
They connen so moch craft on Wades bote,
So moche broken harm whan that hem lest,
That with hem shuld I never live in rest.

For sondry scoles maken subtil clerkes;
Woman of many scoles half a clerk is.
But certainly a yong thing men may gie,
Right as men may warm wax with handes plie.
Wherfore I say you plainly in a clause,
I wol non old wif han right for this cause.
" For if so were I hadde swiche meschaunce,
That I in hire ne coude have no plesance,
Than shuld I lede my lif in avoutrie,
And so streight to the devil whan I die.
Ne children shuld I non upon hire geten:
Yet were me lever houndes had me eten,
Than that min heritage shulde fall
In straunge hondes: and this I tell you all.
I dote not, I wot the cause why
Men shulden wedde: and furthermore wot I,
Ther speketh many a man of mariage,
That wot no more of it than wot my page,
For which causes a man shuld take a wif.
If he ne may not liven chast his lif,
Take him a wif with gret devotion,
Because of leful procreation
Of children, to the honour of God above,
And not only for paramour or love;
And for they shulden lecherie eschue,
And yeld hir dette whan that it is due:
Or for that eche of hem shuld helpen other
In meschefe, as a suster shal the brother,
And live in chastitee ful holily.
" But, sires, (by your leve) that am not I,
For God be thanked, I dare make avaunt,
I fele my limmes stark and suffisant
To don all that a man belongeth to:
I wot myselven best what I may do.
Though I be hoor, I fare as doth a tre,
That blosmeth er the fruit ywoxen be;
The blosmy tre n'is neither drie ne ded:
I feel me no wher hoor but on my hed.
Min herte and all my limmes ben as grene,
As laurer thurgh the yere is for to sene.
And sin that ye han herd all min entent,
I pray ye to my will ye wolde assent."
Diverse men diversely him told
Of mariage many ensamples old;
Som blamed it, som praised it certain;
But atte laste, shortly for to sain,
(As all day falleth altercation
Betwixen frendes in disputison)
Ther fell a strif betwix his brethren two,
Of which that on was cleped Placebo,
Justinus sothly called was that other.
Placebo sayd; " O January brother,
Ful litel nede han he, my lord so dere,
Conseil to aske of any that is here:
But that ye ben so ful of sapience,
That you ne liketh for your high prudence,
To weiven fro the word of Salomon.
This word sayd he unto us everich on;
Werke alle thing by conseil, thus sayd he,
And then ne shalt thou not repenten thee.
But though that Salomon spake swiche a word,
Min owen dere brother and my lord,
So wisly God my soule bringe at rest,
I hold your owen conseil is the best.
" For, brother min, take of me this motif,
I have now ben a court-man all my lif,
And God it wot, though I unworthy be,
I have stonden in ful gret degree
Aboven lordes of ful high estat:
Yet had I never with non of hem debat,
I never hem contraried trewely.
I wot wel that my lord can more than I;
What that he saith, I hold it firme and stable,
I say the same, or elles thing semblable.
A ful gret fool is any conseillour,
That serveth any lord of high honour,
That dare presume, or ones thinken it,
That his conseil shuld passe his lordes wit:
Nay, lordes be no fooles by my fay.
Ye han yourselven shewed here to-day
So high sentence, so holily, and wel,
That I consent, and confirme every del
Your wordes all, and your opinioun.
By God ther n'is no man in all this toun
Ne in Itaille, coud bet han ysayd:
Crist holt him of this conseil wel apaid.
And trewely it is an high corage
Of any man that stopen is in age,
To take a young wif: by my fader kin
Your herte hongeth on a joly pin.
" Doth now in this matere right as you lest,
For finally I hold it for the best."
Justinus, that ay stille sat and herd,
Right in this wise he to Placebo answerd.
" Now, brother min, be patient I pray,
Sin ye han said, and herkneth what I say.
" Senek among his other wordes wise
Saith, that a man ought him right wel avise,
To whom he yeveth his lond or his catel.
And sith I ought avisen me right wel,
To whom I yeve my good away fro me,
Wel more I ought avisen me, parde,
To whom I yeve my body: for alway
I warne you wel it is no childes play.
To take a wif without avisement.
Men must enqueren (this is min assent)
Wheder she be wise and sobre, or dronkelewe,
Or proud, or elles other waies a shrew,
A chidester, or a wastour of thy good,
Or riche or poure, or elles a man is wood.
Al be it so, that no man finden shal
Non in this world, that trotteth hol in al,
Ne man, ne beste, swiche as men can devise,
But natheles it ought ynough suffice
With any wif, if so were that she had
Mo goode thewes, than hire vices bad:
And all this axeth leiser to enquere.
For God it wot, I have wept many a tere
Ful prively, sin that I had a wif.
Praise who so wol a wedded mannes lif,
Certain I find in it but cost and care,
And observances of alle blisses bare.
And yet, God wot, my neighebours aboute,
And namely of women many a route,
Sain that I have the most stedefast wif,
And eke the mekest on that bereth lif.
But I wot best, wher wringeth me my sho.
Ye may for me right as you liketh do.
Aviseth you, ye ben a man of age,
How that ye entren into mariage;
And namely with a yong wif and a faire.
By him that made water, fire, erthe, and aire,
The yongest man, that is in all this route,
Is besy ynow to bringen it aboute
To han his wif alone, trusteth me:
Ye shul not plesen hire fully yeres three,
This to sain, to don hire ful plesance.
A wif axeth ful many an observance.
I pray you that ye be not evil apaid."
" Wel," quod this January, " and hast thou saide?

Straw for Senek, and straw for thy proverbes,
I counte not a panier ful of herbes
Of scole termes; wiser men than thou,
As thou hast herd, assented here right now
To my purpos: Placebo, what saye ye?"
"I say it is a cursed man," quod he,
"That letteth matrimonie sikerly."
And with that word they risen sodenly,
And ben assented fully, that he sholde
Be wedded whan him list, and wher he wolde.
High fantasie and curious besinesse
Fro day to day gan in the soule empresse
Of January about his mariage.
Many a faire shap, and many a faire visage
Ther passeth through his herte night by night.
As who so toke a mirrour polished bright,
And set it in a comune market place,
Than shuld he see many a figure pace
By his mirrour, and in the same wise
Gan January in with his thought devise
Of maidens, which that dwelten him beside:
He wiste not wher that he might abide.
For if that on have beautee in hire face,
Another stont so in the peples grace
For hire sadnesse and hire benignitee,
That of the peple the gretest vois hath she:
And som were riche and hadden a bad name.
But natheles, betwix ernest and game,
He at the last appointed him on on,
And let all other from his herte gon,
And chees hire of his owen auctoritee,
For love is blind all day, and may not see.
And whan that he was in his bed ybrought,
He purtreied in his herte and in his thought
Hire freshe beautee, and hire age tendre,
Hire middel smal, hire armes long and sclendre,
Hire wise governance, hire gentillesse,
Hire womanly bering, and hire sadnesse.
And whan that he on hire was condescended,
Him thought his chois it might not ben amended;
For whan that he himself concluded had,
Him thought eche other mannes wit so bad,
That impossible it were to replie
Again his chois; this was his fantasie.
His frendes sent he to, at his instance,
And praied hem to don him that plesance,
That hastily they wolden to him come;
He wolde abregge hir labour all and some:
Neded no more to hem to go ne ride,
He was appointed ther he wolde abide.
Placebo came, and eke his frendes sone,
And alderfirst he bade hem all a bone,
That non of hem non argumentes make
Again the purpos that he hath ytake:
Which purpos was plesant to God (said he)
And veray ground of his prosperitee.
He said, ther was a maiden in the toun,
Which that of beautee hadde gret renoune,
Al were it so she were of smal degree,
Sufficeth him hire youth and hire beautee:
Which maid (he said) he wold han to his wif
To lede in ese and holinesse his lif:
And thanked God, that he might han hire all,
That no wight with his blisse parten shall:
And praied hem to labour in this nede,
And shapen that he faille not to spede.
For than, he sayd, his spirit was at ese;
"Than is" (quod he) "nothing may me displese,
Save o thing pricketh in my conscience,
The which I wol reherse in your presence.
"I have" (quod he) "herd said ful yore ago,
Ther may no man han parfite blisses two,
This is to say, in Erthe and eke in Heven.
For though he kepe him fro the sinnes seven,
And eke from every branch of thilke tree,
Yet is ther so parfit felicitee,
And so gret ese and lust in mariage,
That ever I am agast now in min age,
That I shal leden now so mery a lif,
So delicat, withouten wo or strif,
That I shal han min Heven in Erthe here
For sin that veray Heven is bought so dere
With tribulation and gret penance,
How shuld I than, living in swiche plesance
As alle wedded men don with hir wives,
Come to the blisse, ther Crist eterne on live is?
This is my drede, and ye, my brethren tweie,
Assoileth me this question I preie."
Justinus, which that hated his folie,
Answerd anon right in his japerie;
And for he wold his longe tale abrege,
He wolde non auctoritee allege,
But sayde, "Sire, so ther be non obstacle
Other than this, God of his hie miracle,
And of his mercy may so for you werche,
That er ye have your rights of holy cherche,
Ye may repent of wedded mannes lif,
In which ye sain ther is no wo ne strif:
And elles God forbede, but if he sent
A wedded man his grace him to repent
Wel often, rather than a single man.
And therfore, sire, the best rede that I can,
Despeire you not, but haveth in memorie,
Paraventure she may be your purgatorie;
She may be Goddes mene and Goddes whippe;
Than shal your soule up unto Heven skippe
Swifter than doth an arow of a bow.
I hope to God hereafter ye shal know,
That ther n'is non so gret felicitee
In mariage, ne never more shal be,
That you shal let of your salvation,
So that ye use, as skill is and reson,
The lustes of your wif attemprely,
And that ye plese hire nat to amorously:
And that ye kepe your eke from other sinne.
My tale is don, for my wit is but thinne.
Beth not agast therof my brother dere,
But let us waden out of this matere.
The wif of Bathe, if ye han understonde,
Of mariage, which ye now han in honde,
Declared hath ful wel in litel space;
Fareth now wel, God have you in his grace."
And with this word this Justine and his brother
Han take hir leve, and eche of hem of other.
And whan they saw that it must nedes be,
They wroughten so by sleighte and wise tretee,
That she this maiden, which that Maius hight,
As hastily as ever that she might,
Shal wedded be unto this January.
I trow it were to longe you to tary,
If I you told of every script and bond,
By which that she was feoffed in his lond;
Or for to reken of hire rich array.
But finally ycomen is the day,
That to the chirche bothe ben they went,
For to receive the holy sacrament.
Forth cometh the preest, with stole about his nekke,
And bade hire be like Sara and Rebekke,
In wisdome and in trouthe of mariage:
And sayd his orisons, as is usage,

And crouched hem, and bade God shuld hem blesse,
And made all siker ynow with holinesse.
This ben they wedded with solempnitee;
And at the feste sitteth he and she
With other worthy folk upon the deis.
Al ful of joye and blisse is the paleis,
And ful of instruments, and of vitaille,
The moste deinteous of al Italie.
Before hem stood swiche instruments of soun,
That Orpheus, ne of Thebes Amphion,
Ne maden never swiche a melodie.
At every cours in came loude minstralcie,
That never Joab tromped for to here,
Ne he Theodomas yet half so clere
At Thebes, whan the citee was in doute.
Bacchus the win hem skinketh al aboute,
And Venus laugheth upon every wight,
(For January was become hire knight,
And wolde bothe assaien his corage
In libertee, and eke in mariage)
And with hire firebrond in hire hond aboute
Danceth before the bride and all the route.
And certainly I dare right wel say this,
Ymeneus, that God of wedding is,
Saw never his lif so mery a wedded man.
Hold thou thy pees, thou poet Marcian,
That writest us that ilke wedding mery
Of hire Philologie and him Mercurie,
And of the songes that the Muses songe:
To smal is both thy pen and eke thy tonge
For to descriven of this mariage.
Whan tendre youth hath wedded stouping age,
Ther is swiche mirth that it may not be writen;
Assaieth it yourself, than may ye witen
If that I lie or non in this matere.
Maius, that sit with so benigne a chere,
Hire to behold it semed faerie,
Quene Hester loked never with swiche an eye
On Assuere, so meke a look hath she,
I may you not devise all hire beautee;
But thus moch of hire beautee tell I may,
That she was like the brighte morwe of May
Fulfilled of all beautee, and plesance.
This January is ravished in a trance,
At every time he loketh in hire face,
But in his herte he gan hire to manace,
That he that night in armes wold hire streine
Harder than ever Paris did Heleine.
But natheles yet had he gret pitee
That thilke night offenden hire must he,
And thought. "Alas, o tendre creature,
Now wolde God ye mighten wel endure
All my corage, it is so sharpe and kene;
I am agast ye shal it nat sustene.
But God forbede, that I did all my might.
Now wolde God that it were waxen night,
And that the night wol lasten ever mo.
I wold that all this peple were ago."
And finally he doth all his labour,
As he best mighte, saving his honour,
To haste hem fro the mete in subtil wise.
The time came that reson was to rise,
And after that men dance, and drinken fast,
And spices all about the hous they cast,
And ful of joye and blisse is every man,
All but a squier, that highte Damian,
Which carf before the knight ful many a day:
He was so ravisht on his lady May,
That for the veray peine he was nie wood;
Almost he swelt, and swouned ther he stood:
So sore hath Venus hurt him with hire brond,
As that she bare it dancing in hire hond.
And to his bed he went him hastily;
No more of him as at this time speke I;
But ther I let him wepe ynow and plaine,
Til freshe May wol rewen on his peine.
O perilous fire, that in the bedstraw bredeth!
O famuler fo, that his service bedeth!
O servant traitour, false of holy hewe,
Like to the nedder in bosom slie untrewe,
God shielde us alle from your acquaintance!
O January, dronken in plesance
Of mariage, see how thy Damian,
Thin owen squier and thy boren man,
Entendeth for to do thee vilanie:
God grante thee thin homly fo to espie.
For in this world ti'is werse pestilence,
Than homly fo, all day in thy presence.
Parformed hath the Sonne his arke diurne,
No longer may the body of him sojourne
On the orisont, as in that latitude:
Night with his mantel, that is derke and rude,
Gan overspred the hemisperie aboute:
For which departed is this lusty route
Fro January with thank on every side.
Home to hir houses lustily they ride,
Ther as they don hir thinges, as hem lest,
And whan they saw hir time gon to rest.
Sone after that this hastif January
Wol go to bed, he wol no longer tary.
He drinketh Ipocras clarre, and vernage
Of spices hot, to encresen his corage:
And many a letuarie had he ful fine,
Swiche as the cursed monk dan Constantine
Hath written in his book *de Coitu;*
To ete hem all he wolde nothing eschue:
And to his privee frendes thus sayd he:
"For Goddes love, as sone as it may be,
Let voiden all this hous in curteis wise."
And they han don right as he wol devise.
Men drinken, and the travers drawe anon;
The bride is brought a-bed as still as ston;
And whan the bed was with the preest yblessed,
Out of the chambre hath every wight him dressed,
And January hath fast in armes take
His freshe May, his paradis, his make.
He lulleth hire, he kisseth hire ful oft;
With thicke bristles of his berd unsoft,
Like to the skin of houndfish, sharp as brere,
(For he was shave al newe in his manere)
He rubbeth hire upon hire tendre face,
And sayde thus: "Alas! I mote trespace
To you, my spouse, and you gretly offend,
Or time come that I wol doun descend.
But natheles considereth this," (quod he)
"Ther n'is no werkman, whatsoever he be,
That may both werken wel and hastily:
This wol be don at leiser parfitly.
It is no force how longe that we play;
In trewe wedlok coupled be we tway;
And blessed be the yoke that we ben inne,
For in our actes may ther be no sinne.
A man may do no sinne with his wif,
Ne hurt himselven with his owen knif:
For we have leve to play us by the law."
Thus laboureth he, til that the day gan dawe,
And than he taketh a sop in fine clarre,
And upright in his bed than sitteth he.
And after that he sang ful loud and clere,
And kist his wif, and maketh wanton chere.

He was al coltish, ful of ragerie,
And ful of jergon, as a flecked pie.
The slacke skin about his necke shaketh,
While that he sang, so chanteth he and craketh.
But God wot what that May thought in hire herte,
Whan she him saw up sitting in his sherte
In his night cap, and with his necke lene:
She praiseth not his playing worth a bene.
Than sayd he thus; "My reste wol I take
Now day is come, I may no lenger wake;"
And doun he layd his hed and slept til prime,
And afterward, whan that he saw his time,
Up riseth January, but freshe May
Held hire in chambre til the fourthe day,
As usage is of wives for the beste.
For every labour somtime moste han reste,
Or elles longe may he not endure;
This is to say, no lives creature,
Be it of fish, or brid, or best, or man.
Now wol I speke of woful Damian,
That langureth for love, as ye shul here;
Therfore I speke to him in this manere.
I say, "O sely Damian, alas!
Answer to this demand, as in this cas,
How shalt thou to thy lady freshe May
Tellen thy wo? She wol alway say nay;
Eke if thou speke, she wol thy wo bewrein;
God be thin help, I can no better sein."
This sike Damian in Venus fire
So brenneth, that he dieth for desire;
For which he put his lif in aventure,
No lenger might he in this wise endure,
But prively a penner gan he borwe,
And in a lettre wrote he all his sorwe,
In manere of a complaint or a lay,
Unto his faire freshe lady May.
And in a purse of silk, heng on his sherte,
He hath it put, and layd it at his herte.
The Mone that at none was thilke day
That January had wedded freshe May
In ten of Taure, was into Cancer gliden;
So long hath Maius in hire chambre abiden,
As custome is unto thise nobles alle.
A bride shal not eten in the halle,
Til dayes four or three dayes at the leste
Ypassed ben, than let hire go to feste.
The fourthe day complete fro none to none,
Whan that the highe messe was ydone,
In halle sat this January and May,
As fresh as is the brighte somers day.
And so befel, how that this goode man
Remembred him upon this Damian,
And sayde; "Seinte Marie, how may it be,
That Damian entendeth not to me?
Is he ay sike? or how may this betide?"
His squiers, which that stoden ther beside,
Excused him, because of his siknesse,
Which letteth him to don his besinesse:
Non other cause mighte make him tary.
"That me forthinketh," quod this January;
"He is a gentil squier by my trouthe,
If that he died, it were gret harme and routhe.
He is as wise, discret, and as secree,
As any man I wote of his degree,
And therto manly and eke servisable,
And for to ben a thrifty man right able.
But after mete as sone as ever I may
I wol myselfe visite him, and eke May,
To don him all the comfort that I can."
And for that word him blessed every man,
That of his bountee and his gentillesse
He wolde so comforten in siknesse
His squier, for it was a gentil dede.
"Dame," quod this January, "take good hede,
At after mete, ye with your women alle,
(Whan that ye ben in chambre out of this halle)
That all ye gon to see this Damian:
Doth him disport, he is a gentil man,
And telleth him that I wol him visite,
Have I nothing but rested me a lite:
And spede you faste, for I wol abide
Til that ye slepen faste by my side."
And with that word he gan unto him calle
A squier, that was marshal of his halle,
And told him certain thinges that he wolde.
This freshe May hath streight hire way yholde
With all hire women unto Damian.
Doun by his beddes side sit she than,
Comforting him as goodly as she may.
This Damian, whan that his time he say,
In secree wise, his purse, and eke his bill,
In which that he ywritten had his will,
Hath put into hire hond withouten more,
Save that he siked wonder depe and sore,
And softely to hire right thus sayd he;
"Mercie, and that ye nat discover me:
For I am ded, if that this thing be kid."
This purse hath she in with hire bosome hid,
And wan hire way; ye get no more of me;
But unto January ycome is she,
That on his beddes side sate ful soft.
He taketh hire, and kisseth hire ful oft:
And layd him doun to slepe, and that anon.
She feined hire, as that she muste gon
Ther as ye wote that every wight mot nede;
And whan she of this bill hath taken hede,
She rent it all to cloutes at the last,
And in the privee softely it cast.
Who studieth now but faire freshe May?
Adoun by olde January she lay,
That slepte, til the cough hath him awaked:
Anon he prayd hire stripen hire al naked,
He wolde of hire, he said, have som plesance;
And said, hire clothes did him encombrance.
And she obeieth him, be hire lefe or loth.
But lest that precious folk be with me wroth,
How that he wrought, I dare nat to you tell,
Or wheder hire thought it paradis or Hell;
But ther I let hem werken in hir wise
Til evesong rang, and that they must arise.
Were it by destinee, or aventure,
Were it by influence, or by nature,
Or constellation, that in swiche estat
The Heven stood at that time fortunat,
As for to put a bill of Venus werkes
(For alle thing hath time, as sayn thise clerkes)
To any woman for to get hire love,
I cannot say, but grete God above,
That knoweth that non act is causeles,
He deme of all, for I wol hold my pees.
But soth is this, how that this freshe May
Hath taken swiche impression that day
Of pitee on this sike Damian,
That fro hire herte she ne driven can
The remembrance for to don him ese. [displese
"Certain" (thought she) "whom that this thing
I rekke not, for here I him assure,
To love him best of any creature,
Though he no more hadde than his sherte."
Lo, pitee renneth sone in gentil herte.

Here may ye seen, how excellent franchise
In women is whan they hem narwe avise.
Som tyraunt is, as ther ben many on,
That hath an herte as hard as any ston,
Which wold han lette him sterven in the place
Wel rather than han granted him hire grace:
And hem rejoyeen in hir cruel pride,
And rekken not to ben an homicide.
This gentil May, fulfilled of pitee,
Right of hire hond a lettre maketh she,
In which she granteth him hire veray grace;
Ther lacked nought, but only day and place,
Wher that she might unto his lust suffice:
For it shal be, right as he wol devise.
And whan she saw hire time upon a day
To visiten this Damian goth this May,
And sotilly this lettre doun she threst
Under his pilwe, rede it if him lest.
She taketh him by the hond, and hard him twist
So secretly, that no wight of it wist,
And bade him ben all hol, and forth she went
To January, whan he for hire sent.
Up riseth Damian the next morwe,
Al passed was his siknesse and his sorwe.
He kembeth him, he proineth him and piketh,
He doth all that his lady lust and liketh;
And eke to January he goth as lowe,
As ever did a dogge for the bowe.
He is so plesant unto every man,
(For craft is all, who so that don it can)
That every wight is fain to speke him good;
And fully in his ladies grace he stood.
Thus let I Damian about his nede,
And in my tale forth I wol procede.
Som clerkes holden that felicitee
Staut in delit, and therfore certain he
This noble January, with all his might
In honest wise as longeth to a knight,
Shope him to liven ful deliciously.
His housing, his array, as honestly
To his degree was maked as a kinges.
Amonges other of his honest thinges
He had a gardin walled all with ston,
So fayre a gardin wote I no wher non.
For out of doute I verayly suppose,
That he that wrote the Romant of the Rose,
Ne coude of it the beautee wel devise:
Ne Priapus ne might not suffise,
Though he be god of gardins, for to tell
The beautee of the gardin, and the well,
That stood under a laurer alway grene.
Ful often time he Pluto and his quene
Proserpina, and alle hir Faerie,
Disporten hem and maken melodie
About that well, and daunced, as men told.
This noble knight, this January the old
Swiche deintee hath in it to walke and pley,
That he wol suffre no wight bere the key,
Sauf he himself, for of the smal wiket
He bare alway of silver a cliket,
With which whan that him list he it unshette.
And whan that he wold pay his wives dette
In somer seson thider wold he go,
And May his wif, and no wight but they two;
And thinges which that were not don a-bedde,
He in the gardin parfourned hem and spedde.
And in this wise many a mery day
Lived this January and freshe May,
But worldly joye may not alway endure
To January, ne to no creature.

O soden hap, o thou fortune unstable,
Like to the scorpion so deceivable,
That flatrest with thy hed whan thou wolt sting;
Thy tayl is deth, thurgh thin enveniming.
O brotel joye, o swete poyson queinte,
O monstre, that so sotilly canst peinte
Thy giftes, under hewe of stedfastnesse,
That thou deceivest bothe more and lesse,
Why hast thou January thus deceived,
That haddest him for thy ful frend received?
And now thou hast beraft him both his eyen,
For sorwe of which desireth he to dyen.
Alas! this noble January free,
Amidde his lust and his prosperitee
Is waxen blind, and that all sodenly.
He wepeth and he waileth pitously;
And therwithall, the fire of jalousie
(Lest that his wif shuld fall in som folie)
So brent his herte, that he wolde fain,
That som man had beth him and hire yslain;
For nother after his deth, ne in his lif,
Ne wold he that she were no love ne wif,
But ever live as a widewe in clothes blake,
Sole as the turtle that hath lost hire make.
But at the last, after a moneth or tway,
His sorwe gan asswagen, soth to say.
For whan he wist it might non other be,
He patiently toke his adversitee:
Save out of doute he ne may nat forgon,
That he n'as jalous ever more in on:
Which jalousie it was so outrageous,
That neither in halle, ne in non other hous,
Ne in non other place never the mo
He n'olde suffre hire for to ride or go,
But if that he had honde on hire alway.
For which ful often wepeth freshe May
That loveth Damian so brenningly,
That she moste either dien sodenly,
Or elles she moste han him as hire lest:
She waited whan hire herte wold to-brest.
Upon that other side Damian
Becomen is the sowefullest man
That ever was, for neither night ne day
Ne might he speke a word to freshe May,
As to his purpos of no swiche matere,
But if that January must it here,
That had an hand upon hire evermo.
But natheles, by writing to and fro,
And privee signes, wist he what she ment,
And she knew eke the fin of his entent.
O January, what might it thee availe,
Though thou might seen, as fer as shippes saile?
For as good is blind to deceived be,
As be deceived, whan a man may see.
Lo Argus, which that had an hundred eyen,
For all that ever he coude pore or prien,
Yet was he blent, and, God wot, so ben mo,
That wenen wisly that it be not so:
Passe over is an ese, I say no more.
This freshe May, of which I spake of yore,
In warm wex hath enprented the cliket,
That January bare of the smal wiket,
By which into his gardin oft he went;
And Damian that knew all hire entent
The cliket contrefeted prively:
Ther n'is no more to say, but hastily
Som wonder by this cliket shal betide,
Which ye shul heren, if ye wol abide.
O noble Ovide, soth sayest thou, God wote,
What sleight is it if love be long and hote,

That he n'ill find it out in som manére?
By Pyramus and Thisbe may men lere;
Though they were kept ful long and streit over all
They ben accorded, rowping thurgh a wall,
Ther no wight coude han founden swiche a sleighte.
But now to purpós; er that dasies eighte
Were passed of the month of Juil, befill,
That January hath caught so gret a will,
Thurgh egging of his wif, him for to play
In his gardin, and no wight but they tway,
That in a morwe unto this May said he;
"Rise up, my wif, my love, my lady free;
The turtles vois is herd, myn owen swete;
The winter is gon, with all his raines wete.
Come forth now with thin eyen columbine.
Wel fairer ben thy brests than ony wine.
The gardin is enclosed all aboute;
Come forth, my white spouse, for out of doute,
Thou hast me wounded in myn herte, o wif:
No spot in thee n'as never in all thy lif.
Come forth and let us taken our disport,
I chese thee for my wif and my comfort."
Swiche olde lewed wordes used he.
On Damian a signe made she,
That he shuld go before with his cliket.
This Damian hath opened the wiket,
And in he stert, and that in swiche manere,
That no wight might him see neyther yhere,
And still he sit under a bush. Anon
This January, as blind as is a ston,
With Maius in his hand, and no wight mo,
Into this freshe gardin is ago,
And clapped to the wiket sodenly.
"Now wif," quod he, "here n'is but thou, and I,
That art the creature that I best love:
For by that Lord that sit in Heven above,
I hadde leve dien on a knif,
Than thee offenden, dere trewe wif.
For Goddes sake, thinke how I thee chees,
Not for no covetise douteles,
But only for the love I had to thee.
And though that I be old and may not see,
Beth to me trewe, and I wol tell you why;
Certes three thinges shal ye win therby;
First love of Crist, and to yourself honour,
And all min heritage, toun and tour.
I yeve it you, maketh chartres as you lest:
This shal be don to-morwe er Sonne rest,
So wisly God my soule bring to blisse;
I pray you on this covenant ye me kisse.
And though that I be jalous, wite me nought;
Ye ben so depe enprented in my thought,
That whan that I consider your beautee,
And therwithall the unlikely elde of me,
I may not certes, though I shulde die,
Forbere to ben out of your compagnie
For veray love; this is withouten doute:
Now kisse me, wif, and let us rome aboute."
This freshe May, whan she thise wordes herd,
Benignely to January answerd,
But first and forward she began to wepe:
"I have," quod she, "a soule for to kepe
As wel as ye, and also min honour,
And of my wifhood thilke tendre flour,
Which that I have assured in your hond,
Whan that the preest to you my body bond:
Wherfore I wol answere in this manere
With leve of you, min owen lord so dere.
"I pray to God that never daw that day,
That I ne sterve, as foule as woman may,
If ever I do unto my kin that shame,
Or elles I empeire so my name,
That I be false; and if I do that lakke,
Do stripen me and put me in a sakke,
And in the nexte river do me drenche:
I am a gentil woman, and no wenche.
Why speke ye thus? but men ben ever untrewe,
And women han reprefe of you ay newe.
Ye con non other dallance, I leve,
But speke to us as of untrust and repreve."
And with that word she saw wher Damian
Sat in the bush, and coughen she began;
And with hire finger a signe made she,
That Damian shuld climbe up on a tre,
That charged was with fruit, and up he went:
For verailly he knew all hire entent,
And every signe that she coude make,
Wel bet than January hire owen make.
For in a lettre she had told him all
Of this matere, how that he werken shall.
And thus I let him sitting in the pery,
And January and May roming ful mery.
Bright was the day, and blew the firmament;
Phebus of gold his stremes doun hath sent
To gladen every flour with his warmnesse;
He was that time in Geminis, I gesse,
But litel fro his declination
Of Cancer, Joves exaltation.
And so befell in that bright morwe tide,
That in the gardin, on the ferther side,
Pluto, that is the king of Faerie,
And many a ladie in his compagnie
Folwing his wif, the quene Proserpina,
Which that he ravished out of Ethna,
While that she gadred floures in the mede,
(In Claudian ye may the story rede,
How that hire in his grisely carte he fette)
This king of Faerie adoun him sette
Upon a benche of turves freshe and grene,
And right anon thus said he to his quene.
"My wif," quod he, "ther may no wight say nay,
The experience so preveth it every day,
The treson which that woman doth to man.
Ten hundred thousand stories tell I can
Notable of your untrouth and brotelnesse.
"O Salomon, richest of all richesse,
Fulfilled of sapience and worldly glorie,
Ful worthy ben thy wordes to memorie
To every wight, that wit and reson can.
Thus praiseth he the bountee yet of man;
'Among a thousand men yet fond I on,
But of all women fond I never non.'
Thus saith this king, that knew your wikkedness;
And Jesus, *filius* Sirach, as I gesse,
He speketh of you but selden reverence.
A wilde fire, a corrupt pestilence,
So fall upon your bodies yet to-night:
Ne see ye not this honourable knight?
Because, alas! that he is blind and old,
His owen man shal make him a cokewold.
Lo, wher he sit, the lechour, in the tree.
Now wol I graunten of my majestee
Unto this olde blinde worthy knight,
That he shal have again his eyen sight,
Whan that his wif wol don him vilanie;
Than shal he knowen all hire harlotrie;
Both in reprefe of hire and other mo."
"Ye, sire," quod Proserpine, "and wol ye so?
Now by my modre Ceres soule I swere,
That I shal yeve hire suffisant answere,

And alle women after for hire sake;
That though they ben in any gilt ytake,
With face bold they shul hemselve excuse,
And bere hem doun that wolden hem accuse.
For lacke of answere, non of us shul dien.
Al had ye seen a thing with bothe youre eyen,
Yet shul we so visage it hardely,
And wepe and swere and chiden subtilly,
That ye shul ben as lewed as ben gees.
" What rekketh me of your auctoritees?
I wote wel that this Jewe, this Salomon,
Fond of us women fooles many on:
But though that he ne fond no good woman,
Ther hath yfonden many an other man
Women ful good, and trewe, and vertuous;
Witnesse on hem that dwelte in Cristes hous,
With martyrdom they preved hir constance.
The Romain gestes maken remembrance
Of many a veray trewe wif also.
But, sire, ne be not wroth, al be it so,
Though that he said he fond no good woman,
I pray you take the sentence of the man:
He ment thus, that in soverain bountee
N'is non but God, no, nouther he ne she.
" Ey, for the veray God that n'is but on,
What maken ye so moche of Salomon?
What though he made a temple, Goddes hous?
What though he riche were and glorious?
So made he eke a temple of false goddes,
How might he don a thing that more forbode is?
Parde as faire as ye his name emplastre,
He was a lechour, and an idolastre,
And in his elde he veray God forsoke.
And if that God ne hadde (as saith the boke)
Spared him for his fathers sake, he sholde
Han lost his regne rather than he wolde.
" I sete nat of all the vilanie,
That he of women wrote, a boterflie.
I am a woman, nedes moste I speke,
Or swell unto that time min herte breke.
For sin he said that we ben jangleresses,
As ever mote I brouken hole my tresses,
I shal nat sparen for no curtesie
To speke him harm, that sayth us vilanie."
" Dame," quod this Pluto, " be no lenger wroth,
I yeve it up: but sin I swore min oth,
That I wold graunten him his sight again,
My word shal stand, that warne I you certain:
I am a king, it sit me not to lie."
" And I," quod she, " am quene of Faerie.
Hire answere she shal han I undertake;
Let us no more wordes of it make."
Forsoth," quod he, " I wol you not contrary."
Now let us turne again to January,
That in the gardin with his faire May
Singeth wel merier than the popingay:
" You love I best, and shal, and other non."
So long about the alleyes is he gon,
Til he was comen again to thilke pery,
Wher as this Damian sitteth ful mery
On high, among the freshe leves grene.
This freshe May, that is so bright and shene,
Gan for to sike, and said; " Alas my side!
Now, sire," quod she, " for ought that may betide
I moste have of the peres that I see,
Or I moste die, so sore longeth me
To eten of the smale peres grene:
Help for hire love that is of Heven quene.
I tell you wel a woman in my plit
May have to fruit so gret an appetit,
That she may dien, but she of it have."
" Alas!" quod he, " that I n'adde here a knave,
That coude climbe, alas! alas!" (quod he)
For I am blinde." " Ye, sire, no force," quod she;
" But wold ye vouchesauf for Goddes sake,
The pery in with your armes for to take,
(For wel I wot that ye mistrusten me)
Than wol I climben wel ynough," (quod she)
" So I my fote might setten on your back."
" Certes," said he, " therin shal be no lack,
Might I you helpen with min herte blood."
He stoupeth doun, and on his back she stood,
And caught hire by a twist, and up she goth.
(Ladies, I pray you that ye be not wroth,
I can nat glose, I am a rude man:)
And sodenly anon this Damian
Gan pullen up the smock, and in he throng.
And whan that Pluto saw this grete wrong,
To January he yaft again his sight,
And made him see as wel as ever he might.
And wan he thus had caught his sight again,
Ne was ther never man of thing so fain:
But on his wif his thought was ever mo.
Up to the tree he cast his eyen two,
And saw how Damian his wif had dressed
In swiche manere, it may not ben expressed,
But if I wold speke uncurteisly.
And up he yaf a roring and a cry,
As doth the mother whan the child shal die;
" Out! helpe! alas! harow!" he gan to cry;
" O stronge lady store, what doest thou?"
And she answered: " Sire, what aileth you?
Have patience and reson in your minde,
I have you holpen on both your eyen blinde.
Up peril of my soule, I shal nat lien,
As me was taught to helpen with your eyen,
Was nothing better for to make you see,
Than strogle with a man upon a tree:
God wot, I did it in ful good entent."
" Strogle!" quod he, " ye algate in it went.
God yeve you both on shames deth to dien!
He swived thee; I saw it with min eyen;
And elles be I honged by the halse."
" Than is," quod she, " my medicine al false.
For certainly, if that ye mighten see,
Ye wold not say thise wordes unto me.
Ye have som glimsing, and no parfit sight,"
" I see," quod he, " as wel as ever I might,
(Thanked be God) with both min eyen two,
And by my feith me thought he did thee so."
" Ye mase, ye masen, goode sire," quod she;
" This thank have I for I have made you see:
Alas!" quod she, " that ever I was so kind."
" Now, dame," quod he, " let al passe out of mind:
Come doun, my lefe, and if I have missaid,
God helpe me so, as I am evil apaid.
But by my fadres soule, I wende have sein,
How that this Damian had by thee lein,
And that thy smock had lein upon his brest."
" Ye, sire," quod she, " ye may wene as you lest:
But, sire, a man that waketh of his slepe,
He may not sodenly wel taken kepe
Upon a thing, ne seen it parfitly,
Til that he be adawed verayly.
Right so a man, that long hath blind ybe,
He may not sodenly so wel ysee,
First whan his sight is newe comen agein,
As he that hath a day or two ysein.
Til that your sight ysateled be a while,
Ther may ful many a sighte you begile.

Beware, I pray you, for by Hevenè king
Ful many a man weneth to see a thing,
And it is all another than it semeth:
He which that misconceiveth oft misdemeth."
And with that word she lep doun fro the tree.
This January who is glad but he?
He kisseth hire, and clippeth hire ful oft,
And on hire wombe he stroketh hire ful soft;
And to his paleis home he hath hire lad.
Now, goode men, I pray you to be glad.
Thus endeth here my tale of Januarie,
God blesse us, and his moder Seinte Marie.

THE SQUIRES PROLOGUE.

"By Goddes mercy," sayde oure Hoste tho,
"Now swiche a wif I preie God kepe me fro.
Lo, swiche sleightes and subtilitees
In women ben; for ay as bisy as bees
Ben they us sely men for to deceive,
And from a sothe wol they ever weive:
By this Marchantes tale it preveth wel.
But natheles, as trewe as any stele,
I have a wif, though that she poure be;
But of hire tonge a labbing shrewe is she;
And yet she hath an hepe of vices mo.
Therof no force; let all swiche thinges go.
But wete ye what? in conseil be it seyde,
Me reweth sore I am unto hire teyde;
For and I shulde rekene every vice,
Which that she hath, ywis I were to nice;
And cause why, it shulde reported be
And told to hire of som of this compagnie,
(Of whom it nedeth not for to declare,
Sin women connen utter swiche chaffare)
And eke my wit sufficeth not therto
To tellen all; wherfore my tale is do.
"Squier, come ner, if it youre wille be,
And say somwhat of love, for certes ye
Connen theron as moche as any man."
"Nay, sire," quod he, "but swiche thing as I can
With hertly wille, for I wol not rebelle
Agein youre lust, a tale wol I telle.
Have me excused if I speke amis;
My wille is good; and lo, my tale is this.

THE SQUIERES TALE.

At Sarra, in the lond of Tartarie,
Ther dwelt a king that werreied Russie,
Thurgh which ther died many a doughty man:
This noble king was cleped Cambuscan,
Which in his time was of so gret renoun,
That ther n'as no wher in no regioun,
So excellent a lord in alle thing:
Him lacked nought that longeth to a king,
As of the secte of which that he was borne.
He kept his lay to which he was ysworne,
And therto he was hardy, wise, and riche,
And pitous and just, and alway yliche;
Trewe of his word, benigne and honourable;
Of his corage as any centre stable;
Yong, fresh, and strong, in armes desirous,
As any bacheler of all his hous.
A faire person he was, and fortunate,
And kept alway so wel real estat,
That ther n'as no wher swiche another man.
This noble king, this Tartre Cambuscan,
Hadde two sones by Elfeta his wif,
Of which the eldest sone highte Algarsif,
That other was ycleped Camballo.
A doughter had this worthy king also,
That yongest was, and highte Canace:
But for to tellen you all hire beautee,
It lith not in my tonge, ne in my conning,
I dare not undertake so high a thing:
Min English eke is unsufficient,
It muste ben a rethor excellent,
That coude his colours longing for that art,
If he shuld hire descriven ony part:
I am not swiche, I mote speke as I can.
And so befell, that whan this Cambuscan
Hath twenty winter borne his diademe,
As he was wont fro yere to yere I deme,
He let the feste of his nativitee
Don crien, thurghout Sarra his citee,
The last Idus of March, after the yere.
Phebus the sonne ful jolif was and clere,
For he was nigh his exaltation
In Martes face, and in his mansion
In Aries, the colerike hote signe:
Ful lusty was the wether and benigne
For which the foules again the sonne shene,
What for the seson and the yonge grene,
Ful loude songen hir affections:
Hem semed han getten hem protections
Again the swerd of winter kene and cold.
This Cambuscan, of which I have you told,
In real vestiments, sit on his deis
With diademe, ful high in his paleis;
And holt his feste so solempne and so riche,
That in this world ne was ther non it liche.
Of which if I shal tellen all the array,
Than wold it occupie a somers day;
And eke it nedeth not for to devise
At every cours the order of hir service.
I wol not tellen of hir strange sewes,
Ne of hir swannes, ne hir heronsewes.
Eke in that lond, as tellen knightes old,
Ther is som mete that is ful deintee hold,
That in this lond men recche of it ful smal:
Ther n'is no man that may reporten al.
I wol not tarien you, for it is prime,
And for it is no fruit, but losse of time,
Unto my purpose I wol have recours.
And so befell that after the thridde cours
While that this king sit thus in his nobley,
Herking his ministralles hir thinges pley
Beforne him at his bord deliciously,
In at the halle dore al sodenly
Ther came a knight upon a stede of bras,
And in his hond a brod mirrour of glas;
Upon his thombe he had of gold a ring,
And by his side a naked swerd hanging:
And up he rideth to the highe bord.
In all the halle ne was ther spoke a word,
For mervaille of this knight; him to behold
Ful besily they waiten yong and old.
This strange knight that come thus sodenly
Al armed save his hed ful richely,
Saluëth king and quene, and lordes alle
By order, as they saten in the halle,
With so high reverence and observance,
As wel in speche as in his contenance,
That Gawain with his olde curtesie,
Though he were come agen out of Faerie,

Ne coude him not amenden with a word.
And after this, before the highe bord
He with a manly vois sayd his message,
After the forme used in his langage,
Withouten vice of sillable or of letter.
And for his tale shulde seme the better,
Accordant to his wordes was his chere,
As techeth art of speche hem that it lere.
Al be it that I cannot soune his stile,
Ne cannot climben over so high a stile,
Yet say I this, as to comun entent,
Thus much amounteth all that ever he ment,
If it so be that I have it in mind.
He sayd; "The king of Arabie and of Inde,
My liege lord, on this solempne day
Saludeth you as he best can and may,
And sendeth you in honour of your feste
By me, that am al redy at your heste,
This stede of bras, that esily and wel
Can in the space of a day naturel,
(This is to sayn, in four and twenty houres)
Wher so you list, in drought or elles shoures,
Beren your body into every place,
To which your herte willeth for to pace,
Withouten wemme of you, thurgh foule or faire.
Or if you list to fleen as high in the aire,
As doth an egle, whan him list to sore,
This same stede shal bere you evermore
Withouten harme, till ye be ther you lest,
(Though that ye slepen on his back or rest)
And turne again, with writhing of a pin.
He that it wrought, he coude many a gin;
He waited many a constellation,
Or he had don this operation,
And knew ful many a sele and many a bond.
"This mirrour eke, that I have in min hond,
Hath swiche a might, that men may in it see,
Whan ther shal falle ony adversitee
Unto your regne, or to yourself also,
And openly, who is your frend or fo.
And over all this, if any lady bright
Hath set hire herte on any maner wight,
If he be false, she shal his treson see,
His newe love, and all his subtiltee
So openly, that ther shal nothing hide.
"Wherfore again this lusty somer tide
This mirrour and this ring, that ye may se,
He hath sent to my lady Canace,
Your excellente doughter that is here.
"The vertue of this ring, if ye wol here,
Is this, that if hire list it for to were
Upon hire thombe, or in hire purse it bere,
Ther is no foule that fleeth under Heven,
That she ne shal wel understond his steven,
And know his mening openly and plaine,
And answere him in his langage again:
And every gras that groweth upon rote
She shal eke know, and whom it wol do bote,
All be his woundes never so depe and wide.
"This naked sword, that hangeth by my side,
Swiche vertue hath, that what man that it smite,
Thurghout his armure it wol kerve and bite,
Were it as thicke as is a braunched oke:
And what man that is wounded with the stroke
Shal never be hole, til that you list of grace
To stroken him with the platte in thilke place
Ther he is hurt; this is as much to sain,
Ye moten with the platte swerd again
Stroken him in the wound, and it wol close.
This is the veray soth withouten glose,
It failleth not, while it is in your hold."
And whan this knight hath thus his tale told,
He rideth out of halle, and doun he light;
His stede, which that shone as Sonne bright,
Stant in the court as stille as any ston.
This knight is to his chambre ladde anon,
And is unarmed, and to the mete ysette.
Thise presents ben ful richelich yfette,
This is to sain, the swerd and the mirrour,
And borne anon into the highe tour.
With certain officers ordained therfore;
And unto Canace the ring is bore
Solempnely, ther she sat at the table;
But sikerly, withouten any fable,
The hors of bras, that may not be remued;
It stant, as it were to the ground yglued;
Ther may no man out of the place it drive
For non engine, of windas, or polive:
And cause why, for they con not the craft,
And therfore in the place they han it laft,
Til that the knight hath taught hem the manere
To voiden him, as ye shal after here.
Gret was the prees, that swarmed to and fro
To gauren on this hors that stondeth so:
For it so high was, and so brod and long,
So wel proportioned for to be strong,
Right as it were a stede of Lumbardie;
Therwith so horsly, and so quik of eye,
As it a gentil Poileis courser were:
For certes, fro his tayl unto his ere
Nature ne art ne coud him not amend
In no degree, as all the peple wend.
But evermore hir moste wonder was,
How that it coude gon, and was of bras;
It was of faerie, as the peple semed.
Diverse folk diversely han demed;
As many heds, as many wittes ben.
They murmured, as doth a swarme of been,
And maden skilles after hir fantasies,
Rehersing of the olde poetries,
And sayd it was ylike the Pegasee,
The hors that hadde winges for to flee,
Or elles it was the Grekes hors Sinon,
That broughte Troye to destruction,
As men moun in thise olde gestes rede.
"Min herte" (quod on) "is evermore in drede,
I trow som men of armes ben therin,
That shapen hem this citee for to win:
It were right good that al swiche thing were know."
Another rowned to his felaw low,
And sayd, "He lieth, for it is rather like
An apparence ymade by som magike,
As jogelours plain at thise festes grete."
Of sondry doutes thus they jangle and trete,
As lewed peple demen comunly
Of thinges, that ben made more subtilly
Than they can in hir lewednesse comprehende,
They demen gladly to the badder ende.
And som of hem wondred on the mirrour,
That born was up in to the maister tour,
How men mighte in it swiche thinges see.
Another answered, and sayd, "It might wel be
Naturelly by compositions
Of angles, and of slie reflections;"
And saide that in Rome was swiche on.
They speke of Alhazen and Vitellon,
And Aristotle, that writen in hir lives
Of queinte mirrours, and of prospectives,
As knowen they, that han hir bookes herd.
And other folk han wondred on the swerd,

That wolde percen thurghout every thing:
And fell in speche of Telephus the king,
And of Achilles for his queinte spere,
For he coude with it bothe hele and dere,
Right in swiche wise as men may with the swerd,
Of which right now ye have yourselven herd.
They speken of sondry harding of metall,
And speken of medicines therwithall,
And how, and whan it shuld yharded be,
Which is unknow algates unto me.
Tho speken they of Canacees ring,
And saiden all, that swiche a wonder thing
Of craft of ringes herd they never non,
Save that he Moises and king Salomon
Hadden a name of conning in swiche art.
Thus sain the peple, and drawen hem apart.
But natheles som saiden that it was
Wonder to maken of ferne ashen glas,
And yet is glas nought like ashen of ferne,
But for they han yknowen it so ferne,
Therfore ceseth hir jangling and hir wonder.
As sore wondren som on cause of thonder,
On ebbe and floud, on gossomer, and on mist,
And on all thing, til that the cause is wist.
Thus janglen they, and demen and devise,
Til that the king gan fro his bord arise.
Phebus hath left the angle meridional,
And yet ascending was the beste real,
The gentil Leon, with his Aldrian,
Whan that this Tartre king, this Cambuscan,
Rose from his bord, ther as he sat ful hie:
Beforne him goth the loude minstralcie,
Til he come to his chambre of parements,
Ther as they sounden divers instruments,
That it is like an Heven for to here.
Now dauncen lusty Venus children dere:
For in the Fish hir lady set ful hie,
And loketh on hem with a frendly eye.
This noble king is set upon his trone;
This straunge knight is fet to him ful sone,
And on the daunce he goth with Canace.
Here is the revell and the jolitee,
That is not able a dull man to devise:
He must han knowen love and his servise,
And ben a festlich man, as fresh as May,
That shulde you devisen swiche array.
Who coude tellen you the forme of daunces
So uncouth, and so freshe contenaunces,
Swiche subtil lokings and dissimulings,
For dred of jalous mennes apperceivings?
No man but Launcelot, and he is ded.
Therfore I passe over all this lustyhed,
I say no more, but in this jolinesse
I lete hem, til men to the souper hem dresse.
The steward bit the spices for to hie
And eke the win, in all this melodie;
The ushers and the squierie ben gon,
The spices and the win is come anon:
They ete and drinke, and whan this had an end,
Unto the temple, as reson was, they wend:
The service don, they soupen all by day.
What nedeth you rehersen hir array?
Eche man wot wel, that at a kinges fest
Is plentee, to the most and to the lest,
And deintees mo than ben in my knowing.
At after souper goth this noble king
To seen this hors of bras, with all a route
Of lordes and of ladies him aboute.
Swiche wondring was ther on this hors of bras,
That sin the gret assege of Troye was,
Ther as men wondred on an hors also,
Ne was ther swiche a wondring, as was tho.
But finally the king asketh the knight
The vertue of this courser, and the might,
And praied him to tell his governaunce.
This hors anon gan for to trip and daunce,
Whan that the knight laid hond up on his rein,
And saide, "Sire, ther n'is no more to sain,
But whan you list to riden any where,
Ye moten trill a pin, stant in his ere,
Which I shal tellen you betwixt us two,
Ye moten nempne him to what place also,
Or to what contree that you list to ride.
"And whan ye come ther as you list abide,
Bid him descend, and trill another pin,
(For therin lieth the effect of all the gin)
And he wol doun descend and don your will,
And in that place he wol abiden still:
Though al the world had the contrary swore,
He shal not thennes be drawe ne be bore.
Or if you list to bid him thennes gon,
Trille this pin, and he wol vanish anon
Out of the sight of every maner wight,
And come agen, be it by day or night,
Whan that you list to clepen him again
In swiche a guise, as I shal to you sain
Betwixen you and me, and that ful sone.
Ride whan you list, ther n'is no more to done."
Enfourmed whan the king was of the knight,
And hath conceived in his wit aright
The maner and the forme of all this thing,
Ful glad and blith, this noble doughty king
Repaireth to his revel, as beforne.
The bridel is in to the tour yborne,
And kept among his jewels lefe and dere:
The hors vanisht, I n'ot in what manere,
Out of hir sight, ye get no more of me:
But thus I lete in lust and jolitee
This Cambuscan his lordes festeying,
Til that wel nigh the day began to spring.

PARS SECUNDA.

The norice of digestion, the slepe,
Gan on hem winke, and bad hem taken kepe,
That moche drinke, and labour wol have rest:
And with a galping mouth hem all he kest,
And said, that it was time to lie adoun,
For blood was in his dominatioun:
Cherisheth blood, natures frend, quod he.
They thanken him galping, by two by three;
And every wight gan drawe him to his rest,
As slepe hem bade, they toke it for the best.
Hir dremes shul not now be told for me;
Ful were hir hedes of fumositee,
That causeth dreme, of which ther is no charge.
They slepen til that it was prime large,
The moste part, but it were Canace;
She was ful mesurable, as women be.
For of hire father had she take hire leve
To gon to rest, sone after it was eve;
Hire liste not appalled for to be,
Nor on the morwe unfestliche for to see;
And slept hire firste slepe, and than awoke.
For swiche a joye she in hire herte toke
Both of hire queinte ring, and of hire mirrour,
That twenty time she chaunged hire colour;
And in hire slepe right for the impression
Of hire mirrour she had a vision.

Wherfore, or that the Sonne gan up glide,
She clepeth upon hire maistresse hire beside,
And saide, that hire luste for to arise.
Thise olde women, that ben gladly wise,
As is hire maistresse, answered hire anon,
And said; "Madame, whider wol ye gon
Thus erly? for the folk ben all in rest."
"I wol," quod she, "arisen (for me lest
No longer for to slepe) and walken aboute."
Hire maistresse clepeth women a gret route,
And up they risen, wel a ten or twelve;
Up riseth freshe Canace hireselve,
As rody and bright, as the yonge Sonne,
That in the Ram is foure degrees yronne;
No higher was he, whan she redy was;
And forth she walketh esily a pas,
Arrayed after the lusty seson sote
Lightely for to playe, and walken on fote,
Nought but with five or sixe of hire meinie;
And in a trenche forth in the park goth she.
The vapour, which that fro the erthe glode,
Maketh the Sonne to seme rody and brode:
But natheles, it was so faire a sight,
That it made all hir hertes for to light,
What for the seson, and the morwening,
And for the foules that she herde sing.
For right anon she wiste what they ment
Right by hir song, and knew all hir entent.
The knotte, why that every tale is tolde,
If it be taried til the lust be colde
Of hem, that han it herkened after yore,
The savour passeth ever lenger the more,
For fulsumnesse of the prolixitee:
And by that same reson thinketh me
I shuld unto the knotte condescende,
And maken of hire walking sone an ende.
Amidde a tree fordry, as white as chalk,
As Canace was playing in hire walk,
Ther sat a faucon over hire hed ful hie,
That with a pitous vois so gan to crie,
That all the wood resouned of hire cry,
And beten had hireself so pitously
With bothe hire winges, til the rede blood
Ran endelong the tree, ther as she stood.
And ever in on alway she cried and shright,
And with hire bek hireselven she so twight,
That ther n'is tigre, ne no cruel best,
That dwelleth other in wood, or in forest,
That n'olde han wept, if that he wepen coude,
For sorwe of hire, she shright alway so loude.
For ther was never yet no man on live,
If that he coude a faucon wel descrive,
That herde of swiche another of fayrenesse
As wel of plumage, as of gentilesse,
Of shape, of all that might yrekened be.
A faucon peregrine semed she
Of fremde lond, and ever as she stood,
She swouned now and now for lack of blood,
Til wel neigh is she fallen fro the tree.
This faire kinges doughter Canace,
That on hire finger bare the queinte ring,
Thurgh which she understood wel every thing
That any foule may in his leden sain,
And coude answere him in his leden again,
Hath understonden what this faucon seyd,
And wel neigh for the routhe almost she deyd:
And to the tree she goth ful hastily,
And on this faucon loketh pitously,
And held hire lap abrode, for wel she wist
The faucon muste fallen from the twist
Whan that she swouned next, for faute of blood.
A longe while to waiten hire she stood.
Til at the last she spake in this manere
Unto the hauk, as ye shul after here.
"What is the cause, if it be for to tell,
That ye ben in this furial peine of Hell?"
Quod Canace unto this hauk above;
"Is this for sorwe of deth, or losse of love?
For as I trow, thise be the causes two,
That causen most a gentil herte wo.
Of other harme it nedeth not to speke,
For ye yourself upon yourself awreke,
Which preveth wel, that other ire or drede
Mote ben encheson of your cruel dede,
Sin that I se non other wight you chace.
For the love of God, as doth yourselven grace:
Or what may be your helpe? for west ne est
Ne saw I never er now no brid ne best,
That ferde with himself so pitously.
Ye sle me with your sorwe verily,
I have of you so gret compassioun.
For Goddes love come fro the tree adoun;
And as I am a kinges doughter trewe,
If that I verily the causes knewe
Of your disese, if it lay in my might,
I wold amend it, or that it were night,
As wisly help me the gret God of kind.
And herbes shal I right ynough yfind,
To elen with your hurtes hastily."
Tho shright this faucon yet more pitously
Than ever she did, and fell to ground anon,
And lith aswoune, as ded as lith a ston,
Til Canace hath in hire lappe hire take,
Unto that time she gan of swoune awake:
And after that she out of swoune abraide,
Right in hire haukes leden thus she sayde.
"That pitee renneth sone in gentil herte
(Feling his similitude in peines smerte)
Is proved alle day, as men may see,
As wel by werke as by auctoritee,
For gentil herte kitheth gentillesse.
I see wel, that ye have on my distresse
Compassion, my faire Canace,
Of veray womanly benignitee,
That nature in your principles hath set.
But for non hope for to fare the bet,
But for to obey unto your herte free,
And for to maken other yware by me,
As by the whelpe chastised is the leon,
Right for that cause and that conclusion,
While that I have a leiser and a space,
Min harme I wol confessen er I pace."
And ever while that on hire sorwe told,
That other wept, as she to water wold,
Til that the faucon bad hire to be still,
And with a sike right thus she said hire till.
"Ther I was bred, (alas that ilke day!)
And fostred in a roche of marble gray
So tendrely, that nothing ailed me.
I ne wist not what was adversitee,
Til I coud flee ful high under the skie.
"Tho dwelled a tercelet me faste by,
That semed welle of alle gentillesse,
Al were he ful of treson and falsenesse.
It was so wrapped under humble chere,
And under hew of trouth in swiche manere,
Under plesance, and under besy peine,
That no wight coud have wend he coude feine,
So depe in greyn he died his coloures.
Right as a serpent hideth him under floures,

Til he may see his time for to bite;
Right so this god of loves hypocrite
Doth so his ceremonies and obeisance,
And kepeth in semblaunt alle his observance,
That souneth unto gentillnesse of love.
As on a tombe is all the faire above,
And under is the corps, swiche as ye wote;
Swiche was this hypocrite both cold and hote,
And in this wise he served his entent,
That, save the fend, non wiste what he ment:
Til he so long had weped and complained,
And many a yere his service to me fained,
Till that min herte, to pitous and to niee,
Al innocent of his crowned malice,
For-fered of his deth, as thoughte me,
Upon his othes and his seuretee,
Graunted him love, on this conditioun,
That evermo min honour and renoun
Were saved, bothe privee and apert;
This is to say, that, after his desert,
I yave him all min herte and all my thought,
(God wote, and he, that other wayes nought)
And toke his herte in chaunge of min for ay.
But soth is said, gon sithen is many a day,
A trewe wight and a theef thinken not on.

"And whan he saw the thing so fer ygon,
That I had granted him fully my love,
In swiche a guise as I have said above,
And yeven him my trewe herte as free
As he swore that he yaf his herte to me,
Anon this tigre, ful of doublenesse,
Fell on his knees with so gret humblesse,
With so high reverence, as by his chere,
So like a gentil lover of manere,
So ravished, as it semed, for the joye,
That never Jason, ne Paris of Troye,
Jason? certes, ne never other man,
Sin Lamech was, that alderfirst began
To loven two, as writen folk beforne,
Ne never sithen the first man was borne,
Ne coude man by twenty thousand part
Contrefete the sophimes of his art;
Ne were worthy to unbocle his galoche,
Ther doublenesse of faining shuld approche,
Ne coude so thanke a wight, as he did me.
His maner was an Heven for to see
To any woman, were she never so wise;
So painted he and kempt, at point devise,
As wel his wordes, as his contenance.
And I so loved him for his obeisance,
And for the trouthe I demed in his herte,
That if so were that any thing him smerte,
Al were it never so lite, and I it wist,
Me thought I felt deth at myn herte twist.
And shortly, so ferforth this thing is went,
That my will was his willes instrument;
This is to say, my will obeied his will
In alle thing, as fer as reson fill,
Keping the boundes of my worship ever:
Ne never had I thing so lefe, ne lever,
As him, God wot, ne never shal no mo.

"This lasteth lenger than a yere or two,
That I supposed of him nought but good.
But finally, thus at the last it stood,
That fortune wolde that he muste twin
Out of that place, which that I was in.
Wher me was wo, it is no question;
I cannot make of it description.
For o thing dare I telien boldely,
I know what is the peine of deth therby,
Swiche harme I felt, for he ne might byleve.

"So on a day of me he toke his leve,
So sorweful eke, that I wend verailly,
That he had felt as mochel harme as I,
Whan that I herd him speke, and sawe his hewe.
But natheles, I thought he was so trewe,
And eke that he repairen shuld again
Within a litel while, soth to sain,
And reson wold eke that he muste go
For his honour, as often happeth so,
That I made vertue of necessitee,
And toke it wel, sin that it muste be.
As I best might, I hid fro him my sorwe,
And toke him by the hond, Seint John to borwe,
And said him thus; 'Lo, I am youres all,
Beth swiche as I have ben to you and shall.'

"What he answerd, it nedeth not reherse;
Who can say bet than he, who can do werse?
Whan he hath al wel said, than hath he done.
Therfore behoveth him a ful long spone,
That shal ete with a fend; thus herd I say.

"So at the last he muste forth his way,
And forth he fleeth, til he come ther him lest.
Whan it came him to purpos for to rest,
I trow that he had thilke text in mind,
That alle thing repairing to his kind
Gladeth himself; thus sain men as I gesse:
Men loven of propre kind newefangelnesse,
As briddes don, that men in cages fede.
For though thou night and day take of hem hede,
And strew hir cage faire and soft as silke,
And give hem sugre, hony, bred, and milke,
Yet right anon as that his dore is up,
He with his feet wol spurnen doun his cup,
And to the wood he wol, and wormes ete;
So newefangel ben they of hir mete,
And loven noveltees of propre kind;
No gentillesse of blood ne may hem bind.

"So ferd this tercelet, alas the day!
Though he were gentil borne, and fresh, and gay,
And goodly for to seen, and humble, and free,
He saw upon a time a kite flee,
And sodenly he loved this kite so,
That all his love is clene fro me ago:
And hath his trouthe falsed in this wise.
Thus hath the kite my love in hire service,
And I am lorn withouten remedy."

And with that word this faucon gan to cry,
And swouneth eft in Canacees barme.
Gret was the sorwe for that haukes harme,
That Canace and all hire women made;
They n'isten how they might the faucon glade.
But Canace hom bereth hire in hire lap,
And softely in plastres gan hire wrap,
Ther as she with hire bek had hurt hireselve.

Now cannot Canace but herbes delve
Out of the ground, and maken salves newe
Of herbes precious and fine of hewe,
To helen with this hauk; fro day to night
She doth hire besinesse, and all hire might.
And by hire beddes hed she made a mew,
And covered it with velouettes blew,
In signe of trouth, that is in woman sene;
And all without the mew is peinted grene,
In which were peinted all thise false foules,
As ben thise tidifes, tercelettes, and owles;
And pies, on hem for to cry and chide,
Right for despit were peinted hem beside.

Thus lete I Canace hire hauk keping.
I wol no more as now speke of hire ring,

Til it come eft to purpos for to sain,
How that this faucon gat hire love again
Repentant, as the story telleth us,
By mediation of Camballus
The kinges sone, of which that I you told.
But hennesforth I wol my processe hold
To speke of aventures, and of batailles,
That yet was never herd so gret mervailles.
First wol I tellen you of Cambuscan,
That in his time many a citee wan:
And after wol I speke of Algarsif,
How that he wan Theodora to his wif,
For whom ful oft in gret perif he was,
Ne had he ben holpen by the hors of bras.
And after wol I speke of Camballo,
That fought in listes with the brethren two
For Canace, er that he might hire winne,
And ther I left I wol again beginne:

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THE FRANKELEINES PROLOGUE.

"In faith, Squier, thou hast thee wel yquit
And gentilly, I preise wel thy wit,"
Quod the Frankelein; "considering thin youthe,
So felingly thou spekest, sire, I alowe the
As to my dome, ther is non that is here,
Of eloquence that shal be thy pere,
If that thou live; God yeve thee goode chance,
And in vertue send thee continuance,
For of thy speking I have gret deintee.
I have a sone, and by the Trinitee
It were me lever than twenty pound worth lond,
Though it right now were fallen in my hond,
He were a man of swiche discretion,
As that ye ben: fie on possession,
But if a man be vertuous withal.
I have my sone snibbed, and yet shal,
For he to vertue listeth not to entend,
But for to play at dis, and to dispend,
And lese all that he hath, is his usage:
And he had lever talken with a page,
Than to commune with any gentil wight,
Ther he might leren gentillesse aright."
"Straw for your gentillesse," quod our Hoste.
"What? Frankelein, parde, sire, wel thou wost,
That eche of you mote tellen at the lest
A tale or two, or breken his behest."
"That know I wel, sire," quod the Frankelein,
"I pray you haveth me not in disdein,
Though I to this man speke a word or two."
"Tell on thy tale, withouten wordes mo."
"Gladly, sire Hoste," quod he, "I wol obey
Unto your will; now herkeneth what I sey;
I wol you not contrarien in no wise,
As fer as that my wittes may suffice.
I pray to God that it may plesen you,
Than wot I wel that it is good ynow.
"Thise olde gentil Bretons in hir dayes
Of diverse aventures maden layes,
Rimeyed in hir firste Breton tonge;
Which layes with hir instruments they songe,
Or elles redden hem for hir plesance,
And on of hem have I in remembrance,
Which I shal sayn with good wille as I can.
"But, sires, because I am a borel man,
At my beginning first I you beseche
Have me excused of my rude speche.
I lerned never rhetorike certain;
Thing that I speke, it mote be bare and plain.
I slept never on the mount of Pernaso,
Ne lerned Marcus Tullius Cicero.
Colours ne know I non, withouten drede,
But swiche colours as growen in the mede,
Or elles swiche as men die with or peinte;
Colours of rhetorike ben to me queinte;
My spirit feleth not of swiche matere.
But if you list my tale shul ye here."

THE FRANKELEINES TALE.

In Armorike, that called is Bretaigne,
Ther was a knight, that loved and did his peine
To serve a ladie in his beste wise;
And many a labour, many a gret emprise
He for his lady wrought, or she were wonne:
For she was on the fairest under Sonne,
And eke therto comen of so high kinrede,
That wel unnethes durst this knight for drede
Tell hire his wo, his peine, and his distresse.
But at the last, she for his worthinesse,
And namely for his meke obeysance,
Hath swiche a pitee caught of his penance,
That prively she fell of his accord
To take him for hire husbond and hire lord;
(Of swiche lordship as men han over hir wives)
And, for to lede the more in blisse hir lives,
Of his free will he swore hire as a knight,
That never in all his lif he day ne night
Ne shulde take upon him no maistrie
Agains hire will, ne kithe hire jalousie,
But hire obey, and folwe hire will in al,
As any lover to his lady shal:
Save that the name of soverainetee
That wold he han for shame of his degree.
She thonked him, and with ful gret humblesse
She saide; "Sire, sin of your gentillesse
Ye profren me to have so large a reine,
Ne wolde God never betwix us tweine,
As in my gilt, were either werre or strif:
Sire, I wol be your humble trewe wif,
Have here my trouth, till that myn herte breste."
Thus ben they both in quiete and in reste.
For o thing, sires, saufly dare I seie,
That frendes everich other must obeie,
If they wol longe holden compagnie.
Love wol not be constreined by maistrie.
Whan maistrie cometh, the God of love anon
Beteth his winges, and farewel, he is gon.
Love is a thing, as any spirit, free.
Women of kind desiren libertee,
And not to be constreined as a thral;
And so don men, if sothly I say shal.
Loke who that is most patient in love,
He is at his avantage all above.
Patience is an high vertue certain,
For it venquisheth, as thise clerkes sain,
Thinges that rigour never shulde atteine.
For every word men may not chide or pleine.
Lerneth to suffren, or, so mote I gon,
Ye shul it lerne whether ye wol or non.
For in this world certain no wight ther is,
That he ne doth or sayth somtime amis.
Ire, sikenesse, or constellation,
Win, wo, or changing of complexion,
Causeth ful oft to don amis or speken:
On every wrong a man may not be wreken.

Afrer the time must be temperance
To every wight that can of governance.
And therfore hath this worthy wise knight
(To liven in ese) suffrance hire behight;
And she to him ful wisly gan to swere,
That never shuld ther be defaute in here.
Here may men seen an humble wise accord:
Thus hath she take hire servant and hire lord,
Servant in love, and lord in mariage.
Than was he both in lordship and servage?
Servage? nay, but in lordship al above,
Sin he hath both his lady and his love:
His lady certes, and his wif also,
The which that law of love accordeth to.
And whan he was in this prosperitee,
Home with his wif he goth to his contree,
Not fer fro Penmark, ther his dwelling was,
Wher as he liveth in blisse and in solas.
Who coude tell, but he had wedded be,
The joye, the ese, and the prosperitee,
That is betwix an husbond and his wif?
A yere and more lasteth this blisful lif,
Til that this knight, of which I spake of thus,
That of Cairrud was cleped Arviragus,
Shope him to gon and dwelle a yere or twaine
In Englelond, that cleped was eke Bretaigne,
To seke in armes worship and honour:
(For all his lust he set in swiche labour)
And dwelte ther two yere; the book saith thus.
Now wol I stint of this Arviragus,
And speke I wol of Dorigene his wif,
That loveth hire husbond as hire hertes lif.
For his absence wepeth she and siketh,
As don thise noble wives whan hem liketh;
She morneth, waketh, waileth, fasteth, pleineth;
Desir of his presence hire so distraineth,
That all this wide world she set at nought.
Hire frendes, which that knew hire hevy thought,
Comforten hire in all that ever they may;
They prechen hire, they telle hire night and day,
That causeles she sleth hireself, alas!
And every comfort possible in this cas
They don to hire, with all hir besinesse,
Al for to make hire leve hire hevinesse.
By processe, as ye knowen everich on,
Men mowe so longe graven in a ston,
Til som figure therin emprented be:
So long han they comforted hire, til she
Received hath, by hope and by reson,
The emprenting of hir consolation,
Thurgh which hire grete sorwe gan assuage;
She may not alway duren in swiche rage.
And eke Arviragus, in all this care,
Hath sent his lettres home of his welfare,
And that he wol come hastily again,
Or elles had this sorwe hire herte slain.
Hire frendes saw hire sorwe gan to slake,
And preiden hire on knees for Goddes sake
To come and romen in hir compagnie,
Away to driven hire derke fantasie:
And finally she granted that request,
For wel she saw that it was for the best.
Now stood hire castel faste by the see,
And often with hire frendes walked she,
Hire to disporten on the bank an hie,
Wher as she many a ship and barge sie,
Sailing hir cours, wher as hem list to go.
But than was that a parcel of hire wo,
For to hireself ful oft, "Alas!" said she,
"Is ther no ship, of so many as I see,
Wol bringen home my lord? than were my herte
Al warished of his bitter peines smerte."
Another time wold she sit and thinke,
And cast her eyen dounward fro the brinke;
But whan she saw the grisly rockes blake,
For veray fere so wold hire herte quake,
That on hire feet she might hire not sustene.
Than wold she sit adoun upon the grene,
And pitously into the see behold,
And say right thus, with careful sikes cold.
"Eterne God, that thurgh thy purveance
Ledest this world by certain governance,
In idel, as men sain, ye nothing make.
But, Lord, thise grisly fendly rockes blake,
That semen rather a foule confusion
Of werk, than any faire creation
Of swiche a parfit wise God and stable,
Why han ye wrought this werk unreasonable?
For by this werk, north, south, ne west, ne eat,
Ther n'is yfostred man, ne brid, ne best:
It doth no good, to my wit, but anoyeth.
See ye not, Lord, how mankind it destroyeth?
An hundred thousand bodies of mankind
Han rockes slain, al be they not in mind;
Which mankind is so faire part of thy werk,
Thou madest it like to thyn owen merk.
Than, semeth it, ye had a gret chertee
Toward mankind; but how than may it be,
That ye swiche menes make it to destroyen?
Which menes don no good, but ever anoyen.
"I wote wel, clerkes wol sain as hem lest
By arguments, that all is for the best,
Though I ne can the causes nought yknow;
But thilke God that made the wind to blow,
As kepe my lord, this is my conclusion:
To clerkes lete I all disputison:
But wolde God, that all thise rockes blake
Were sonken into Helle for his sake.
Thise rockes slee min herte for the fere."
Thus wold she say with many a pitous tere.
Hire frendes saw that it was no disport
To romen by the see, but discomfort,
And shape hem for to plaien somwher elles.
They leden hire by rivers and by welles,
And eke in other places delitables;
They dancen and they play at ches and tables.
So on a day, right in the morwe tide,
Unto a gardin that was ther beside,
In which that they had made hir ordinance
Of vitaille, and of other purveance,
They gon and plaie hem all the longe day:
And this was on the sixte morwe of May,
Which May had peinted with his softe shoures
This gardin ful of leves and of floures:
And craft of mannes hond so curiously
Arrayed had this gardin trewely,
That never was ther gardin of swiche pris,
But if it were the veray Paradis.
The odour of floures, and the freshe sight,
Wold han ymaked any herte light
That ever was born, but if to gret sikenesse
Or to gret sorwe held it in distresse,
So ful it was of beautee and plesance.
And after dinner gonnen they to dance
And sing also, sauf Dorigene alone,
Which made alway hire complaint and hire mone,
For she ne saw him on the dance go,
That was hire husbond, and hire love also:
But nathlees she must a time abide,
And with good hope let hire sorwe slide.

Upon this dance, amonges other men,
Danced a squier before Dorigen,
That fresher was and jolier of array,
As to my dome, than is the month of May.
He singeth, daunceth, passing any man,
That is or was sin that the world began;
Therwith he was, if men shuld him discrive,
On of the beste faring men on live,
Yong, strong, and virtuous, and riche, and wise,
And wel beloved, and holden in gret prise.
And shortly, if the soth I tellen shal,
Unweting of this Dorigene at al,
This lusty squier, servant to Venus,
Which that ycleped was Aurelius,
Had loved hire best of any creature
Two yere and more, as was his aventure:
But never dorst he tell hire his grevance,
Withouten cup he dranke all his penance.
He was dispeired, nothing dorst he say,
Sauf in his songes somwhat wold he wray
His wo, as in a general complaining;
He said, he loved, and was beloved nothing.
Of swiche matere made he many layes,
Songes, complaintes, roundels, virelayes;
How that he dorste not his sorwe telle,
But languisheth, as doth a furie in Helle;
And die he must, he said, as did Ecco
For Narcissus, that dorst not tell hire wo.
In other manér than ye here me say,
Ne dorst he not to hire his wo bewray,
Sauf that paraventure somtime at dances,
Ther yonge folk kepen hir observances,
It may wel be he loked on hire face
In swiche a wise, as man that axeth grace,
But nothing wiste she of his entent.
Natheles it happed, or they thennes went,
Because that he was hire neighebour,
And was a man of worship and honour,
And had yknowen him of time yore,
They fell in speche, and forth ay more and more
Unto his purpos drow Aurelius;
And whan he saw his time, he saide thus.
"Madame," quod he, "by God that this world made,
So that I wist it might your herte glade,
I wold that day, that your Arviragus
Went over see, that I Aurelius
Had went ther I shuld never come again;
For wel I wot my service is in vain,
My guerdon n'is but bresting of min herte.
Madame, rueth upon my peines smerte,
For with a word ye may me sleen or save.
Here at your feet God wold that I were grave.
I ne have as now no leiser more to sey:
Have merey, swete, or ye wol do me dey."
She gan to loke upon Aurelius;
"Is this your will," quod she, "and say ye thus?
Never erst," quod she, "ne wist I what ye ment:
But now, Aurelie, I know your entent.
By thilke God that yaf me soule and lif,
Ne shal I never ben an untrewe wif
In word ne werk, as fer as I have wit,
I wol ben his to whom that I am knit:
Take this for final answer as of me."
But after that in play thus saide she.
"Aurelie," quod she, "by high God above
Yet wol I granten you to ben your love,
(Sin I you see so pitously complaine)
Loke, what day that endelong Bretaigne
Ye remue all the rockes, ston by ston,
That they ne letten ship ne bote to gon,
I say, whan ye han made the cost so clene
Of rockes, that ther n'is no ston ysene,
Than wol I love you best of any man,
Have here my trouth, in all that ever I can;
For wel I wote that it shal never betide.
Let swiche folie out of your herte glide.
What deintee shuld a man have in his lif
For to go love another mannes wif,
That hath hire body whan that ever him liketh?"
Aurelius ful often sore siketh;
"Is ther non other grace in you?" quod he.
"No, by that Lord," quod she, "that maked me."
Wo was Aurelie whan that he this herd,
And with a sorweful herte he thus answerd.
"Madame," quod he, "this were an impossible.
Than moste I die of soden deth horrible."
And with that word he turned him anon.
Tho come hire other frendes many on,
And in the alleyes romed up and doun,
And nothing wist of this conclusioun.
But sodenly begonnen revel newe,
Til that the brighte Sonne had lost his hewe,
For the orizont had reft the Sonne his light;
(This is as much to sayn as it was night)
And home they gon in mirthe and in solas;
Sauf only wrecche Aurelius, alas!
He to his hous is gon with sorweful herte.
He saith, he may not from his deth asterte,
Him semeth, that he felt his herte cold.
Up to the Heven his hondes gan he hold,
And on his knees bare he set him doun,
And in his raving said his orisoun.
For veray wo out of his wit he braide,
He n'iste what he spake, but thus he saide;
With pitous herte his plaint hath he begonne
Unto the goddes, and first unto the Sonne.
He said; "Apollo, god and governour
Of every plante, herbe, tree, and flour,
That yevest after thy declination
To eche of hem his time and his seson,
As that thin herbergh chaungeth low and hie;
Lord Phebus, cast thy merciable eie
On wrecche Aurelie, which that am but lorne.
Lo, lord, my lady hath my deth ysworne
Withouten gilt, but thy benignitee
Upon my dedly herte have som pitee.
For wel I wot, lord Phebus, if you lest,
Ye may me helpen, sauf my lady, best.
Now voucheth sauf, that I may you devise
How that I may be holpe and in what wise.
"Your blisful suster, Lucina the shene,
That of the see is chief goddesse and quene,
Though Neptunus have deitee in the see,
Yet emperice aboven him is she:
Ye knowe wel, lord, that right as hire desire
Is to be quiked and lighted of your fire,
For which she folweth you ful besily,
Right so the see desireth naturelly
To folwen hire, as she that is goddesse
Both in the see and rivers more and lesse.
Wherfore, lord Phebus, this is my request,
Do this miracle, or do min herte brest;
That now next at this opposition,
Which in the signe shal be of the Leon,
As preyeth hire so gret a flood to bring,
That five fadome at the lest it overspring
The highest rock in Armorike Bretaigne,
And let this flood enduren yeres twaine:
Than certes to my lady may I say,
Holdeth your hest, the rockes ben away.

Lord Phebus, this miracle doth for me,
Prey hire she go no faster cours than ye;
I say this, preyeth your suster that she go
No faster cours than ye thise yeres two:
Than shal she ben even at ful alway,
And spring-flood lasten bothe night and day.
And but she vouchesauf in swiche manere
To graunten me my soveraine lady dere,
Prey hire to sinken every rock adoun
Into hire owen derke regioun
Under the ground, ther Pluto dwelleth in,
Or nevermo shal I my lady win.
"Thy temple in Delphos wol I barefoot seke.
Lord Phebus, see the teres on my cheke,
And on my peine have som compassioun."
And with that word, in sorwe he fell adoun,
And longe time he lay forth in a trance.
His brother, which that knew of his penance,
Up caught him, and to bed he hath him brought.
Dispeired in this turment and this thought
Let I this woful creature lie,
Chese he for me whether he wol live or die.
Arviragus with hele and gret honour
(As he that was of chevalrie the flour)
Is comen home, and other worthy men:
O, blisful art thou now, thou Dorigen,
That hast thy lusty husbond in thin armes,
The freshe knight, the worthy man of armes,
That loveth thee, as his owen hertes lif:
Nothing list him to be imaginatif,
If any wight had spoke, while he was oute,
To hire of love; he had of that no doute;
He not entendeth to no swiche matere,
But danceth, justeth, and maketh mery chere.
And thus in joye and blisse I let hem dwell,
And of the sike Aurelius wol I tell.
In langour and in turment furious
Two yere and more lay wrecche Aurelius,
Er any foot on erthe he mighte gon;
Ne comfort in this time ne had he non,
Sauf of his brother, which that was a clerk.
He knew of all this wo and all this werk;
For to non other creature certain
Of this matere he dorste no word sain;
Under his brest he bare it more secree,
Than ever did Pamphilus for Galathee.
His brest was hole withouten for to seen,
But in his herte ay was the arwe kene,
And wel ye knowe that of a sursanure
In surgerie is perilous the cure,
But men might touch the arwe or come therby.
His brother wepeth and waileth prively,
Til at the last him fell in remembrance,
That while he was at Orleaunce in France,
As yonge clerkes, that ben likerous
To reden artes that ben curious,
Seken in every halke and every herne
Particuler sciences for to lerne,
He him remembred, that upon a day
At Orleaunce in studie a book he say
Of magike naturel, which his felaw,
That was that time a bacheler of law,
Al were he ther to lerne another craft,
Had prively upon his desk ylaft;
Which book spake moche of operations
Touching the eight and twenty mansions
That longen to the Mone, and swiche folie
As in our dayes n'is not worth a flie!
For holy cherches feith, in our beleve,
Ne suffreth non illusion us to greve.
And whan this book was in his remembrance,
Anon for joye his herte gan to dance,
And to himself he saied prively;
"My brother shal be warished hastily:
For I am siker that ther be sciences,
By which men maken divers apparences,
Swiche as thise subtil tregetoures play.
For oft at festes have I wel herd say,
That tregetoures, within an halle large,
Have made come in a water and a barge,
And in the halle rowen up and doun.
Somtime hath semed come a grim leoun,
And somtime floures spring as in a mede,
Somtime a vine, and grapes white and rede,
Somtime a castel al of lime and ston,
And whan hem liketh voideth it anon:
Thus semeth it to every mannes sight.
"Now than conclude I thus, if that I might
At Orleaunce som olde felaw find,
That hath thise Moones mansions in mind,
Or other magike naturel above,
He shuld wel make my brother have his love.
For with an apparence a clerk may make
To mannes sight, that all the rockes blake
Of Bretaigne were yvoided everich on,
And shippes by the brinke comen and gon,
And in swiche forme endure a day or two:
Than were my brother warished of his wo,
Than must she nedes holden hire behest,
Or elles he shal shame hire at the lest."
What shuld I make a lenger tale of this?
Unto his brothers bed he comen is,
And swiche comfort he yaf him, for to gon
To Orleaunce, that he up stert anon,
And on his way forthward than is he fare,
In hope for to ben lissed of his care.
Whan they were come almost to that citee,
But if it were a two furlong or three,
A yonge clerk roming by himself they mette,
Which that in Latine thriftily hem grette.
And after that he sayd a wonder thing;
"I know," quod he, "the cause of your coming:"
And or they forther any foote went,
He told hem all that was in hir entent.
This Breton clerk him axed of felawes,
The which he had yknowen in olde dawes,
And he answered him that they dede were,
For which he wept ful often many a tere.
Doun of his hors Aurelius light anon,
And forth with this magicien is gon
Home to his hous, and made hem wel at ese:
Hem lacked no vitaille that might hem plese.
So wel arraied hous as ther was on,
Aurelius in his lif saw never non.
He shewed him, or they went to soupere,
Forestes, parkes ful of wilde dere.
Ther saw he hartes with hir hornes hie,
The gretest that were ever seen with eie.
He saw of hem an hundred slain with houndes,
And som with arwes blede of bitter woundes.
He saw, whan voided were the wilde dere,
Thise fauconers upon a faire rivere,
That with hir haukes han the heron slain.
Tho saw he knightes justen in a plain.
And after this he did him swiche plesance,
That he him shewed his lady on a dance,
On which himselven danced, as him thought.
And whan this maister, that this magike wrought,
Saw it was time, he clapped his hondes two,
And farewel, al the revel is ago.

And yet remued they never out of the hous,
While they saw all thise sightes merveillous;
But in his studie, ther his bookes be,
They saten still, and no wight but they three.
To him this maister called his squier,
And sayd him thus, "May we go to souper?
Almost an houre it is, I undertake,
Sin I you bade our souper for to make,
Whan that thise worthy men wenten with me
Into my studie, ther my bookes be."
"Sire," quod this squier, "whan it liketh you,
It is al redy, though ye wol right now."
"Go we than soupe," quod he, "as for the best,
Thise amorous folk somtime moste han rest."
At after souper fell they in tretee
What summe should this maisters guerdon be,
To remue all the rockes of Bretaigne,
And eke from Gerounde to the mouth of Saine.
He made it strange, and swore, so God him save,
Lesse than a thousand pound he wold not have.
Ne gladly for that summe he wold not gon.
Aurelius with blisful herte anon
Answered thus; "Fie on a thousand pound:
This wide world, which that men sayn is round,
I wold it yeve, if I were lord of it.
This bargaine is ful-drive, for we ben knit;
Ye shul be paied trewely by my trouth.
But loketh, for non negligence or slouth,
Ye tarie us here no lenger than to morwe." [borwe."
"Nay," quod this clerk, "have here my faith to
To bed is gon Aurelius whan him lest,
And wel nigh all that night he had his rest.
What for his labour, and his hope of blisse,
His woful herte of penance had a lisse.
Upon the morwe whan that it was day,
To Bretaigne token they the righte way,
Aurelie, and this magicien him beside,
And ben descended ther they wold abide:
And this was, as the bookes me remember,
The colde frosty seson of December.
Phebus waxe old, and hewed like laton,
That in his hote declination
Shone as the burned gold, with stremes bright;
But now in Capricorne adoun he light,
Wher as he shone ful pale, I dare wel sain.
The bitter frostes with the sleet and rain
Destroyed han the grene in every yerd.
Janus sit by the fire with double berd,
And drinketh of his bugle horn the wine:
Beforn him stant braune of the tusked swine,
And "Nowel" crieth every lusty man.
Aurelius in all that ever he can,
Doth to his maister chere and reverence,
And praieth him to don his diligence
To bringen him out of his peines smerte,
Or with a swerd that he wold slit his herte.
This sotil clerk swiche routh hath on this man,
That night and day he spedeth him, that he can,
To wait a time of his conclusion;
This is to sayn, to make illusion,
By swiche an apparence or joglerie,
(I can no termes of astrologie)
That she and every wight shuld wene and say,
That of Bretaigne the rockes were away,
Or elles they were sonken under ground.
So at the last he hath his time yfound
To make his japes and his wretchednesse
Of swiche a superstitious cursednesse.
His tables Toletanes forth he brought
Ful wel corrected, that ther lacked nought,
Nother his collect, ne his expans yeres,
Nother his rotes, ne his other geres,
As ben his centres, and his argumentes,
And his proportionel convenientes
For his equations in every thing.
And by his eighte speres in his werking,
He knew ful wel how fer Alnath was shove
Fro the hed of thilke fix Aries above,
That in the ninthe spere considered is.
Ful sotilly he calculed all this.
Whan he had found his firste mansion,
He knew the remenant by proportion;
And knew the rising of his Mone wel,
And in whos face, and terme, and every del;
And knew ful wel the Mones mansion
Accordant to his operation;
And knew also his other observances,
For swiche illusions and swiche meschances,
As hethen folk used in thilke daies.
For which no lenger maketh he delaies,
But thurgh his magike, for a day or tway,
It semed all the rockes were away.
Aurelius, which that despeired is,
Whether he shal han his love, or fare amis,
Awaiteth night and day on this miracle:
And whan he knew that ther was non obstacle,
That voided were thise rockes everich on,
Doun to his maisters feet he fell anon,
And sayd; "I woful wretch Aurelius,
Thanke you, my lord, and lady min Venus,
That me han holpen fro my cares cold."
And to the temple his way forth hath he hold,
Theras he knew he shuld his lady see.
And whan he saw his time, anon right he
With dredful herte and with ful humble chere
Salued hath his soveraine lady dere.
"My rightful lady," quod this woful man,
"Whom I most drede, and love, as I best can,
And lothest were of all this world displese,
N'ere it that I for you have swiche disese,
That I must die here at your foot anon,
Nought wold I tell how me is wo begon.
But certes other must I die or plaine;
Ye sle me gilteles for veray peine.
But of my deth though that ye han no routh,
Aviseth you, or that ye breke your trouth:
Repenteth you for thilke God above,
Or ye me sle, because that I you love.
For, madame, wel ye wote what ye have hight;
Not that I chalenge any thing of right
Of you, my soveraine lady, but of grace;
But in a gardin yond, in swiche a place,
Ye wote right wel what ye behighten me,
And in myn hond your trouthe plighten ye,
To love me best; God wote ye saied so,
Although that I unworthy be therto;
Madame, I speke it for the honour of you,
More than to save my hertes lif right now:
I have don so as ye commanded me,
And if ye vouchesauf, ye may go see.
Doth as you list, have your behest in mind,
For quick or ded, right ther ye shul me find:
In you lith all to do me live or dey,
But wel I wote the rockes ben awey."
He taketh his leve, and she astonied stood;
In al hire face n'as o drope of blood:
She wened never han come in swiche a trappe.
"Alas!" quod she, "that ever this shuld happe!
For wend I never by possibilitee,
That swiche a monstre or mervaille might be;

It is again the processe of nature."
And home she goth a sorweful creature,
For veray fere unnethes may she go.
She wepeth, waileth all a day or two,
And swouneth, that it routhe was to see:
But why it was, to no wight tolde she,
For out of toun was gon Arvigarus.
But to hireself she spake, and saied thus,
With face pale, and with ful sory chere,
In hire complaint, as ye shul after here.
" Alas!" quod she, " on thee, Fortune, I plain,
That unware hast me wrapped in thy chain;
Fro which to escapen, wote I no soccour,
Sauf only deth, or elles dishonour:
On of thise two behoveth me to chese.
But natheles, yet had I lever lese
My lif, than of my body have a shame,
Or know myselven false, or lese my name;
And with my deth I may be quit ywis.
Hath ther not many a noble wif or this,
And many a maid yslaine hireself, alas!
Rather than with hire body don trespas?
Yes certes; lo, thise stories bere witnesse.
" Whan thirty tyrants ful of cursednesse
Had slain Phidon in Athens at the fest,
They commanded his doughtren for to arrest,
And bringen hem beforne hem in despit
Al naked, to fulfill hir foule delit;
And in hir fadres blood they made hem dance
Upon the pavement, God yeve hem meschance.
For which thise woful maidens ful of drede,
Rather than they wold lese hir maidenhede,
They prively ben stert into a welle,
And dreint hemselven, as the bookes telle.
" They of Messene let enquere and seke
Of Lacedomie fifty maidens eke,
On which they wolden don hir leeherie:
But ther was non of all that compagnie
That she n'as slaine, and with a glad entent
Chees rather for to dien, than assent
To ben oppressed of hire maidenhede.
Why should I than to dien ben in drede?
" Lo eke the tyrant Aristoclides,
That loved a maid hight Stimphalides,
Whan that hire father slaine was on a night,
Unto Dianes temple goth she right,
And hente the image in hire handes two,
Fro which image wold she never go,
No wight hire handes might of it arrace,
Til she was slaine right in the selve place.
" Now sin that maidens hadden swiche despit
To be defouled with mannes foule delit,
Wel ought a wif rather herselven sle,
Than be defouled, as it thinketh me.
" What shal I sayn of Hasdrubales wif,
That at Cartage beraft hireself hire lif?
For whan she saw that Romains wan the toun,
She toke hire children all, and skipt adoun
Into the fire, and chees rather to die,
Than any Romain did hire vilanie.
" Hath not Lucrece yslaine hireself, alas!
At Rome, whan that she oppressed was
Of Tarquine? for hire thought it was a shame
To liven, whan she hadde lost hire name.
" The seven maidens of Milesie also
Han slaine hemself for veray drede and wo,
Rather than folk of Gaule hem shuld oppresse.
" Mo than a thousand stories, as I gesse,
Coude I now tell as touching this matere.
" Whan Abradate was slain, his wif so dere
Hireselven slow, and let hire blood to glide
In Abradates woundes, depe and wide,
And sayd, my body at the leste way
Ther shal no wight defoulen, if I may.
" What shuld I mo ensamples hereof sain?
Sin that so many han hemselven slain
Wel rather than they wold defouled be,
I wol conclude that it is bet for me
To sle myself than be defouled thus.
I wol be trewe unto Arviragus,
Or elles sle myself in some manere,
As did Demotiones doughter dere,
Because she wolde not defouled be.
" O Sedasus, it is ful gret pitee
To reden how thy doughtren died, alas!
That slowe hemselven for swiche maner cas.
" As gret a pitee was it or wel more,
The Theban maiden, that for Nichanore
Hireselven slow, right for swiche manere wo.
Another Theban mayden did right so,
For on of Macedoine had hire oppressed,
She with hire deth hire maidenhed redressed.
" What shal I sain of Nicerates wif,
That for swiche cas beraft hireself hire lif?
" How trewe was eke to Alcibiades
His love, that for to dien rather chees,
Than for to suffre his body unburied be?
" Lo, which a wif was Alceste eke?" (quod she)
" What sayth Homere of good Penelope?
All Grece knoweth of hire chastitee.
" Parde of Laodomia is written thus,
That whan at Troye was slain Prothesilaus,
No lenger wolde she live after his day.
" The same of noble Portia telle I may;
Withouten Brutus coude she not live,
To whom she had all hol hire herte yeve.
" The parfit wifhood of Artemisie
Honoured is thurghout all Barbarie.
" O Teuta quene, thy wifly chastitee
To alle wives may a mirrour be."
Thus plained Dorigene a day or twey,
Purposing ever that she wolde dey;
But natheles upon the thirdde night
Home came Arviragus, the worthy knight,
And axed hire why that she weep so sore:
And she gan wepen ever lenger the more.
" Alas," quod she, " that ever I was yborne!
Thus have I said," (quod she) " thus have I sworne."
And told him all, as ye have herd before:
It needeth not reherse it you no more.
This husbond with glad chere in frendly wise
Answerd and sayd, as I shal you devise.
" Is ther ought elles, Dorigene, but this?"
" Nay, nay," quod she, " God helpe me so, as wis
This is to much, and it were Goddes will."
" Ye, wif," quod he, " let slepen that is still,
It may be wel paraventure yet to-day.
Ye shal your trouthe holden by my fay.
For God so wisly have mercy on me,
I had wel lever stiked for to be,
For veray love which that I to you have,
But if ye shuld your trouthe kepe and save.
Trouth is the hiest thing that man may kepe."
But with that word he brast anon to wepe,
And sayd; " I you forbede on peine of deth,
That never while you lasteth lif or breth,
To no wight tell ye this misaventure.
As I may best I wol my wo endure.
Ne make no contenance of hevinesse,
That folk of you may demen harme or gesse."

And forth he cleped a squier and a maid.
" Goth forth anon with Dorigene," he said,
" And bringeth hire to swiche a place anon."
They take hir leve, and on hir way they gon:
But they ne wisten why she thider went,
She n'olde no wight tellen hire entent.
This squier, which that highte Aurelius,
On Dorigene that was so amorous,
Of aventure happed hire to mete
Amid the toun, right in the quikkest strete,
As she was boun to go the way forthright
Toward the gardin, ther as she had hight.
And he was to the gardinward also;
For wel he spied whan she wolde go
Out of hire hous, to any maner place:
But thus they met of aventure or grace,
And he salued hire with glad entent,
And axeth of hire whiderward she went.
And she answered, half as she were mad,
" Unto the gardin, as myn husbond bad,
My trouthe for to hold, alas! alas!"
Aurelius gan wondren on this cas,
And in his herte had gret compassion
Of hire, and of hire lamentation,
And of Arviragus the worthy knight,
That bad hire holden all that she had hight,
So loth him was his wif should breke hire trouthe.
And in his herte he caught of it gret routhe,
Considering the best on every side,
That fro his lust yet were him lever abide,
Than do so high a cherlish wretchednesse
Ageins fraunchise, and alle gentillesse;
For which in fewe wordes sayd he thus.
" Madame, say to your lord Arviragus,
That sin I see the grete gentillesse
Of him, and eke I see wel your distresse, [routhe)
That him were lever haye shame (and that were
Than ye to me shuld breken thus your trouthe,
I hadde wel lever ever to suffren wo,
Than to depart the love betwix you two.
I you relese, madame, into your hond
Quit every seurement and every bond,
That ye han made to me, as herebeforne,
Sin thilke time that ye were yborne.
Have here my trouthe, I shal you never repreve
Of no behest, and here I take my leve,
As of the trewest and the beste wif,
That ever yet I knew in all my lif."
But every wif beware of hire behest;
On Dorigene remembreth at the lest.
Thus can a squier don a gentil dede,
As wel as can a knight, withouten drede.
She thanketh him upon hire knees bare,
And home unto hire husbond is she fare,
And told him all, as ye han herd me sayd:
And, trusteth me, he was so wel apayd,
That it were impossible me to write.
What shuld I lenger of this cas endite?
Arviragus and Dorigene his wif
In soveraine blisse leden forth hir lif,
Never eft ne was ther anger hem betwene;
He cherished hire as though she were a quene,
And she was to him trewe for evermore:
Of thise two folk ye get of me no more.
Aurelius, that his cost hath all forlorne,
Curseth the time, that ever he was borne.
" Alas!" quod he, " alas that I behight
Of pured gold a thousand pound of wight
Unto this philosopher! how shal I do?
I see no more, but that I am fordo.
Min heritage mote I nedes sell,
And ben a begger, here I n'ill not dwell,
And shamen all my kinrede in this place,
But I of him may geten better grace.
But natheles I wol of him assay
At certain daies yere by yere to pay,
And thanke him of his grete curtesie.
My trouthe wol I kepe, I wol not lie."
With herte sore he goth unto his cofre,
And broughte gold unto this philosophre,
The value of five hundred pound I gesse,
And him besecheth of his gentillesse
To graunt him daies of the remenaunt,
And sayde; " Maister, I dare wel make avaunt,
I failled never of my trouthe as yet.
For sikerly my dette shal be quit
Towardes you, how so that ever I fare
To gon a begging in my kirtle bare:
But wold ye vouchen sauf upon seurtee
Two yere or three for to respiten me,
Than were I wel, for elles mote I sell
Min heritage, ther is no more to tell."
This philosophre sobrely answerd,
And saied thus, whan he thise wordes herd;
" Have I not holden covenant to thee?"
" Yes certes, wel and trewely," quod he.
" Hast thou not had thy lady as thee liketh?"
" No, no," quod he, and sorwefully he siketh.
" What was the cause? tell me if thou can."
Aurelius his tale anon began,
And told him all as ye han herd before,
It nedeth not reherse it any more.
He sayd, " Arviragus of gentillesse
Had lever die in sorwe and in distresse,
Than that his wif were of hire trouthe fals."
The sorwe of Dorigene he told him als,
How loth hire was to ben a wicked wif,
And that she lever had lost that day hire lif;
And that her trouth she swore thurgh innocence;
She never erst hadde herd speke of apparence:
" That made me han of hire so gret pitee,
And right as freely as he sent hire to me,
As freely sent I hire to him again:
This is all and som, ther n'is no more to sain."
The philosophre answerd; " Leve brother,
Everich of you did gentilly to other;
Thou art a squier, and he is a knight,
But God forbede for his blisful might,
But if a clerk coud don a gentil dede
As wel as any of you, it is no drede.
" Sire, I relese thee thy thousand pound,
As thou right now were crope out of the ground,
Ne never er now ne haddest knowen me.
For, sire, I wol not take a peny of thee
For all my craft, ne nought for my travaille:
Thou hast ypaied wel for my vitaille.
It is ynough, and farewel, have good day."
And toke his hors, and forth he goth his way.
Lordings, this question wold I axen now,
Which was the moste free, as thinketh you?
Now telleth me, or that ye further wende.
I can no more, my tale is at an ende.

THE DOCTOURES PROLOGUE.

" Ye, let that passen," quod our Hoste, " as now.
" Sire Doctour of Physike, I prey you,
Tell us a tale of som honest matere."
" It shal be don, if that ye wol it here,"

Said this Doctour, and his tale began anon.
" Now, good men," quod he, " herkeneth everich on."

THE DOCTOURES TALE.

Ther was, as telleth Titus Livius,
A knight, that cleped was Virginius,
Fulfilled of honour and worthinesse,
And strong of frendes, and of gret richesse.
This knight a doughter hadde by his wif:
No children had he mo in all his lif.
Faire was this maid in excellent beautee
Aboven every wight that man may see:
For Nature hath with soveraine diligence
Yformed hire in so gret excellence,
As though she wolde sayn, " Lo, I Nature,
Thus can I forme and peint a creature,
Whan that me list; who can me contrefete?
Pigmalion? not, though he ay forge and bete,
Or grave, or peinte: for I dare wel sain,
Apelles, Xeuxis, shulden werche in vain,
Other to grave, or peinte, or forge, or bete,
If they persumed me to contrefete.
For he that is the former principal,
Hath maked me his vicaire general
To forme and peinten erthly creatures
Right as me list, and eche thing in my cure is
Under the Mone, that may wan and waxe.
And for my werk right nothing wol I axe;
My lord and I ben ful of on accord.
I made hire to the worship of my lord;
So do I all min other creatures,
What colour that they han, or what figures."
Thus semeth me that Nature wolde say.
This maid of age twelf yere was and tway,
In which that Nature hadde swiche delit.
For right as she can peint a lily whit
And red a rose, right with swiche peinture
She peinted hath this noble creature
Er she was borne, upon hire limmes free,
Wheras by right swiche colours shulden be:
And Phebus died hath hire tresses grete,
Like to the stremes of his burned hete.
And if that excellent were hire beautee,
A thousand fold more vertuous was she.
In hire ne lacked no condition,
That is to preise, as by discretion.
As wel in gost as body, chast was she;
For which she floured in virginitee.
With all humilitee and abstinence,
With all attemperance and patience,
With mesure eke, of bering and array.
Discrete she was in answering alway,
Though she were wise as Pallas, dare I sain,
Hire facounde eke ful womanly and plain,
No contrefeted termes hadde she
To semen wise; but after hire degree
She spake, and all hire wordes more and lesse
Souning in vertue and in gentillesse.
Shamefast she was in maidens shamefastnesse,
Constant in herte, and ever in besinesse
To drive hire out of idel slogardie:
Bacchus had of hire mouth right no maistrie.
For wine and youthe don Venus encrese,
As men in fire wol casten oile and grese.
And of hire owen vertue unconstreined,
She hath hireself ful often sike yfeined,
For that she wolde fleen the compagnie,
Wher likely was to treten of folie,
As is at festes, at revels, and at dances,
That ben occasions of daliances.
Swiche thinges maken children for to be
To sone ripe and bold, as men may see,
Which is ful perilous, and hath ben yore;
For al to sone may she lernen lore
Of boldnesse, whan she woxen is a wif.
And ye maistresses in your olde lif,
That lordes doughters han in governance,
Ne taketh of my wordes displesance:
Thinketh that ye ben set in governinges
Of lordes doughters, only for two thinges
Other for ye han kept your honestee,
Or elles for ye han fallen in freeltee,
And knowen wel ynough the olde dance,
And han forsaken fully swiche meschance
For evermo: therfore for Cristes sake
To teche hem vertue loke that ye ne slake.
A theef of venison, that hath forlaft,
His likerousnesse, and all his olde craft,
Can kepe a forest best of any man:
Now kepeth hem wel, for if ye wol ye can.
Loke wel, that ye unto no vice assent,
Lest ye be damned for your wikke entent,
For who so doth, a traytour is certain:
And taketh kepe of that I shall you sain;
Of alle treson soveraine pestilence
Is, whan a wight betrayeth innocence.
Ye fathers, and ye mothers eke also,
Though ye han children, be it on or mo,
Your is the charge of all hir surveance,
While that they ben under your governance.
Beth ware, that by ensample of your living,
Or by your negligence in chastising,
That they ne perish: for I dare wel saye,
If that they don, ye shul it dere abeye.
Under a shepherd soft and negligent,
The wolf hath many a shepe and lamb to-rent.
Sufficeth this ensample now as here,
For I mote turne agen to my matere.
This maid, of which I tell my tale expresse,
She kept hireself, hire neded no maistresse;
For in hire living maidens mighten rede,
As in a book, every good word and dede,
That longeth to a maiden vertuous:
She was so prudent and so bounteous.
For which the fame out sprong on every side
Both of hire beautee and hire bountee wide;
That thurgh the lond they preised hire ech one,
That loved vertue, sauf envie alone,
That sory is of other mannes wele,
And glad is of his sorwe and his unhele.
The Doctour maketh this descriptioun.
This maiden on a day went in the toun
Toward a temple, with hire mother dere,
As is of yonge maidens the manere.
Now was ther than a justice in that toun,
That governour was of that regioun:
And so befell, this juge his eyen cast
Upon this maid, avising hire ful fast,
As she came forth by ther this juge stood:
Anon his herte changed and his mood,
So was he caught with beautee of this maid,
And to himself ful prively he said,
" This maiden shal be min for any man."
Anon the fend into his herte ran,
And taught him sodenly, that he by sleight
This maiden to his purpos winnen might.

For certes, by no force, ne by no mede,
Him thought he was not able for to spede;
For she was strong of frendes, and eke she
Confermed was in swiche soveraine bountee,
That wel he wist he might hire never winne,
As for to make hire with hire body sinne.
For which with gret deliberatioun
He sent after a cherl was in the toun,
The which he knew for sotil and for bold.
This juge unto this cherl his tale hath told
In secree wise, and made him to ensure,
He shulde tell it to no creature,
And if he did, he shulde lese his hede.
And whan assented was this cursed rede,
Glad was the juge, and maked him gret chere,
And yaf him yeftes precious and dere.

Whan shapen was all hir conspiracie
Fro point to point, how that his lecherie
Parformed shulde be ful sotilly,
As ye shul here it after openly,
Home goth this cherl, that highte Claudius.
This false juge, that highte Appius,
(So was his name, for it is no fable,
But knowen for an historical thing notable;
The sentence of it soth is out of doute)
This false juge goth now fast aboute
To hasten his delit all that he may.
And so befell, sone after on a day
This false juge, as telleth us the storie,
As he was wont, sat in his consistorie,
And yaf his domes upon sondry cas;
This false cherl came forth a ful gret pas,
And saide; "Lord, if that it be your will,
As doth me right upon this pitous bill,
In which I plaine upon Virginius.
And if that he wol sayn it is not thus,
I wol it preve, and finden good witnesse,
That soth is that my bille wol expresse."

The juge answerd, "Of this in his absence
I may not yeve deffinitif sentence.
Let don him call, and I wol gladly here;
Thou shalt have right, and no wrong as now here."

Virginius came to wete the juges will,
And right anon was red this cursed bill;
The sentence of it was as ye shul here.

"To you, my lord sire Appius so dere,
Sheweth your poure servant Claudius,
How that a knight called Virginius,
Agein the lawe, agein all equitee,
Holdeth, expresse agein the will of me,
My servant, which that is my thral by right,
Which from min hous was stolen on a night
While that she was ful yong, I wol it preve
By witnesse, lord, so that it you not greve;
She n'is his doughter nought, what so he say.
Wherfore to you, my lord the juge, I pray;
Yelde me my thral, if that it be your will."
Lo, this was all the sentence of his bill.

Virginius gan upon the cherl behold;
But hastily, er he his tale told,
And wold han preved it, as shuld a knight,
And eke by witnessing of many a wight,
That all was false, that said his adversary,
This cursed juge wolde nothing tary,
Ne here a word more of Virginius,
But yave his jugement, and saide thus.

"I deme anon this cherl his servant have:
Thou shalt no lenger in thin hous hire save.
Go bring hire forth, and put hire in our ward.
The cherl shal have his thral; thus I award."

And whan this worthy knight Virginius,
Thurgh sentence of this justice Appius,
Muste by force his dere doughter yeven
Unto the juge, in lecherie to liven,
He goth him home, and set him in his hall,
And let anon his dere doughter call:
And with a face ded as ashen cold,
Upon hire humble face he gan behold,
With fadres pitee stiking thurgh his herte,
Al wold he from his purpos not converte.

"Doughter," quod he, "Virginia by thy name,
Ther ben two waies, other deth or shame,
That thou must suffre, alas that I was bore!
For never thou deservedest wherfore
To dien with a swerd or with a knif.
O dere doughter, ender of my lif,
Which I have fostred up with swiche plesance,
That thou were never out of my remembrance;
O doughter, which that art my laste wo,
And in my lif my laste joye also,
O gemme of chastitee, in patience
Take thou thy deth, for this is my sentence;
For love and not for hate thou must be ded,
My pitous hond must smiten of thin hed.
Alas that ever Appius thee say!
Thus hath he falsely juged thee to-day."
And told hire all the cas, as ye before
Han herd, it nedeth not to tell it more.

"O mercy, dere father," quod this maid.
And with that word she both hire armes laid
About his necke, as she was wont to do,
(The teres brast out of hire eyen two,)
And said, "O goode father, shal I die?
Is ther no grace? is ther no remedie?"

"No certes, dere doughter min," quod he,
"Than yeve me leiser, father min," quod she,
"My deth for to complaine a litel space:"
For parde Jepte yave his doughter grace
For to complaine, or he hire slow, alas!
And God it wot, nothing was hire trespas,
But for she ran hire father first to see,
To welcome him with gret solempnitee."
And with that word she fell aswoune anon,
And after, whan hire swouning was agon,
She riseth up, and to hire father said:
"Blessed be God, that I shall die a maid.
Yeve me my deth, or that I have a shame.
Doth with your child your wille a goddes name."
And with that word she praied him ful oft,
That with his swerd he wolde smite hire soft;
And with that word, aswoune again she fell.
Hire father, with ful sorweful herte and will,
Hire hed of smote, and by the top it hent,
And to the juge he gan it to present,
As he sat yet in dome in consistorie.

And whan the juge it saw, as saith the storie,
He bad to take him, and anhang him fast.
But right anon a thousand peple in thrast
To save the knight, for routh and for pitee,
For knowen was the false iniquitee.

The peple anon had suspect in this thing
By maner of the cherles chalenging,
That it was by the assent of Appius;
They wisten wel that he was lecherous.
For which unto this Appius they gon,
And caste him in a prison right anon,
Wheras he slow himself: and Claudius,
That servant was unto this Appius,
Was demed for to hange upon a tree;
But that Virginius of his pitee

So prayed for him, that he was exiled,
And elles certes had he ben begiled:
The remenant were anhanged, more and lesse,
That were consentant of this cursednesse.
Here men may see how sin hath his merite:
Beth ware, for no man wot whom God wol smite
In no degree, ne in which maner wise
The worme of conscience may agrise
Of wicked lif, though it so privee be,
That no man wote therof, sauf God and he:
For be he lewed man or elles lered,
He n'ot how sone that he shal ben afered.
Therfore I rede you this conseil take,
Forsaketh sinne, or sinne you forsake.

THE PARDONERES PROLOGUE.

Our Hoste gan to swere as he were wood;
"Harow!" (quod he) "by nailes and by blood,
This was a false cherl, and a false justice.
As shameful deth as herte can devise,
Come to thise juges and hir advocas.
Algate this sely maide is slain, alas!
Alas! to dere abought she hire beautee.
Wherfore I say, that al day man may see,
That yeftes of fortune and of nature
Ben cause of deth to many a creature.
Hire beautee was hire deth, I dare wel sain;
Alas! so pitously as she was slain.
Of bothe yeftes, that I speke of now,
Men han ful often more for harm than prow.
"But trewely, min owen maister dere,
This was a pitous tale for to here:
But natheles, passe over, is no force.
I pray to God so save thy gentil corps,
And eke thyn urinals, and thy jordanes,
Thin Ypocras, and eke thy Galianes,
And every boist ful of thy letuarie,
God blesse hem and our lady Seinte Marie.
So mote I the, thou art a propre man,
And like a prelat by Seint Ronian;
Said I not wel? I cannot speke in terme;
But wel I wot, thou dost min herte to erme,
That I have almost caught a cardiacle:
By *corpus domini* but I have triacle,
Or elles a draught of moist and corny ale,
Or but I here anon a mery tale,
Myn herte is lost for pitee of this maid.
Thou *bel amy*, thou Pardoner," he said,
"Tel us som mirth of japes right anon."
"It shal be don," quod he, "by Seint Ronion.
"But first" (quod he) "here at this ale-stake
I wol both drinke, and biten on a cake."
But right anon thise gentiles gan to crie;
"Nay, let him tell us of no ribaudrie.
Tell us som moral thing, that we mow lere,
Som wit, and thanne wol we gladly here."
"I graunte ywis," quod he, "but I must thinke
Upon som honest thing, while that I drinke."

THE PARDONERES TALE.

Lordings, quod he, in chirche whan I preche,
I peine me to have an hautein speche,
And ring it out, as round as goth a bell,
For I can all by rote that I tell.
My teme is alway on, and ever was;
Radix malorum est cupiditas.
First I pronounce whennes that I come,
And than my bulles shew I all and some:
Our liege lordes sele on my patente,
That shew I first my body to warrente,
That no man be so bold, ne preest ne clerk,
Me to disturbe of Cristes holy werk.
And after that than tell I forth my tales.
Bulles of popes, and of cardinales,
Of patriarkes, and bishoppes I shewe,
And in Latin I speke a wordes fewe,
To saffron with my predication,
And for to stere men to devotion.
Than shew I forth my longe cristal stones,
Ycrammed ful of cloutes and of bones,
Relikes they ben, as wenen they echon.
Than have I in laton a shulder bone,
Which that was of an holy Jewes shepe.
"Good men," say I, "take of my wordes kepe:
If that this bone be washe in any well,
If cow, or calf, or shepe, or oxe swell,
That any worm hath ete, or worm ystonge,
Take water of that well, and wash his tonge,
And it is hole anon: and forthermore
Of pockes, and of scab, and every sore
Shal every shepe be hole, that of this well
Drinketh a draught; take kepe of that I tell.
"If that the good man, that the bestes oweth,
Wol every weke, or that the cok him croweth,
Fasting ydrinken of this well a draught,
As thilke holy Jew our eldres taught,
His bestes and his store shal multiplie.
And, sires, also it heleth jalousie.
For though a man be falle in jalous rage,
Let maken with this water his potage,
And never shal he more his wif mistrist,
Though he the soth of hire defaute wist;
Al had she taken preestes two or three.
"Here is a mitaine eke, that ye may see:
He that his hand wol put in this mitaine,
He shal have multiplying of his graine,
Whan he hath sowen, be it whete or otes,
So that he offer pens or elles grotes.
"And, men and women, o thing warne I you:
If any wight be in this chirche now,
That hath don sinne horrible, so that he
Dare not for shame of it yshriven be:
Or any woman, be she yong or old,
That hath ymade hire husbond cokewold,
Swiche folk shul han no power ne no grace
To offer to my relikes in this place.
And who so findeth him out of swiche blame,
He wol come up and offer in Goddes name,
And I assoyle him by the authoritee,
Which that by bulle ygranted was to me."
By this gaude have I wonnen yere by yere
An hundred mark, sin I was pardonere.
I stonde like a clerk in my pulpet,
And whan the lewed peple is doun yset,
I preche so as ye han herd before,
And tell an hundred false japes more.
Than peine I me to stretchen forth my necke,
And est and west upon the peple I becke,
As doth a dove, sitting upon a berne:
Myn hondes and my tonge gon so yerne,
That it is joye to see my besinesse.
Of avarice and of swiche cursednesse
Is all my preching, for to make hem free
To yeve hir pens, and namely unto me.

For min entente is not but for to winne,
And nothing for correction of sinne.
I recke never whan that they be beried,
Though that hir soules gon a-blake beried.
For certes many a predication
Cometh oft time of evil entention;
Som for plesance of folk, and flatorie,
To ben avanced by hypocrisie;
And som for vaine glorie, and som for hate.
For whan I dare non other wayes debate,
Than wol I sting him with my tonge smerte
In preching, so that he shal not asterte
To ben defamed falsely, if that he
Hath trespased to my brethren or to me.
For though I telle not his propre name,
Men shal wel knowen that it is the same
By signes, and by other circumstances.
Thus quite I folk, that don us displesances:
Thus spit I out my venime under hewe
Of holinesse, to seme holy and trewe.
But shortly min entente I wol devise,
I preche of nothing but for covetise.
Therfore my teme is yet, and ever was,
Radax malorum est cupiditas.
Thus can I preche again the same vice
Which that I use, and that is avarice.
But though myself be gilty in that sinne,
Yet can I maken other folk to twinne
From avarice, and sore hem to repente.
But that is not my principal entente;
I preche nothing but for covetise.
Of this matere it ought ynough suffise.
Than tell I hem ensamples many on
Of olde stories longe time agon.
For lewed peple loven tales olde;
Swiche thinges can they wel report and holde.
What? trowen ye, that whiles I may preche
And winnen gold and silver for I teche,
That I wol live in poverte wilfully?
Nay, nay, I thought it never trewely.
For I wol preche and beg in sondry londes,
I wol not do no labour with min hondes,
Ne make baskettes for to live therby,
Because I wol not beggen idelly.
I wol non of the apostles contrefete:
I wol have money, wolle, chese, and whete,
Al were it yeven of the pourest page,
Or of the pourest widewe in a village:
Al shulde hire children sterven for famine.
Nay, I wold drinke the licour of the vine,
And have a joly wenche in every toun.
But herkeneth, lordings, in conclusioun,
Your liking is that I shal tell a tale.
Now I have dronke a draught of corny ale,
By God I hope I shall you telle a thing,
That shal by reson ben at your liking:
For though myself be a ful vicious man,
A moral tale yet I you tellen can,
Which I am wont to prechen, for to winne.
Now hold your pees, my tale I wol beginne.

In Flandres whilom was a compagnie
Of yonge folk, that haunteden folie,
As hasard, riot, stewes, and tavernes;
Wheras with harpes, lutes, and giternes,
They dance and plaie at dis bothe day and night,
And ete also, and drinke over hir might;
Thurgh which they don the Devil sacrifice
Within the Devils temple, in cursed wise,
By superfluitee abhominable,
Hir othes ben so gret and so damnable.
That it is grisly for to here hem swere.
Our blisful Lordes bodly they to-tere;
Hem thought the Jewes rent him not ynough;
And eche of hem at others sinne lough.
And right anon in comen tombesteres
Fetis and smale, and yonge fruitesteres,
Singers with harpes, baudes, wafereres,
Which ben the veray Devils officeres,
To kindle and blow the fire of lecherie,
That is annexed unto glotonie.
The holy writ take I to my witnesse,
That luxurie is in wine and dronkenesse.
Lo, how that dronken Loth unkindely
Lay by his daughters two unwetingly,
So dronke he was he n'iste what he wrought.
Herodes, who so wel the stories sought,
Whan he of wine replete was at his feste,
Right at his owen table he yave his heste
To sleen the Baptist John ful gilteles.
Seneca saith a good word douteles:
He saith he can no difference find
Betwix a man that is out of his mind,
And a man whiche that is dronkelew:
But that woodnesse, yfallen in a shrew,
Persevereth lenger than doth dronkenesse.
O glotonie, full of cursednesse;
O cause first of our confusion,
O original of our damnation,
Til Crist had bought us with his blood again.
Loketh, how dere, shortly for to sain,
Abought was thilke cursed vilanie:
Corrupt was all this world for glotonie.
Adam our father, and his wif also,
Fro Paradis, to labour and to wo,
Were driven for that vice, it is no drede.
For while that Adam fasted, as I rede,
He was in Paradis, and whan that he
Ete of the fruit defended on a tree,
Anon he was out cast to wo and peine.
O glotonie, on thee wel ought us plaine.
O, wist a man how many maladies
Folwen of excesse and of glotonies,
He wolde ben the more mesurable
Of his diete, sitting at his table.
Alas! the shorte throte, the tendre mouth,
Maketh that est and west, and north and south,
In erthe, in air, in water, men to-swinke,
To gete a gloton deintee mete and drinke.
Of this matere, O Poule, wel canst thou trete.
Mete unto wombe, and wombe eke unto mete
Shal God destroien bothe, as Paulus saith.
Alas! a foule thing is it by my faith
To say this word, and fouler is the dede,
Whan man so drinketh of the white and rede,
That of his throte he maketh his privee
Thurgh thilke cursed superfluitee.
The Apostle saith weping ful pitously,
Ther walken many, of which you told have I,
I say it now weping with pitous vois,
That they ben enemies of Cristes crois:
Of whiche the end is deth, womb is hir God.
O wombe, O belly, stinking is thy cod,
Fulfilled of dong and of corruptioun;
At either end of thee foule is the soun.
How gret labour and cost is thee to find!
Thise cokes how they stamp, and strein, and grind,
And turnen substance into accident,
To fulfill all thy likerous talent!
Out of the harde bones knocken they
The mary, for they casten nought away,

That may go thurgh the gullet soft and sote:
Of spicerie, of leef, of barke, and rote,
Shal ben his sause ymaked by delit
To make him yet a newer appetit.
But certes he, that haunted swiche delices,
Is ded, while that he liveth in tho vices.
A lecherous thing is wine, and dronkenesse
Is ful of striving and of wretchednesse.
O dronken man, disfigured is thy face,
Sour is thy breth, foul art thou to embrace:
And thurgh thy dronken nose semeth the soun,
As though thou saidest ay, "Sampsoun, Sampsoun:"
And yet, go wot, Sampsoun dronk never no wine.
Thou fallest, as it were a stiked swine:
Thy tonge is lost, and all thin honest cure,
For dronkenesse is veray sepulture
Of mannes wit, and his discretion.
In whom that drink hath domination,
He can no conseil kepe, it is no drede.
Now kepe you fro the white and fro the rede,
And namely fro the white wine of Lepe,
That is to sell in Fishstrete and in Chepe.
This wine of Spaigne crepeth subtilly
In other wines growing faste by,
Of which ther riseth swiche fumositee,
That whan a man hath dronken draughtes three,
And weneth that he be at home in Chepe,
He is in Spaigne, right at the toun of Lepe,
Not at the Rochell, ne at Burdeux toun;
And thanne wol he say, "Sampsoun, Sampsoun."
But herkeneth, lordings, o word, I you pray,
That all the soveraine actes, dare I say,
Of victories in the Olde Testament,
Thurgh veray God, that is omnipotent,
Were don in abstinence and in prayere:
Loketh the Bible, and ther ye mow it lere.
Loke Attila, the gret conquerour,
Died in his slepe, with shame and dishonour,
Bleding ay at his nose in dronkenesse:
A capitaine shuld live in sobrenesse.
And over all this, aviseth you right wel,
What was commanded unto Lamuel;
Not Samuel, but Lamuel say I.
Redeth the Bible, and find it expresly
Of wine yeving to hem that have justice.
No more of this, for it may wel suffice.
And now that I have spoke of glotonie,
Now wol I you defenden hasardrie.
Hasard is veray moder of lesinges,
And of deceite, and cursed forsweringes:
Blaspheming of Crist, manslaughter, and wast also
Of catel, and of time; and forthermo
It is repreve, and contrary of honour,
For to ben hold a commun hasardour.
And ever the higher he is of estat,
The more he is holden desolat.
If that a prince useth hasarderie,
In alle governance and policie
He is, as by commun opinion,
Yhold the lesse in reputation.
Stilbon, that was a wise embassadour,
Was sent to Corinth with ful gret honour
Fro Calidone, to maken hem alliance:
And whan he came, it happed him *par chance*,
That all the gretest that were of that lond
Yplaying atte hasard he hem fond.
For which, as sone as that it mighte be,
He stale him home agein to his contree,
And sayde ther, "I wol not lese my name,
Ne wol not take on me so gret defame,
You for to allie unto non hasardours.
Sendeth som other wise embassadours.
For by my trouthe, me were lever die,
Than I you shuld to hasardours allie.
For ye, that ben so glorious in honours,
Shal not allie you to non hasardours,
As by my wille, ne as by my tretee."
This wise philosophere thus sayd he.
Loke eke how to the king Demetrius
The king of Parthes, as the book sayth us,
Sent him a pair of dis of gold in scorne,
For he had used hasard therbeforne:
For which he held his glory and his renoun
At no value or reputatioun.
Lordes may finden other maner play
Honest ynough to drive the day away.
Now wol I speke of others false and grete
A word or two, as olde bookes trete.
Gret swering is a thing abhominable,
And false swering is yet more reprevable.
The highe God forbad swering at al,
Witnesse on Mathew: but in special
Of swering sayth the holy Jeremie,
Thou shalt swere soth thin othes, and not lie;
And swere in dome, and eke in rightwisnesse;
But idel swering is a cursednesse.
Behold and see that in the firste table
Of highe Goddes hestes honourable,
How that the second hest of him is this,
Take not the name in idel or amis.
Lo, rather he forbedeth swiche swering,
Than homicide, or many an other thing.
I say that as by ordre thus it stondeth;
This knoweth he that his hestes understondeth,
How that the second hest of God is that.
And forthermore, I wol thee tell all plat,
That vengeance shal not parten from his hous,
That of his othes is outrageous.
"By Goddes precious herte, and by his nailes,
And by the blood of Crist, that is in Hailes,
Seven is my chance, and thin is cink and treye:
By Goddes armes, if thou falsely pleye,
This dagger shal thurghout thin herte go."
This fruit cometh of the bicchel bones two,
Forswering, ire, falsenesse, and homicide.
Now for the love of Crist that for us dide,
Leteth your othes, bothe gret and smale.
But, sires, now wol I tell you forth my tale.
Thise riotoures three, of which I tell,
Long erst or prime rong of any bell,
Were set hem in a taverne for to drinke:
And as they sat, they herd a belle clinke
Before a corps was caried to his grave:
That on of hem gan callen to his knave,
"Go bet," quod he, "and axe redily,
What corps is this, that passeth here forth by:
And loke that thou report his name wel."
"Sire," quod this boy, "it nedeth never a del;
It was me told or ye came here two houres;
He was parde an old felaw of youres,
And sodenly he was yslain to-night,
Fordronke as he sat on his benche upright,
Ther came a privee theef, men clepen Deth,
That in this contree all the peple sleth,
And with his spere he smote his herte atwo,
And went his way withouten wordes mo.
He hath a thousand slain this pestilence:
And, maister, or he come in his presence,
Me thinketh that it were ful necessarie,
For to beware of swiche an adversarie:

Beth redy for to mete him evermore.
Thus taughte me my dame, I say no more."
"By Seinte Marie," sayd this tavernere,
"The child sayth soth, for he hath slain this yere
Hens over a mile, within a gret village,
Both man and woman, child, and hyne, and page;
I trowe his habitation be there:
To ben avised gret wisdome it were,
Or that he did a man a dishonour."
"Ye, Goddes armes," quod this riotour,
"Is it swiche peril with him for to mete?
I shal him seke by stile and eke by strete.
I make a vow by Goddes digne bones.
Herkeneth, felawes, we three ben all ones:
Let eche of us hold up his hond to other,
And eche of us becomen others brother,
And we wol slen this false traitour Deth;
He shal be slain, he that so many sleth,
By Goddes dignitee, or it be night."
Togeder han thise three hir trouthes plight
To live and dien eche of hem for other,
As though he were his owen boren brother.
And up they stert al dronken in this rage,
And forth they gon towardes that village,
Of which the taverner had spoke beforn,
And many a grisly oth than have they sworn,
And Cristes blessed body they to-rent;
"Deth shal be ded, if that we may him hent."
Whan they han gon not fully half a mile,
Right as they wold han troden over a stile,
An olde man and a poure with hem mette.
This olde man ful mekely hem grette,
And sayde thus; "Now, lordes, God you see."
The proudest of thise riotoures three
Answerd agen; "What! cherl, with sory grace,
Why art thou all forwrapped save thy face?
Why livest thou so longe in so gret age?"
This olde man gan loke in his visage,
And sayde thus; "For I ne cannot finde
A man, though that I walked into Inde,
Neither in citee, ne in no village,
That wolde change his youthe for min age;
And therfore mote I han min age still
As longe time as it is Goddes will.
Ne Deth, alas! ne will not han my lif.
Thus walke I like a restelès caitif,
And on the ground, which is my modres gate,
I knocke with my staf, erlich and late,
And say to hire, 'Leve mother, let me in.
Lo, how I vanish, flesh, and blood, and skin,
Alas! whan shul my bones ben at reste?
Mother, with you wold I changen my cheste,
That in my chambre longe time hath be,
Ye, for an heren cloute to wrap in me.'
But yet to me she wol not don that grace,
For which ful pale and welked is my face.
"But, sires, to you it is no curtesie
To speke unto an olde man vilanie,
But he trespase in word or elles in dede.
In holy writ ye moun yourselven rede;
Ageins an olde man, hore upon his hede,
Ye shuld arise: therefore I yeve you rede,
Ne doth unto an olde man non harm now,
No more than that ye wold a man did you
In age, if that ye may so long abide.
And God be with you, wher ye go or ride.
I moste go thider as I have to go."
"Nay, olde cherl, by God thou shalt not so,"
Sayde this other hasardour anon;
"Thou partest not so lightly by Seint John.
Thou spake right now of thilke traitour Deth,
That in this contree of all our frendes sleth;
Have here my trouth as thou art his espie;
Tell wher he is, or thou shalt it abie,
By God and by the holy sacrement;
For sothly thou art on of his assent
To slen us yonge folk, thou false thefe."
"Now, sires," quod he, "if it be you so lefe
To finden Deth, tourne up this croked way,
For in that grove I left him by my fay
Under a tree, and ther he wol abide;
Ne for your bost he wol him nothing hide.
Se ye that oke? right ther ye shuln him find.
God save you, that bought agen mankind,
And you amende;" thus sayd this olde man.
And everich of thise riotoures ran,
Til they came to the tree, and ther they found
Of floreins fine of gold ycoined round,
Wel nigh an eighte bushels, as hem thought.
No lenger as than after Dethe they sought,
But eche of hem so glad was of the sight,
For that the floreins ben so faire and bright,
That doun they sette hem by the precious hord.
The werste of hem he spake the firste word.
"Brethren," quod he, "take kepe what I shall say;
My wit is gret, though that I bourde and play.
This tresour hath fortune unto us yeven
In mirth and jolitee our lif to liven,
And lightly as it cometh, so wol we spend.
Ey, Goddes precious dignitee, who wend
To-day, that we shuld han so faire a grace!
But might this gold be caried fro this place
Home to myn hous, or elles unto youres,
(For wel I wote that all this gold is oures)
Than were we in high felicitee.
But trewely by day it may not be;
Men wolden say that we were theeves strong,
And for our owen tresour don us hong.
This tresour must ycaried be by night
As wisely and as sleighly as it might.
Wherfore I rede, that cut among us alle
We drawe, and let see wher the cut wol falle:
And he that hath the cut, with herte blith,
Shal rennen to the toun, and that ful swith,
And bring us bred and win ful privelý:
And two of us shall kepen subtilly
This tresour wel: and if he wol not tarien,
Whan it is night, we wol this tresour carien
By on assent, wher as us thinketh best."
That on of hem the cut brought in his fest,
And bad hem drawe and loke wher it wold falle
And it fell on the yongest of hem alle:
And forth toward the toun he went anon.
And al so sone as that he was agon,
That on of hem spake thus unto that other;
"Thou wotest wel thou art my sworen brother,
Thy profite wol I tell thee right anon.
Thou wost wel that our felaw is agon,
And here is gold, and that ful gret plentee,
That shal departed ben among us three.
But natheles, if I can shape it so,
That it departed were among us two,
Had I not don a frendes turn to thee?"
That other answered, "I n'ot how that may be:
He wote wel that the gold is with us tweye.
What shuln we don? what shuln we to him seye?"
"Shal it be conseil?" sayd the firste shrewe;
"And I shal tellen thee in wordes fewe
What we shul don, and bring it wel aboute."
"I grante," quod that other, "out of doute,

That by my trouth I wol thee not bewreie." [tweie,
"Now," quod the first, "thou wost wel we ben
And tweie of us shul strenger be than on.
Loke, whan that he is set, thou right anon
Arise, as though thou woldest with him play;
And I shal rive him thurgh the sides tway,
While that thou stroglest with him as in game,
And with thy dagger loke thou do the same;
And than shal all this gold departed be,
My dere frend, betwixen thee and me:
Than moun we bothe our lustes al fulfille,
And play at dis right at our owen wille."
And thus accorded ben thise shrewes tweye,
To slen the thridde, as ye han herd me seye.

This yongest, which that wente to the toun,
Ful oft in herte he rolleth up and doun
The beautee of thise florcins newe and bright.
"O Lord," quod he, "if so were that I might
Have all this tresour to myself alone,
Ther n'is no man that liveth under the trone
Of God, that shulde live so mery as I."
And at the last the fend our enemy
Putte in his thought, that he shuld poison beye,
With which he mighte slen his felaws tweye.
For why, the fend fond him in swiche living,
That he had leve to sorwe him to bring.
For this was outrely his ful entente
To slen hem both, and never to repente.

And forth he goth, no lenger wold he tary,
Into the toun unto a potecary,
And praied him that he him wolde sell
Som poison, that he might his ratouns quell.
And eke ther was a polkat in his hawe,
That, as he sayd, his capons had yslawe:
And fayn he wolde him wreken, if he might,
Of vermine, that destroied hem by night.

The potecary answerd, "Thou shalt have
A thing, as wisly God my soule save,
In all this world ther n'is no creature,
That ete or dronke hath of this confecture,
Not but the mountance of a corne of whete,
That he ne shal his lif anon forlete;
Ye, sterve he shal, and that in lesse while,
Than thou wolt gon a pas not but a mile:
This poison is so strong and violent."

This cursed man hath in his hond yhent
This poison in a box, and swithe he ran
Into the nexte strete unto a man,
And borwed of him large botelles three;
And in the two the poison poured he;
The thridde he kept clene for his drinke,
For all the night he shope him for to swinke
In carying of the gold out of that place.

And whan this riotour, with sory grace,
Hath filled with win his grete botelles three,
To his felawes agen repaireth he.

What nedeth it therof to sermon more?
For right as they had cast his deth before,
Right so they han him slain, and that anon.
And whan that this was don, thus spake that on;
"Now let us sit and drinke, and make us mery,
And afterward we wiln his body bery."
And with that word it happed him *par cas*,
To take the botelle, ther the poison was,
And dronke, and yave his felaw drinke also,
For which anon they storven bothe two.

But certes I suppose that Avicenne
Wrote never in no canon, ne in no fenne,
Mo wonder signes of empoisoning,
Than had thise wretches two or hir ending.
Thus ended ben thise homicides two,
And eke the false empoisoner also.

O cursednesse of alle cursednesse!
O traitours homicide! O wickednesse!
O glotonie, luxurie, and hasardrie!
Thou blasphemour of Crist with vilanie,
And othes grete, of usage and of pride!
Alas! mankinde, how may it betide,
That to thy creatour, which that thee wrought,
And with his precious herte-blood thee bought,
Thou art so false and so unkind, alas!

Now, good men, God foryeve you your trespas,
And ware you fro the sin of avarice.
Min holy pardon may you all warice,
So that ye offre nobles or starlinges,
Or elles silver broches, spones, ringes.
Boweth your hed under this holy bulle.
Cometh up ye wives, and offreth of your wolle;
Your names I entre here in my roll anon;
Into the blisse of Heven shul ye gon:
I you assoile by min high powere,
You that wiln offre, as clene and eke as clere
As ye were borne. Lo, sires, thus I preche;
And Jesu Crist, that is our soules leche,
So graunte you his pardon to receive;
For that is best, I wol you not deceive.

But, sires, o word forgate I in my tale:
I have relikes and pardon in my male,
As faire as any man in Englelond,
Which were me yeven by the Popes hond.
If any of you wol of devotion
Offren, and han min absolution,
Cometh forth anon, and kneleth here adoun,
And mekely receiveth my pardoun,
Or elles taketh pardon, as ye wende,
Al newe and freshe at every tounes ende,
So that ye offren alway newe and newe,
Nobles or pens, which that ben good and trewe.
It is an honour to everich that is here,
That ye moun have a suffisant pardonere
To assoilen you in contree as ye ride,
For aventures, which that moun betide.
Paraventure ther may falle on, or two,
Doun of his hors, and breke his necke atwo.
Loke, which a seurtee is it to you alle,
That I am in your felawship yfalle,
That may assoile you bothe more and lasse,
Whan that the soule shal fro the body passe.
I rede that our Hoste shal beginne,
For he is most envoluped in sinne.
Come forth, sire Hoste, and offre first anon,
And thou shalt kisse the relikes everich on,
Ye for a grote; unbokel anon thy purse.

"Nay nay," quod he, "than have I Cristes curse.
Let be," quod he, "it shal not be, so the ich.
Thou woldest make me kisse thin olde breech,
And swere it were a relike of a seint,
Though it were with thy foundement depeint.
But by the crois, which that Seint Heleine fond,
I wolde I had thin coilons in min hond,
Instede of relikes, or of seintuarie.
Let cut hem of, I wol thee help hem carie;
They shul be shrined in an hogges tord."

This Pardoner answered not a word;
So wroth he was, no word ne wolde he say.

"Now," quod our Hoste, "I wol no lenger play
With thee, ne with non other angry man."
But right anon the worthy knight began,
(Whan that he saw that all the peple lough)
"No more of this for it is right ynough.

Sire Pardoner, be mery and glad of chere;
And ye, sire Hoste, that ben to me so dere,
I pray you that ye kisse the Pardoner;
And, Pardoner, I pray thee draw thee ner,
And as we diden, let us laugh and play."
Anon they kissed, and riden forth hir way.

THE SHIPMANNES PROLOGUE.

Our Hoste upon his stirrops stode anon,
And saide; "Good men, herkeneth everich on,
This was a thrifty tale for the nones.
Sire parish preest," quod he, "for Goddes bones,
Tell us a tale, as was thy forward yore:
I see wel that ye lerned men in lore
Can mochel good, by Goddes digaitee."
The Person him answerd, "*Benedicite!*
What eileth the man, so sinfully to swere?"
Our Hoste answerd, "O Jankin, be ye there?
Now, good men," quod our Hoste, "herkneth to me.
"I smell a loller in the wind," quod he.
Abideth for Goddes digne passion,
For we shul han a predication:
This loller here wol prechen us somwhat."
"Nay by my fathers soule, that shal he nat,"
Sayde the Shipman, "here shal he nat preche,
He shal no gospel glosen here ne teche.
We leven all in the gret God," quod he.
"He wolde sowen som difficultee,
Or springen cockle in our clene corne.
And therfore, hoste, I warne thee beforne,
My joly body shal a tale telle,
And I shal clinken you so mery a belle,
That I shal waken all this compagnie:
But it shal not ben of philosophie,
Ne of physike, ne termes queinte of lawe;
Ther is but litel Latin in my mawe."

THE SHIPMANNES TALE.

A MARCHANT whilom dwelled at Seint Denise,
That riche was, for which men held him wise.
A wif he had of excellent beautee,
And compaignable, and revelous was she,
Which is a thing that causeth more dispence,
Than worth is all the chere and reverence,
That men hem don at festes and at dances.
Swiche salutations and contenances
Passen, as doth a shadwe upon a wall:
But wo is him that payen mote for all.
The sely husbond algate he mote pay,
He mote us clothe and he mote us array
All for his owen worship richely:
In which array we dancen jolily.
And if that he may not paraventure,
Or elles lust not swiche dispence endure,
But thinketh it is wasted and ylost,
Than mote another payen for our cost,
Or lene us gold, and that is perilous.
This noble marchant held a worthy hous,
For which he had all day so gret repaire
For his largesse, and for his wif was faire,
That wonder is: but herkeneth to my tale.
Amonges all thise gestes gret and smale,
Ther was a monk, a faire man and a bold,
I trow a thritty winter he was old,
That ever in on was drawing to that place.
This yonge monk, that was so faire of face,
Acquainted was so with this goode man,
Sithen that hir firste knowlege began,
That in his hous as familier was he;
As it possible is any frend to be.
And for as mochel as this goode man
And eke this Monk, of which that I began,
Were bothe two yborne in o village,
The monk him claimeth, as for cosinage,
And he again him sayd not ones nay,
But was as glad therof, as foule of day;
For to his herte it was a gret plesance.
Thus ben they knit with eterne alliance,
And eche of hem gan other for to ensure
Of brotherhed, while that hir lif may dure.
Free was Dan John, and namely of dispence
As in that hous, and ful of diligence
To don plesance, and also gret costage:
He not forgate to yeve the leste page
In all that hous; but, after hir degree,
He yave the lord, and sithen his meinee,
Whan that he came, som maner honest thing;
For which they were as glad of his coming
As foule is fayn, whan that the Sonne up riseth.
No more of this as now, for it sufficeth.
But so befell, this marchant on a day
Shope him to maken redy his array
Toward the toun of Brugges for to fare,
To byen ther a portion of ware:
For which he hath to Paris sent anon
A messager, and praied hath Dan John
That he shuld come to Seint Denis, and pleie
With him, and with his wif, a day or tweie,
Or he to Brugges went, in alle wise.
This noble monk, of which I you devise,
Hath of his abbot, as him list, licence,
(Because he was a man of high prudence,
And eke an officer out for to ride,
To seen hir granges, and hir bernes wide)
And unto Seint Denis he cometh anon.
Who was so welcome as my lord Dan John,
Our dere cousin, ful of curtesie?
With him he brought a jubbe of Malvesie,
And eke another ful of fine Vernage,
And volatile, as ay was his usage:
And thus I let hem ete, and drinke, and pleye,
This marchant and this monk, a day or tweye.
The thridde day this marchant up ariseth,
And on his nedes sadly him aviseth:
And up into his countour hous goth he,
To reken with himselven, wel may be,
Of thilke yere, how that it with him stood,
And how that he dispended had his good,
And if that he encresed were or non.
His bookes and his bagges many on
He layth beforn him on his counting bord.
Ful riche was his tresour and his hord;
For which ful fast his countour dore he shet;
And eke he n'olde no man shuld him let
Of his accountes for the mene time:
And thus he sit, til it was passed prime.
Dan John was risen in the morwe also,
And in the gardin walketh to and fro,
And hath his thinges sayd ful curteisly.
This goode wif came walking prively
Into the gardin ther he walketh soft,
And him saluteth, as she hath don oft:
A maiden child came in hire compagnie,
Which as hire lust she may governe and gie,

For yet under the yerde was the maide.
"O dere cosin min Dan John," she saide,
"What aileth you so rathe for to arise?"
"Nece," quod he, "it ought ynough suffise
Five houres for to slepe upon a night:
But it were for an olde appalled wight,
As ben thise wedded men, that lie and dare,
As in a fourme sitteth a wery hare,
Were al forstraught with houndes gret and smale.
But, dere nece, why be ye so pale?
I trowe certes, that our goode man
Hath you laboured, sith this night began,
That you were nede to resten hastily."
And with that word he lough ful merily,
And of his owen thought he wexe all red.
This faire wif gan for to shake hire hed,
And saied thus; "Ye, God wote all," quod she.
"Nay, cosin min, it stant not so with me.
For by that God, that yave me soule and lif,
In all the reame of Fraunce is ther no wif,
That lasse lust hath to that sory play;
For I may singe alas and wala wa
That I was borne, but to no wight" (quod she)
"Dare I not tell how that it stant with me.
Wherfore I thinke out of this lond to wende
Or elles of myself to make an ende,
So full am I of drede and eke of care."
This monk began upon this wif to stare,
And sayd, "Alas! my nece, God forbede,
That ye for any sorwe, or any drede,
Fordo yourself: but telleth me your grefe,
Paraventure I may in your mischefe
Conseile or helpe: and therfore telleth me
All your annoy, for it shal ben secree.
For on my portos here I make an oth,
That never in my lif, for lefe ne loth,
Ne shal I of no conseil you bewray."
"The same agen to you," quod she, "I say.
By God and by this portos I you swere,
Though men me wolden all in peces tere,
Ne shal I never, for to gon to Helle,
Bewrey o word of thing that ye me tell,
Nought for no cosinage, ne alliance,
But verayly for love and affiance."
Thus ben they sworne, and hereupon they kiste,
And eche of hem told other what hem liste.
"Cosin," quod she, "if that I had a space,
As I have non and namely in this place,
Than wold I tell a legend of my lif,
What I have suffred sith I was a wif
With min husbond, al be he your cosin."
"Nay," quod this monk, "by God and Seint Martin,
He n'is no more cosin unto me,
Than is the leef that hangeth on the tree:
I clepe him so by Seint Denis of France
To han the more cause of acquaintance
Of you, which I have loved specially
Aboven alle woman sikerly,
This swere I you on my professioun:
Telleth your grefe, lest that he come adoun;
And hasteth you, and goth away anon."
"My dere love," quod she, "o my Dan John,
Ful lefe were me this conseil for to hide,
But out it mote, I may no lenger abide.
"Myn husbond is to me the werste man,
That ever was sith that the world began:
But sith I am a wif, it sith not me
To tellen no wight of our privetee,
Neither in bed, ne in non other place;
God shilde I shulde it tellen for his grace;
A wif ne shal not sayn of hire husbond
But all honour, as I can understond;
Save unto you thus moch I tellen shal:
As helpe me God, he is nought worth at all,
In no degree, the value of a flie.
But yet me greveth most his nigardie:
And wel ye wot, that women naturally
Desiren thinges sixe, as wel as I.
They wolden that hir husbondes shulden be
Hardy, and wise, and riche, and therto free,
And buxome to his wif, and fresh a-bedde.
But by that ilke Lord that for us bledde,
For his honour myselven for to array,
A Sonday next I muste nedes pay
An hundred franks, or elles am I lorne.
Yet were me lever that I were unborne,
Than me were don a sclandre or vilanie.
And if min husbond eke might it espie,
I n'ere but lost; and therfore I you prey
Lene me this summe, or elles mote I dey.
Dan John, I say, lene me this hundred frankes;
Parde I wol not faille you my thankes,
If that you list to do that I you pray.
For at a certain day I wol you pay,
And do to you what plesance and service
That I may don, right as you list devise:
And but I do, God take on me vengeance,
As foule as ever had Genelon of France."
This gentil monk answered in this manere;
"Now trewely min owen lady dere,
I have," quod he, "on you so grete a routhe,
That I you swere, and plighte you my trouthe,
That whan your husbond is to Flandres fare,
I wol deliver you out of this care.
For I wol bringen you an hundred frankes."
And with that word he caught hire by the flankes,
And hire embraced hard, and kiste hire oft.
"Go now your way," quod he, "al stille and soft,
And let us dine as sone as that ye may,
For by my kalender it is prime of day:
Goth now, and beth as trewe as I shal be."
"Now elles God forbede, sire," quod she;
And forth she goth, as joly as a pie,
And bad the cokes that they shuld hem hie,
So that men mighten dine, and that anon.
Up to hire husbond is this wif ygon,
And knocketh at his countour boldely.
"*Qui est la?*" quod he. "Peter, it am I,"
Quod she. "What, sire, how longe wol ye fast?
How longe time wol ye reken and cast
Your summes, and your bookes, and your thinges?
The devil have part of all swiche rekeninges.
Ye han ynough parde of Goddes sonde.
Come doun to-day, and let your bagges stonde.
Ne be ye not ashamed, that Dan John
Shal fasting all this day elenge gon?
What? let us here a masse, and go we dine."
"Wif," quod this man, "litel canst thou divine
The curious besinesse that we have:
For of us chapmen, all so God me save,
And by that lord that cleped is Seint Ive,
Scarsly amonges twenty ten shul thrive
Continuelly, lasting unto oure age.
We moun wel maken chere and good visage,
And driven forth the world as it may be,
And kepen our estat in privitee,
Til we be ded, or elles that we play
A pilgrimage, or gon out of the way.
And therfore have I gret necessitee
Upon this queinte world to avisen me.

For evermore mote we stond in drede
Of hap and fortune in our chapmanhede.
"To Flandres wol I go to-morwe at day,
And come agein as sone as ever I may:
For which, my dere wif, I thee beseke
As be to every wight buxom and meke,
And for to kepe our good be curious,
And honestly governe wel our hous.
Thou hast ynough, in every maner wise,
That to a thrifty houshold may suffice.
Thee lacketh non array, ne no vitaille;
Of silver in thy purse shalt thou not faille."
And with that word his countour dore he shette,
And doun he goth; no lenger wold he lette;
And hastily a masse was ther saide,
And spedily the tables were ylaide,
And to the diner faste they hem spedde,
And richely this monk the chapman fedde.
And after diner Dan John soberly
This chapman toke apart, and prively
He said him thus; "Cosin, it stondeth so,
That, wel I see, to Brugges ye wol go,
God and Seint Austin spede you and gide.
I pray you, cosin, wisely that ye ride;
Governeth you also of your diete
Attemprely, and namely in this hete.
Betwix us two nedeth no strange fare;
Farewel, cosin, God shilde you fro care.
If any thing ther be by day or night,
If it lie in my power and my might,
That ye me wol command in any wise,
It shal be don, right as ye wol devise.
"But o thing or ye go, if it may be,
I wolde prayen you for to lene me
An hundred frankes for a weke or tweye,
For certain bestes that I muste beye,
To storen with a place that is oures:
(God helpe me so, I wold that it were youres)
I shal not faille surely of my day,
Not for a thousand frankes, a mile way.
But let this thing be secree, I you preye;
For yet to-night thise bestes mote I beye.
And fare now wel, min owen cosin dere,
Grand mercy of your cost and of your chere."
This noble marchant gentilly anon
Answerd and said, "O cosin min Dan John,
Now sikerly this is a smal requeste:
My gold is youres, whan that it you leste,
And not only my gold, but my chaffare:
Take what you lest, God shilde that ye spare.
But o thing is, ye know it wel ynough
Of chapmen, that hir money is hir plough.
We moun creancen while we han a name,
But goodles for to ben it is no game.
Pay it agen, whan it lith in your ese;
After my might ful fayn wold I you plese."
Thise hundred frankes fet he forth anon,
And prively he toke hem to Dan John:
No wight in al this world wist of this lone,
Saving this marchant, and Dan John alone,
They drinke, and speke, and rome a while and pleye,
Til that Dan John rideth to his abbeye.
The morwe came, and forth this marchant rideth
To Flandres ward, his prentis wel him gideth,
Til he came in to Brugges merily.
Now goth this marchant faste and besily
About his nede, and bieth, and creanceth;
He neither playeth at the dis, ne danceth;
But as a marchant, shortly for to tell,
He ledeth his lif, and ther I let him dwell.

The Sonday next the marchant was agon,
To Seint Denis ycomon is Dan John,
With croune and berde all fresh and newe yshave.
In all the hous ther n'as so litel a knave,
Ne no wight elles, that he n'as ful fain,
For that my lord Dan John was come again.
And shortly to the point right for to gon,
This faire wif accordeth with Dan John,
That for thise hundred frankes he shuld all night
Haven hire in his armes bolt-upright:
And this accord parformed was in dede.
In mirth all night a besy lif they lede
Til it was day, that Dan John yede his way,
And bad the meinie farewel, have good day.
For non of hem, ne no wight in the toun,
Hath of Dan John right non suspectioun;
And forth he rideth home to his abbey,
Or wher him liste, no more of him I sey.
This marchant, whan that ended was the faire,
To Seint Denis he gan for to repaire,
And with his wif he maketh feste and chere,
And telleth hire that chaffare is so dere,
That nedes muste he make a chevisance,
For he was bounde in a recognisance,
To payen twenty thousand sheldes anon.
For which this marchant is to Paris gon
To borwe of certain frendes that he hadde
A certain frankes, and som with him he ladde.
And whan that he was come in to the toun,
For gret chiertee and gret affectioun
Unto Dan John he goth him first to pleye;
Not for to axe or borwe of him moneye,
But for to wete and seen of his welfare,
And for to tellen him of his chaffare,
As frendes don, whan they ben mette in fere.
Dan John him maketh feste and mery chere;
And he him tolde agen ful specially,
How he had wel ybought and graciously
(Thanked be God) all hole his marchandise:
Save that he must in alle manere wise
Maken a chevisance, as for his beste:
And than he shulde ben in joye and reste.
Dan John answered, "Certes I am fain,
That ye in hele be comen home again:
And if that I were riche, as have I blisse,
Of twenty thousand sheldes shuld ye no misse,
For ye so kindely this other day
Lente me gold, and as I can and may
I thanke you, by God and by Seint Jame.
But natheles I toke unto our dame,
Your wif at home, the same gold again
Upon your benche, she wote it wel certain,
By certain tokens that I can hire tell.
Now by your leve, I may no lenger dwell;
Our abbot wol out of this toun anon,
And in his compagnie I muste gon.
Grete wel our dame, min owen nece swete,
And farewel, dere cosin, til we mete."
This marchant, which that was ful ware and wise,
Creanced hath, and paide eke in Paris
To certain Lumbardes redy in hir hond
The summe of gold, and gate of hem his bond,
And home he goth, mery as a popingay.
For wel he knew he stood in swiche array,
That nedes muste he winne in that viage
A thousand frankes, above all his costage.
His wif ful redy mette him at the gate,
As she was wont of old usage algate:
And all that night in mirthe they ben sette,
For he was riche, and clerely out of dette.

Whan it was day, this marchant gan enbrace
His wif all newe, and kiste hire in hire face,
And up he goth, and maketh it ful tough.
" No more," quod she, " by God ye have ynough:"
And wantonly agen with him she plaide,
Til at the last this merchant to hire saide.
" By God," quod he, " I am a litel wrothe
With you, my wif, although it be me lothe:
And wote ye why? by God, as that I gesse,
That ye han made a manere strangenesse
Betwixen me and my cosin Dan John.
Ye shuld have warned me, or I had gon,
That he you had an hundred frankes paide
By redy token: and held him evil apaide,
For that I to him spake of chevisance:
(Me semed so as by his contenance)
But natheles by God our Heven king,
I thoughte not to axe of him no thing.
I pray thee, wif, ne do thou no more so.
Tell me alway, er that I fro thee go,
If any dettour hath in min absence
Ypaide thee, lest thurgh thy negligence
I might him axe a thing that he hath paide."
This wif was not aferde ne affraide,
But boldely she saide, and that anon;
" Mary I defie that false monk Dan John,
I kepe not of his tokenes never a del:
He toke me certain gold, I wote it wel.
What? evil thedome on his monkes snoute!
For, God it wote, I wend withouten doute,
That he had yeve it me, because of you,
To don therwith min honour and my prow,
For cosinage, and eke for *belle chere*,
That he hath had ful often times here.
But sith I see I stonde in swiche disjoint,
I wol answere you shortly to the point.
" Ye have mo slakke dettours than am I:
For I wol pay you wel and redily
Fro day to day, and if so be I faille,
I am your wif, score it upon my taile,
And I shal pay as sone as ever I may.
For by my trouth, I have on min array,
And not in waste, bestowed it every del.
And for I have bestowed it so wel
For your honour, for Goddes sake I say,
As beth not wroth, but let us laugh and play.
Ye shal my joly body han to wedde:
By God I n'ill not pay you but a-bedde:
Forveye it me, min owen spouse dere;
Turne hitherward and maketh better chere."
This marchant saw ther was no remedy:
And for to chide, it n'ere but a foly,
Sith that the thing may not amended be.
" Now, wif," he said, " and I foryeve it thee;
But by thy lif ne be no more so large;
Kepe bet my good, this yeve I thee in charge."
Thus endeth now my tale, and God us sende
Taling ynough, unto our lives ende.

THE PRIORESSES PROLOGUE.

" Wel said by *corpus Domini*," quod our Hoste,
" Now longe mote thou sailen by the coste,
Thou gentil maister, gentil marinere,
God give the monke a thousand last quad yere.
A ha, felawes, beth ware of swiche a jape.
The monke put in the mannes hode an ape,
And in his wifes eke, by Seint Austin.
Draweth no monkes more into your in.
" But now passe over, and let us seke aboute,
Who shal now tellen first of all this route
Another tale:" and with that word he said,
As curteisly as it had ben a maid,
" My lady Prioresse, by your leve,
So that I wist I shuld you not agreve,
I wolde demen, that ye tellen shold
A tale next, if so were that ye wold.
Now wol ye vouchesauf, my lady dere?"
" Gladly," quod she, and saide as ye shul here.

THE PRIORESSES TALE.

" O Lord our Lord, thy name how merveillous
Is in this large world ysprad!" (quod she)
" For not al only thy laude precious
Parformed is by men of dignitee,
But by the mouth of children thy bountee
Parformed is, for on the brest souking
Somtime shewen they thin herying.

" Wherfore in laude, as I can best and may,
Of thee and of the white lily flour,
Which that thee bare, and is a maide alway,
To tell a storie I wol do my labour;
Not that I may encresen hire honour,
For she hireselven is honour and rote
Of bountee, next hire sone, and soules bote.

" O mother maide, o maide and mother fre,
O bushe unbrent, brenning in Moyses sight,
That ravishedest doun fro the deitee,
Thurgh thin humblesse, the gost that in thee alight:
Of whos vertue, whan he thin herte light,
Conceived was the fathers sapience:
Helpe me to tell it in thy reverence.

" Lady thy bountee, thy magnificence,
Thy vertue and thy gret humilitee,
Ther may no tonge expresse in no science:
For somtime, lady, or men pray to thee,
Thou gost beforn of thy benignitee,
And getest us the light, of thy prayere,
To giden us unto thy sone so dere.

" My conning is so weke, o blisful quene,
For to declare thy grete worthinesse,
That I ne may the weighte not sustene;
But as a child of twelf moneth old or lesse,
That can unnethes any word expresse,
Right so fare I, and therfore I you pray,
Gideth my song, that I shal of you say."

Ther was in Asie, in a gret citee,
Amonges Cristen folk a Jewerie,
Sustened by a lord of that contree,
For foule usure, and lucre of vilanie,
Hateful to Crist, and to his compagnie:
And thurgh the strete men mighten ride and wende,
For it was free, and open at eyther ende.

A litel scole of Cristen folk ther stood
Doun at the ferther ende, in which ther were
Children an hepe comen of Cristen blood,
That lerned in that scole yere by yere,
Swiche manere doctrine as men used there;
This is to say, to singen and to rede,
As smale children don in hir childhede.

Among thise children was a widewes sone,
A litel clergion, sevene yere of age,
That day by day to scole was his wone,
And eke also, wheras he sey the image
Of Cristes moder, had he in usage,
As him was taught, to knele adoun, and say
Ave Marie, as he goth by the way.

Thus hath this widewe hire litel sone ytaught
Our blisful Lady, Cristes moder dere,
To worship ay, and he forgate it naught:
For sely childe wol alway sone lere.
But ay, whan I remembre on this matere,
Seint Nicholas stant ever in my presence,
For he so yong to Crist did reverence.

This litel childe his litel book lerning,
As he sate in the scole at his primere,
He *Alma Redemptoris* herde sing,
As children lered hir antiphonere:
And as he dorst, he drow him nere and nere,
And herkened ay the wordes and the note,
Til he the firste vers coude al by rote.

Nought wist he what this Latin was to say,
For he so yonge and tendre was of age;
But on a day his felaw gan he pray
To expounden him this song in his langage,
Or telle him why this song was in usage:
This prayde he him to construe and declare,
Ful often time upon his knees bare.

His felaw, which that elder was than he,
Answerd him thus: "This song, I have herd say,
Was maked of our blisful Lady fre,
Hire to salue, and eke hire for to prey
To ben our help, and socour whan we dey.
I can no more expound in this matere:
I lerne song, I can but smal grammere."

"And is this song maked in reverence
Of Cristes moder?" said this innocent;
Now certes I wol don my diligence
To conne it all, or Cristemasse be went,
Though that I for my primer shall be shent,
And shal be beten thries in an houre,
I wol it conne, our Ladie for to honoure."

His felaw taught him homeward prively
Fro day to day, til he coude it by rote,
And than he song it wel and boldely
Fro word to word according with the note:
Twies a day it passed thurgh his throte,
To scoleward and homeward whan he wente:
On Cristes moder set was his entente.

As I have said, thurghout the Jewerie
This litel child as he came to and fro,
Ful merily than wold he sing and crie,
O Alma Redemptoris, ever mo:
The swetenesse hath his herte persed so
Of Cristes moder, that to hire to pray
He cannot stint of singing by the way.

Our firste fo, the serpent Sathanas,
That hath in Jewes herte his waspes nest,
Up swale and said, "O Ebraike peple, alas!
Is this to you a thing that is honest,
That swiche a boy shal walken as him leste
In your despit, and *sing* of swiche sentence,
Which is agein our lawes reverence?"

From thennesforth the Jewes han conspired
This innocent out of this world to chace:
An homicide therto han they hired,
That in an aleye had a privee place,
And as the child gan forthby for to pace,
This cursed Jew him hent, and held him fast,
And cut his throte, and in a pit him cast.

I say that in a wardrope they him threwe,
Wher as thise Jewes purgen hir entraille.
O cursed folk, of Herodes alle newe,
What may your evil entente you availle?
Mordre wol out, certein it wol not faille,
And namely ther the honour of God shal sprede:
The blood out crieth on your cursed dede.

O martyr souded in virginitee,
Now maist thou singe, and folwen ever in on
The white lamb celestial, quod she,
Of which the gret Evangelist Seint John
In Pathmos wrote, which sayth that they that gon
Before this lamb, and singe a song al newe,
That never fleshly woman they ne knewe.

This poure widewe awaiteth al that night
After hire litel childe, and he came nought:
For which as sone as it was dayes light,
With face pale of drede and besy thought,
She hath at scole and elleswher him sought,
Til finally she gan so fer aspie,
That he last seen was in the Jewerie.

With modres pitee in hire brest enclosed
She goth, as she were half out of hire minde,
To every place, wher she hath supposed
By likelihed hire litel child to finde:
And ever on Cristes moder meke and kinde
She cried, and at the laste thus she wrought,
Among the cursed Jewes she him sought.

She freyneth, and she praieth pitously
To every Jew that dwelled in thilke place,
To telle hire, if hire child went ought forthby:
They sayden, Nay; but Jesu of his grace
Yave in hire thought, within a litel space,
That in that place after hire sone she cride,
Ther he was casten in a pit beside.

O grete God, that parformest thy laude
By mouth of innocentes, lo here thy might!
This gemme of chastitee, this emeraude,
And eke of martirdome the rubie bright,
Ther he with throte ycorven lay upright,
He *Alma redemptoris* gan to singe
So loude, that all the place gan to ringe.

The Cristen folk, that thurgh the strete wente,
In comen, for to wondre upon this thing:
And hastily they for the provost sente.
He came anon withouten tarying,
And herieth Crist, that is of Heven king,
And eke his moder, honour of mankind,
And after that the Jewes let he binde.

This child with pitous lamentation
Was taken up, singing his song alway:
And with honour and gret procession,
They carien him unto the next abbey.
His moder swouning by the bere lay;
Unnethes might the peple that was there
This newe Rachel bringen fro his bere.

With turment, and with shameful deth eche on
This provost doth thise Jewes for to sterve,
That of this morder wiste, and that anon:
He n'old no swiche cursednesse observe:
Evil shal he have, that evil wol deserve.
Therfore with wilde hors he did hem drawe,
And after that he heng hem by the lawe.

Upon his bere ay lith this innocent
Beforn the auter while the masse last:
And after that, the abbot with his covent.
Had spedde hem for to berie him ful fast:
And whan they holy water on him cast,
Yet spake this child, whan spreint was the holy water,
And sang, *o Alma Redemptoris Mater.*

This abbot, which that was an holy man,
As monkes ben, or elles ought to be,
This yonge child to conjure he began,
And said; "O dere child, I halse thee
In vertue of the holy Trinitee,
Tell me what is thy cause for to sing,
Sith that thy throte is cut to my seming."

"My throte is cut unto my nekke-bon,"
Saide this child, "and as by way of kinde
I shuld have deyd, ye longe time agon:
But Jesu Crist, as ye in bookes finde,
Wol that his glory last and be in minde,
And for the worship of his moder dere,
Yet may I sing *o Alma* loude and clere.

"This welle of mercie, Cristes moder swete,
I loved alway, as after my conning:
And whan that I my lif shulde forlete,
To me she came, and bad me for to sing
This antem verayly in my dying,
As ye han herde, and, whan that I had songe,
Me thought she laid a grain upon my tonge.

"Wherfore I sing, and sing I mote certain
In honour of that blisful maiden free,
Til fro my tonge of taken is the grain.
And after that thus saide she to me;
'My litel child, than wol I fetchen thee,
Whan that the grain is fro thy tong ytake:
Be not agaste, I wol thee not forsake."

This holy monk, this abbot him mene I,
His tonge out caught, and toke away the grain;
And he yave up the gost ful softely.
And whan this abbot had this wonder sein,
His salte teres trilled adoun as reyne:
And groff he fell al platte upon the ground,
And still he lay, as he had ben ybound.

The covent lay eke upon the pavement
Weping and herying Cristes moder dere.
And after that they risen, and forth ben went,
And toke away this martir fro his bere,
And in a tombe of marble stones clere
Enclosen they his litel body swete:
Ther he is now, God lene us for to mete.

O yonge Hew of Lincoln, slain also
With cursed Jewes, as it is notable,
For it n'is but a litel while ago,
Pray eke for us, we sinful folk unstable,
That of his mercy God so merciable
On us his grete mercie multiplie,
For reverence of his moder Marie.

PROLOGUE TO SIRE THOPAS.

Whan said was this miracle, every man
As sober was, that wonder was to see,
Til that our Hoste to japen he began,
And than at erst he loked upon me,
And saide thus; "What man art thou?" quod he.
"Thou lokest, as thou woldest finde an hare,
For ever upon the ground I see thee stare.

"Approche nere, and loke up merily.
Now ware you, sires, and let this man have place.
He in the waste is shapen as wel as I:
This were a popet in an arme to enbrace
For any woman, smal and faire of face.
He semeth elvish by his contenance,
For unto no wight doth he daliance.

"Say now somwhat, sin other folk han saide;
Tell us a tale of mirthe and that anon."
"Hoste," quod I, "ne be not evil apaide,
For other tale certes can I non,
But of a rime I lerned yore agon."
"Ye, that is good," quod he, "we shullen here
Some deintee thing, me thinketh by thy chere."

THE RIME OF SIRE THOPAS.

Listeneth, lordinges, in good entent,
And I wol tell you *verament*
Of mirthe and of solas,
Al of a knight was faire and gent
In bataille and in turnament,
His name was sire Thopas.

Yborne he was in fer contree,
In Flandres, al beyonde the see,
At Popering in the place,
His father was a man ful free,
And lord he was of that contree,
As it was Goddes grace.

Sire Thopas was a doughty swain,
White was his face as paindemaine
His lippes red as rose.
His rudde is like scarlet in grain,
And I you tell in good certain
He had a semely nose.

His here, his berde, was like safroun,
That to his girdle raught adoun,
His shoon of cordewane;
Of Brugges were his hosen broun;
His robe was of cielatoun,
That coste many a jane.

He coude hunt at the wilde dere,
And ride on hauking for the rivere
With grey goshauk on honde:
Therto he was a good archere,
Of wrastling was ther non his pere,
Ther ony ram shuld stonde.

Ful many a maide bright in bour
They mourned for him *par amour*,
Whan hem were bet to slepe;
But he was chaste and no lechour,
And swete as is the bramble flour,
That bereth the red hepe,

And so it fell upon a day,
Forsoth, as I you tellen may,
Sire Thopas wold out ride;
He worth upon his stede gray,
And in his hond a launcegay,
A long sword by his side.

He priketh thurgh a faire forest,
Therin is many a wilde best,
Ye bothe buck and hare,
And as he priked north and est,
I telle it you, him had almeste
Betidde a sory care.

Ther springen herbes grete and smale,
The licoris and the setewale,
And many a clone gilofre,
And notemuge to put in ale,
Whether it be moist or stale,
Or for to lain in cofre.

The briddes singen, it is no nay,
The sperhauk and the popingay,
That joye it was to here,
The throstel cok made eke his lay,
The wode dove upon the spray
He sang ful loude and clere.

Sire Thopas fell in love-longing
Al whan he herd the throstel sing,
And priked as he were wood;
His faire stede in his priking
So swatte, that men might him wring,
His sides were al blood.

Sire Thopas eke so wery was
For priking on the softe gras,
So fiers was his corage,
That doun he laid him in that place
To maken his stede som solace,
And yaf him good forage.

"A, Seinte Mary, *benedicite*,
What aileth this love at me
To binde me so sore?
Me dremed all this night parde,
An elf-quene shal my lemman be,
And slepe under my gore.

"An elf-quene wol I love ywis,
For in this world no woman is
Worthy to be my make || in toun,—
All other women I forsake,
And to an elf-quene I me take
By dale and eke by doun."

Into his sadel he clombe anon,
And priked over stile and ston
An elf-quene for to espie,
Til he so long had ridden and gone,
That he fond in a privee wone
The contree of Faerie.

Wherin he soughte north and south,
And oft he spied with his mouth
In many a forest wilde,
For in that contree n'as ther non,
That to him dorst ride or gon,
Neither wif ne childe.

Til that ther came a gret geaunt,
His name was sire Oliphaunt,
A perilous man of dede,
He sayde, "Child, by Termagaunt,
But if thou prike out of myn haunt,
Anon I slee thy stede || with mace—
Here is the quene of Faerie.
With harpe, and pipe, and simphonie,
Dwelling in this place."

The child sayd, "Al so mote I the,
To morwe wol I meten thee,
Whan I have min armoure,
And yet I hope *par ma fay*,
That thou shalt with this launcegay
Abien it ful soure; || thy mawe—
Shal I perce, if I may,
Or it be fully prime of the day,
For here thou shalt be slawe."

Sire Thopas drow abak ful fast;
This geaunt at him stones cast
Out of a fel staffe sling:
But faire escaped child Thopas.
And all it was thurgh Goddes grace,
And thurgh his faire bering.

Yet listeneth, lordings, to my tale,
Merier than the nightingale,
For now I wol you roune,
How sire Thopas with sides smale,
Priking over hill and dale,
Is comen agein to toune.

His mery men commandeth he,
To maken him bothe game and gle,
For nedes must he fighte,
With a geaunt with hedes three,
For paramour and jolitee
Of on that shone ful brighte.

"Do come," he sayd, "my minestrales
And gestours for to tellen tales
Anon in min arming,
Of romaunces that ben reales,
Of popes and of cardinales,
And eke of love-longing."

They fet him first the swete win,
And mede eke in a maselin,
And real spicerie,
Of ginger-bred that was ful fin,
And licoris and eke comin,
With suger that is trie.

He didde next his white lere
Of cloth of lake fin and clere
A breche and eke a sherte,
And next his shert an haketon,
And over that an habergeon,
For percing of his herte,

And over that a fin hauberk,
Was all ywrought of Jewes werk,
Ful strong it was of plate,
And over that his cote-armoure,
As white as is the lily floure,
In which he wold debate.

His sheld was all of gold so red,
And therin was a bores hed,
A charboucle beside;
And ther he swore on ale and bred
How that the geaunt shuld be ded,
Betide what so betide.

His jambeux were of cuirbouly,
His swerdes sheth of ivory,
His helme of latoun bright,
His sadel was of rewel bone,
His bridel as the sonne-shone,
Or as the mone-light.

His spere was of fin cypres,
That bodeth werre, and nothing pees,
The hed ful sharpe yground.
His stede was all dapple gray,
It goth an aumble in the way
Ful softely and round || in londe—
Lo, lordes min, here is a fit;
If ye wol ony more of it,
To telle it wol I fond.

Now hold your mouth *pour charite*,
Bothe knight and lady fre,
And herkeneth to my spell,
Of bataille and of chevalrie,
Of ladies love and druerie,
Anon I wol you tell.

Men speken of romaunces of pris,
Of Hornchild, and of Ipotis,
Of Bevis, and sire Guy,
Of sire Libeux, and Pleindamour,
But sire Thopas, he bereth the flour
Of real chevalrie.

His goode stede he al bestrode,
And forth upon his way he glode,
As sparcle out of bronde;
Upon his crest he bare a tour,
And therin stiked a lily flour,
God shilde his corps fro shonde.

And for he was a knight auntrous,
He n'olde slepen in non'hous,
But liggen in his hood,
His brighte helm was his wanger,
And by him baited his destrer
Of herbes fin and good.

Himself drank water of the well,
As did the knight sire Percivell
So worthy under wede,
Til on a day———

PROLOGUE TO MELIBEUS.

"No more of this for Goddes dignitee,"
Quod oure Hoste, "for thou makest me
So wery of thy veray lewednesse,
That al so wisly God my soule blesse,
Min eres aken of thy drafty speche.
Now swiche a rime the devil I betechе;
This may wel be rime dogerel," quod he.
"Why so?" quod I, "why wolt thou letten me
More of my tale, than an other man,
Sin that it is the beste rime I can?"
"By God," quod he, "for plainly, at o word,
Thy drafty riming is not worth a tord:
Thou dost nought elles but dispendest time.
Sire, at o word, thou shalt no lenger rime,
Let see wher thou canst tellen ought in geste,
Or tellen in prose somwhat at the leste,
In which ther be som mirthe or som doctrine."
"Gladly," quod I, "by Goddes swete pine
I wol you tell a litel thing in prose,
That oughte liken you, as I suppose,
Or elles certes ye be to dangerous.
It is a moral tale vertuous,
Al be it told somtime in sondry wise
Of sondry folk, as I shal you devise.
"As thus, ye wote that every Evangelist,
That telleth us the peine of Jesu Crist,
Ne saith not alle thing as his felaw doth:
But natheles hir sentence is al soth,
And alle accorden as in hir sentence,
Al be ther in hir telling difference:
For som of hem say more, and som say lesse,
Whan they his pitous passion expresse;
I mene of Mark and Mathew, Luke and John,
But douteles hir sentence is all on.
Therfore, lordinges all, I you beseche,
If that ye thinke I vary in my speche,
As thus, though that I telle som del more
Of proverbes, than ye han herde before
Comprehended in this litel tretise here,
To enforcen with the effect of my matere,
And though I not the same wordes say
As ye han herde, yet to you alle I pray
Blameth me not, for, as in my sentence,
Shul ye nowher finden no difference
Fro the sentence of thilke tretise lite,
After the which this mery tale I write.
And therfore herkeneth what I shal say,
And let me tellen all my tale I pray."

THE TALE OF MELIBEUS.

A YONGE man called Melibeus, mighty and riche, begate upon his wif, that called was Prudence, a doughter, which that called was Sophie.

Upon a day befell, that he for his disport is went into the feldes him to playe. His wif and eke his doughter hath he laft within his hous, of which the dores weren fast yshette. Foure of his olde foes han it espied, and setten ladders to the walles of his hous, and by the windowes ben entred, and beten his wif, and wounded his doughter with five mortal woundes, in five sondry places; this is to say, in hire feet, in hire hondes, in hire eres, in hire nose, and in hire mouth; and lefte hire for dede, and wenten away.

Whan Melibeus retorned was into his house, and sey al this meschief, he, like a mad man, rending his clothes, gan to wepe and crie.

Prudence his wif, as fer forth as she dorste, besought him of his weping for to stint: but not forthy he gan to crie and wepen ever lenger the more.

This noble wif Prudence remembred hire upon the sentence of Ovide, in his boek that cleped is the Remedie of Love, wheras he saith: 'He is a foot that distourbeth the moder to wepe, in the deth of hire childe, til she have wept hire fille, as for a

certain time: and than shal a man don his diligence with amiable wordes hire to reconforte and preye hire of hire weping for to stinte.' For which reson this noble wif Prudence suffred hire housbond for to wepe and crie, as for a certain space: and whan she saw hire time, she sayde to him in this wise. "Alas! my lord," quod she, "why make ye yourself for to be like a fool? Forsothe it apperteineth not to a wise man, to maken swiche a sorwe. Youre doughter, with the grace of God, shal warish and escape. And al were it so that she right now were dede, ye ne ought not as for hire deth youreself to destroye. Senek saith; 'The wise man shal not take to gret discomfort for the deth of his children, but certes he shulde suffren it in patience, as wel as he abideth the deth of his owen propre persone."

This Melibeus answered anon and saide, "What man" (quod he) "shulde of his weping stinte, that hath so gret a cause for to wepe? Jesu Crist, our Lord, himself wepte for the deth of Lazarus his frend." Prudence answered, "Certes wel I wote, attempre weping is nothing defended, to him that sorweful is, among folk in sorwe, but it is rather graunted him to wepe. The Apostle Poule unto the Romaines writeth; 'Man shal rejoyce with hem that maken joye, and wepen with swiche folk as wepen.' But though attempre weping be ygranted, outrageous weping certes is defended. Mesure of weping shulde be considered, after the lore that techeth us Senek. 'Whan that thy frend is dede (quod he) let not thin eyen to moiste ben of teres, ne to muche drie: although the teres comen to thin eyen, let hem not falle. And whan thou hast forgon thy frend, do diligence to get agein another frend: and this is more wisdom than for to wepe for thy frend, which that thou hast lorne, for therin is no bote.' And therfore if ye governe you by sapience, put away sorwe out of youre herte. Remembreth you that Jesus Sirak sayth; 'A man that is joyous and glad in herte, it him conserveth florishing in his age: but sothly a sorweful herte maketh his bones drie.' He saith eke thus, that 'sorwe in herte sleeth ful many a man.' Salomon sayth, that 'right as mouthes in the shepes fleese anoien to the clothes, and the smale wormes to the tree, right so anoieth sorwe to the herte of man.' Wherfore us ought as wel in the deth of oure children, as in the losse of oure goodes temporel, have patience.'

"Remembre you upon the patient Job, whan he hadde lost his children and his temporel substaunce, and in his body endured and received ful many a grevous tribulation, yet sayde he thus: 'Our Lord hath yeve it to me, oure Lord hath beraft it me; right as oure Lord hath wold, right so is it don; yblessed be the name of oure Lord.' To thise foresaide thinges answered Melibeus unto his wif Prudence: "All thy wordes" (quod he) "ben trewe, and therto profitable, but trewely min herte is troubled with this sorwe so grevously, that I n'ot what to don."—"Let calle" (quod Prudence) "thyn trewe frendes alle, and thy linage, which that ben wise, and telleth to hem your cas, and herkeneth what they saye in conseilling, and governe you after hir sentence. Salomon saith, 'Werke all thinges by conseil, and thou shalt never repente.'

Than, by conseil of his wif Prudence, this Melibeus let callen a gret congregation of folk, as surgiens, phisiciens, olde folk and yonge, and som of his olde enemies reconciled (as by hir semblant) to his love and to his grace: and therwithal ther comen some of his neigheboures, that diden him reverence more for drede than for love, as it happeth oft. Ther comen also ful many subtil flaterers, and wise advocats lerned in the lawe.

And whan thise folk togeder assembled weren, this Melibeus in sorweful wise shewed hem his cas, and by the manere of his speche, it semed that in herte he bare a cruel ire, redy to don vengeaunce upon his foes, and sodeinly desired that the werre shulde beginne, but natheles yet axed he his conseil upon this matere. A surgien, by licence and assent of swiche as weren wise, up rose, and unto Melibeus sayde, as ye moun here.

"Sire," (quod he) "as to us surgiens apperteineth, that we do to every wight the beste that we can, wher as we ben withholden, and to our patient that we do no damage: wherfore it happeth many time and ofte, that whan twey men han everich wounded other, o same surgien heleth hem both, wherfore unto our art it is not pertinent to norice werre, ne parties to supporte. But certes, as to the warishing of youre doughter, al be it so that perilously she be wounded, we shuln do so ententif besinesse fro day to night, that with the grace of God, she shal be hole and sound, as sone as is possible." Almost right in the same wise the phisiciens answerden, save that they saiden a fewe wordes more: that right as maladies ben cured by hir contraries, right so shal man warishe werre. His neigheboures ful of envie, his feined frendes that semed reconciled, and his flaterers, maden semblant of weping, and empeired and agregged muchel of this matere, in preysing gretly Melibee of might, of power, of richesse, and of frendes, despising the power of his adversaries: and saiden outrely, that he anon shulde wreken him on his foes, and beginnen werre.

Up rose than an advocat that was wise, by leve and by conseil of other that were wise, and sayde: "Lordinges, the nede for the which we ben assembled in this place, is a ful hevie thing, and an heigh matere, because of the wrong and of the wikkednesse that hath be don, and eke by reson of the grete damages, that in time coming ben possible to fallen for the same cause, and eke by reson of the gret richesse, and power of the parties bothe, for the which resons, it were a ful gret peril to erren in this matere. Wherfore, Melibeus, this is oure sentence; we conseille you, aboven alle thing, that right anon thou do thy diligence in keping of thy propre persone, in swiche a wise that thou ne want non espie ne watche, thy body for to save. And after that, we conseille that in thin hous thou sette suffisant garnison, so that they moun as wel thy body as thy hous defende. But certes for to meeven werre, ne sodenly for to do vengeaunce, we moun not deme in so litel time that it were profitable. Wherfore we axen leiser and space to have deliberation in this cas to deme; for the comune proverbe saith thus; 'he that sone demeth, sone shal repente.' And eke men sain, that thilke juge is wise, that sone understondeth a matere, and jugeth by leiser. For al be it so, that al tarying be anoiful, algates it is not to repreve in yeving of jugement, ne in vengeance taking, whan it is suffisant and resonable. And that shewed our Lord Jesu Crist by ensample, for whan that the woman

that was taken in advoutrie, was brought in his presence to knowen what shuld be don with hire persone, al be it that he wist wel himself what that he wolde answere, yet ne wolde he not answere sodeinly, but he wolde have deliberation, and in the ground he wrote twies; and by thise causes we axen deliberation: and we shuln than by the grace of God conseille the thing that shal be profitable."

Up sterte than the yonge folk at ones, and the most partie of that compagnie han scorned this olde wise man, and begonnen to make noise and saiden; "Right so as while that iren is hot men shulde smite, right so men shuln do wreken hir wronges, while that they ben freshe and newe:" and with loude voys they criden "werre, werre." Up rose tho on of thise olde wise, and with his hand made countenaunce that men shuld holde hem stille, and yeve him audience. "Lordinges," (quod he) "ther is ful many a man that crieth werre, werre, that wote ful litel what werre amounteth. Werre at his beginning hath so gret an entring and so large, that every wight may enter whan him liketh, and lightly find werre: but certes what end that shal befalle, it is not light to know. For sothly whan that werre is ones begonne, ther is ful many a child unborne of his moder, that shal sterve yong, by cause of thilke werre, other elles live in sorwe, and dien in wretchednesse: and therfore or that any werre be begonne, men must have gret conseil and gret deliberation." And whan this olde man wende to enforcen his tale by resons, wel nie alle at ones begonne they to rise, for to breken his tale, and bidden him ful oft his wordes for to abregge. For sothly he that precheth to hem that listen not heren his wordes, his sermon hem anoieth. For Jesus Sirak sayth, that musike in weping is a noious thing. This is to sayn, as muche availleth to speke beforn folk to which his speche anoieth, as to singe beforne him that wepeth. And whan this wise man saw that him wanted audience, al shamefast he sette him doun agein. For Salomon saith: 'Ther as thou ne mayst have non audience, enforce thee not to speke.' "I see wel," (quod this wise man) "that the commune proverbe is soth, that good conseil wanteth, whan it is most nede."

Yet had this Melibeus in his conseil many folk, that prively in his ere conseilled him certain thing, and conseilled him the contrary in general audience. Whan Melibeus had herd that the gretest partie of his conseil were accorded that he shulde make werre, anon he consented to hir conseilling, and fully affermed hir sentence. Than dame Prudence, whan that she saw how that hire hosbonde shope him for to awreke him on his foos, and to beginne werre, she in ful humble wise, whan she saw hire time, sayde him these wordes: "My lord," (quod she) "I you beseche as hertly as I dare and can, ne haste you not to faste, and for alle guerdons as yeve me audience. For Piers Alphonse sayth; 'Who so that doth to thee outher good or harme, haste thee not to quite it, for in this wise thy frend wol abide, and thin enemie shal the lenger live in drede.' The proverbe sayth; 'he hasteth wel that wisely can abide: and in wikked hast is no profite."

This Melibee answered unto his wif Prudence: "I purpose not" (quod he) "to werken by thy conseil, for many causes and resons: for certes every wight wold hold me than a fool; this is to sayn, if I for thy conseilling wolde change thinges, that ben ordeined and affirmed by so many wise men. Secondly, I say, that all women ben wicke, and non good of hem all. 'For of a thousand men,' saith Salomon, 'I found o good man: but certes of alle women good woman found I never.' And also certes, if I governed me by thy conseil, it shulde seme that I had yeve thee over me the maistrie: and God forbede that it so were. For Jesus Sirak sayth, that 'if the wif have the maistrie, she is contrarious to hire husbond.' And Salomon sayth; 'Never in thy lif to thy wif, ne to thy childe, ne to thy frend, ne yeve no power over thyself: for better it were that thy children axe of thee thinges that hem nedeth, than thou see thy self in the handes of thy children.' And also if I wol werche by thy conseilling, certes it must be somtime secree, til it were time that it be knowen: and this ne may not be, if I shulde be conseilled by thee. [For it is written; 'The janglerie of women ne can no thing hide, save that which they wote not.' After the philosophre saith; 'In wikked conseil women venquishen men:' and for thise resons I ne owe not to be conseilled by thee."]

Whan dame Prudence, ful debonairly and with gret pacience, had herd all that hire husbonde liked for to say, than axed she of him licence for to speke, and sayde in this wise. "My lord," (quod she) "as to your first reson, it may lightly ben answerd: for I say that it is no folie to chaunge conseil whan the thing is chaunged, or elles whan the thing semeth otherwise than it semed afore. And moreover I say, though that ye have sworne and behight to performe your emprise, and nevertheles ye weive to performe thilke same emprise by just cause, men shuld not say therfore ye were a fyer, ne forsworn: for the book sayth, that 'the wise man maketh no lesing, whan he turneth his corage for the better.' And al be it that your emprise be established and ordeined by gret multitude of folk, yet thar you not accomplish thilke ordinance but you liketh: for the trouthe of thinges, and the the profit, ben rather founden in fewe folk that ben wise and ful of reson, than by gret multitude of folk, ther every man cryeth and clattereth what him liketh: sothly swiche multitude is not honest. As to the second reson, wheras ye say, that alle women ben wicke: save your grace, certes ye despise alle women in this wise, and 'he that all despiseth,' as saith the book, 'all displeseth.' And Senek saith, that 'who so wol have sapience, shal no man dispreise, but he shal gladly teche the science that he can, without presumption or pride: and swiche thinges as he nought can, he shal not ben ashamed to lere hem, and to enquere of lesse folk than himself.' And, sire, that ther hath ben ful many a good woman, may lightly be preved: for certes, sire, our Lord Jesu Crist n'olde never han descended to be borne of a woman, if all women had be wicked. And after that, for the gret bountee that is in women, our Lord Jesu Crist, whan he was risen from deth to lif, appered rather to a woman than to his Apostles. And though that Salomon sayde, he found never no good woman, it folweth not therfore, that all women be wicked: for though that he ne found no good woman, certes many another man hath founde many a woman ful good and trewe. Or elles peraventure the entent of Salomon was this, that in soveraine bountee he found no woman; this is to say, that ther is no

wight that hath soveraine bountee, save God alone, as he himself recordeth in his Evangelies. For ther is no creature so good, that him ne wanteth somwhat of the perfection of God that is his maker. Youre thridde reson is this; ye say that if that ye governe you by my conseil, it shulde seme that ye had yeve me the maistrie and the lordship of your person. Sire, save your grace, it is not so; for if so were that no man shulde be conseilled but only of hem that han lordship and maistrie of his person, men n'olde not be conseilled so often: for sothly thilke man that asketh conseil of a purpos, yet hath he free chois whether he wol werke after that conseil or non. And as to your fourth reson, ther as ye sain that the janglerie of women can hide thinges that they wot not; as who so sayth, that a woman can not hide that she wote; sire, thise wordes ben understonde of women that ben jangleresses and wicked; of which women men sain that three thinges driven a man out of his hous, that is to say, smoke, dropping of raine, and wicked wives. And of swiche women Salomon sayth, that 'a man were better dwell in desert, than with a woman that is riotous.' And sire, by your leve, that am not I; for ye have ful often assaied my gret silence and my gret patience, and eke how wel that I can hide and hele thinges, that men oughten secretly to hiden. And sothly as to your fifthe reson, wheras ye say, that in wicked conseil women venquishen men; God wote that thilke reson stant here in no stede: for understondeth now, ye axen conseil for to do wickednesse; and if ye wol werken wickednesse, and your wif restraineth thilke wicked purpos, and overcometh you by reson and by good conseil, certes your wif ought rather to be preised than to be blamed. Thus shulde ye understonde the philosophre that sayth, 'In wicked conseil women venquishen hir husbondes.' And ther as ye blamen all women and hir resons, I shal shewe you by many ensamples, that many women have ben ful good, and yet ben, and hir conseil holesome and profitable. Eke som men han sayd, that 'the conseil of women is either to dere, or elles to litel of pris.' But al be it so that ful many a woman be bad, and hire conseil vile and nought worth, yet han men founden ful many a good woman, and discrete and wise in conseilling. Lo, Jacob, thurgh the good conseil of his mother Rebecke, wan the benison of his father, and the lordship over all his brethren. Judith, by hire good conseil, delivered the citee of Bethulie, in which she dwelt, out of the honde of Holofern, that had it beseged, and wolde it al destroye. Abigail delivered Nabal hire housbond fro David the king, that wolde han slain him, and appesed the ire of the king by hire wit, and by hire good conseilling. Hester by hire conseil enhaunced gretly the peple of God, in the regne of Assuerus the king. And the same bountee in good conseilling of many a good woman moun men rede and tell. And further more, whan that oure Lord had created Adam oure forme father, he sayd in this wise; 'It is not good to be a man allone: make we to him an helpe semblable to himself.' Here moun ye see that if women weren not good, and hir conseil good and profitable, oure Lord God of Heven wolde neither han wrought hem, ne called hem helpe of man, but rather confusion of man. And ther sayd a clerk ones in two vers; 'What is better than gold? Jaspre.—What is better than jaspre? Wisdom.—And what is better than wisdom? Woman.—And what is better than a good woman? Nothing.' And, sire, by many other resons moun ye seen, that many women ben good, and hir conseil good and profitable. And therfore, sire, if ye wol troste to my conseil, I shal restore you your doughter hole and sound: and I wol don to you so muche, that ye shuln have honour in this cas."

Whan Melibee had herd the wordes of his wif Prudence, he sayd thus: "I se wel that the word of Salomon is soth; for he saith, that 'wordes, that ben spoken discretly by ordinaunce, ben honiecombes, for they yeven swetenesse to the soule, and holsomnesse to the body.' And, wif, because of thy swete wordes, and eke for I have preved and assaied thy grete sapience and thy grete trouthe, I wol governe me by thy conseil in alle thing."

"Now, sire," (quod dame Prudence) "and sin that ye vouchesafe to be governed by my conseil, I wol enforme you how that ye shuln governe yourself, in chesing of youre conseillours. Ye shuln first in alle your werkes mekely besechen to the heigh God, that he wol be your conseillour: and shapeth you to swiche entente that he yeve you conseil and comforte, as taught Tobie his sone; 'At alle times thou shalt blesse God, and preie him to dresse thy wayes; and loke that alle thy conseils ben in him for evermore.' Seint James eke sayth; 'If any of you have nede of sapience, axe it of God.' And afterwarde, than shulen ye take conseil in yourself, and examine wel your owen thoughtes, of swiche thinges as you thinketh that ben best for your profit. And than shuln ye drive fro your herte three thinges that ben contrarious to good conseil; that is to sayn, ire, coveitise, and hastinesse.

"First, he that axeth conseil of himself, certes he must be withouten ire, for many causes. The first is this: he that hath gret ire and wrath in himself, he weneth alway that he may do thing that he may not do. And secondly, he that is irous and wroth, he may not wel deme: and he that may not wel deme, may not wel conseille. The thirdde is this; 'he that is irous and wroth,' as sayth Senek, 'ne may not speke but blameful thinges, and with his vicious wordes he stirreth other folk to anger and to ire'. And eke, sire, ye must drive coveitise out of your herte. For the apostle sayth, that 'coveitise is the rote of alle harmes.' And trosteth wel, that a coveitous man ne can not deme ne thinke, but only to fulfille the ende of his covetise; and certes that ne may never ben accomplised; for ever the more haboundance that he hath of richesse, the more he desireth. And, sire, ye must also drive out of youre herte hastinesse: for certes ye ne moun not deme for the beste a soden thought that falleth in youre herte, but ye must avise you on it ful ofte: for as ye have herde herebeforn, the commune proverbe is this; 'He that sone demeth, sone repenteth.'

"Sire, ye ne be not alway in like disposition, for certes som thing that somtime semeth to you that it is good for to do, another time it semeth to you the contrarie.

"And whan ye han taken conseil in yourself, and han demed by good deliberation swiche thing as you semeth beste, than rede I you that ye kepe it secree. Bewreye not your conseil to no persone, but if so be that ye wenen sikerly, that thurgh

youre bewreying your condition shal ben to you more profitable. For Jesus Sirak saith: 'Neither to thy foo ne to thy frend discover not thy secree, ne thy folie: for they woln yeve you audience and loking, and supportation in youre presence, and scorne you in youre absence.' Another clerk sayth, that 'scarsly shalt thou finden any persone that may kepe thy conseil secrely. The book sayth; 'While that thou kepest thy conseil in thin herte, thou kepest it in thy prison: and whan thou bewreyest thy conseil to any wight, he holdeth thee in his snare.' And therfore you is better to hide your conseil in your herte, than to preye him to whom ye han bewreyed your conseil, that he wol kepe it close and stille. For Seneca sayth: 'If so be that thou ne mayst not thin owen conseil hide, how darest thou preyen any other wight thy conseil secretly to kepe?' But natheles, if thou wene sikerly that thy bewreying of thy conseil to a persone wol make thy condition to stonden in the better plight, than shalt thou telle him thy conseil in this wise. First, thou shalt make no semblant whether thee were lever pees or werre, or this or that; ne shewe him not thy will ne thin entente: for troste wel that communly these conseillours ben flaterers, namely the conseillours of grete lordes, for they enforcen hem alway rather to speken plesant wordes enclining to the lordes lust, than wordes that ben trewe or profitable: and therfore men sayn, that 'the riche man hath selde good conseil, but if he have it of himself.' And after that thou shalt consider thy frendes and thin enemies. And as touching thy frendes, thou shalt consider which of hem ben most feithful and most wise, and eldest and most appreved in conseilling: and of hem shalt thou axe thy conseil, as the cas requireth.

"I say, that first ye shuln clepe to youre conseil youre frendes that ben trewe. For Salomon saith: that 'right as the herte of a man deliteth in savour that is swote, right so the conseil of trewe frendes yeveth swetenesse to the soule.' He sayth also, 'Ther may nothing be likened to the trewe frend: for certes gold ne silver ben not so muche worth as the good will of a trewe frend.' And eke he sayth, that 'a trewe frend is a strong defence; who so that it findeth, certes he findeth a gret tresor.' Than shuln ye eke consider if that your trewe frendes ben discrete and wise: for the book saith, 'Axe alway thy conseil of hem that ben wise.' And by this same reson shuln ye clepen to youre conseil youre frendes that ben of age, swiche as han seyn and ben expert in many thinges, and ben appreved in conseillinges. For the book sayth, 'In olde men is al the sapience, and in longe time the prudence.' And Tullius sayth, that 'grete thinges ne ben not ay accomplised by strengthe, ne by delivernesse of body, but by good conseil, by authoritee of persones, and by science: the which three thinges ne ben not feble by age, but certes they enforcen and encresen day by day.' And than shuln ye kepe this for a general reule. First ye shuln clepe to youre conseil a fewe of youre frendes that ben especial. For Salomon saith; 'Many frendes have thou, but among a thousand chese thee on to be thy conseillour.' For al be it so, that thou first ne telle thy conseil but to a fewe, thou mayest afterwarde tell it to mo folk, if it be nede. But loke alway that thy conseillours have thilke three conditions that I have sayd before; that is to say, that they be trewe, wise, and of olde experience. And werke not alway in every nede by on conseillour allone: for somtime behoveth it to be conseilled by many. For Salomon sayth; 'Salvation of thinges is wher as ther ben many conseillours.'

"Now sith that I have told you of which folk ye shulde be conseilled: now wol I teche you which conseil ye ought to eschue. First ye shuln eschue the conseilling of fooles; for Salomon sayth, 'Take no conseil of a fool: for he ne can conseille but after his owen lust and his affection.' The book sayth, 'The propretee of a fool is this: he troweth lightly harme of every man, and lightly troweth all bountee in himself.' Thou shalt eke eschue the conseilling of all flaterers, swiche as enforcen hem rather to preisen youre persone by flaterie, than for to tell you the sothfastnesse of thinges.

"Wherfore Tullius sayth, 'Among alle the pestilences that ben in freendship, the gretest is flaterie.' And therfore it is more nede that thou eschue and drede flaterers, than any other peple. The book saith, 'Thou shalt rather drede and flee fro the swete wordes of flatering preisers, than fro the egre wordes of thy frend that saith thee sothes.' Salomon saith, that 'the wordes of a flaterer is a snare to cacchen innocents'. He sayth also, 'He that speketh to his frend wordes of swetenesse and of plesaunce, he setteth a net beforne his feet to cacchen him.' And therfore sayth Tullius, 'Encline not thin eres to flaterers, ne take no conseil of wordes of flaterie.' And Caton sayth, 'Avise thee wel, and eschue wordes of swetenesse and of plesaunce.' And eke thou shalt eschue the conseilling of thin olde enemies that ben reconciled. The book sayth, that 'no wight retourneth safely into the grace of his olde enemie.' And Ysope saith, 'Ne trost not to hem, to which thou hast somtime had werre or enmitee, ne telle hem not thy conseil.' And Senek telleth the cause why. 'It may not be,' saith he, 'ther as gret fire hath long time endured, that ther ne dwelleth som vapour of warmnesse.' And therfore saith Salomon, 'In thin olde foo trost thou never.' For sikerly, though thin enemie be reconciled, and maketh thee chere of humilitee, and louteth to thee with his hed, ne trost him never: for certes he maketh thilke feined humilitee more for his profite, than for any love of thy persone; because that he deemeth to have victorie over thy persone by swiche feined contenance, the which victorie he might not have by strif of werre. And Peter Alphonse sayth; 'Make no felawship with thin olde enemies, for if thou do hem bountee, they wollen perverten it to wickednesse." And eke thou must eschue the conseilling of hem that ben thy servaunts, and beren thee gret reverence: for paraventure they fein it more for drede than for love. And therfore saith a philosophre in this wise: 'Ther is no wight parfitly trewe to him that he to sore dredeth.' And Tullius sayth, 'Ther n'is no might so gret of any emperour that longe may endure, but if he have more love of the peple than drede.' Thou shalt also eschue the conseilling of folk that ben dronkelewe, for they ne can no conseil hide. For Salomon sayth, 'Ther n'is no privetee ther as regneth dronkennesse.' Ye shuln also have in suspect the conseilling of swiche folk as conseille you o thing prively, and conseille you the contrarie openly. For Cassiodore sayth, that 'it is a manere sleighte to hinder his enemy whan he sheweth to don a thing openly, and werketh prively the contrary.' Thou shalt also have in

suspect the conseilling of wicked folk, for hir conseil is alway ful of fraude. And David sayth; 'Blisful is that man that hath not folwed the conseilling of shrewes.' Thou shalt also eschue the conseilling of yonge folk, for hir conseilling is not ripe, as Salomon saith.

"Now, sire, sith I have shewed you of which folk ye shullen take youre conseil, and of which folk ye shullen eschue the conseil, now wol I teche you how ye shuln examine your conseil after the doctrine of Tullius. In examining than of your conseillours, ye shuln considre many thinges. Alderfirst thou shalt considre that in thilke thing that thou purposest, and upon what thing that thou wolt have conseil, that veray trouthe be said and conserved; this is to say, telle trewely thy tale: for he that sayth false, may not wel be conseilled in that cas, of which he lieth. And after this, thou shalt considre the thinges that accorden to that thou purposest for to do by thy conseillours, if resen accord therto, and eke if thy might may atteine therto, and if the more part and the better part of thin conseillours accorden therto or no. Than shalt thou considre what thing shal folwe of that conseilling; as hate, pees, werre, grace, profite, or domage, and many other thinges: and in alle thinges thou shalt chese the beste, and weive alle other thinges. Than shalt thou considre of what roote is engendred the matere of thy conseil, and what fruit it may conceive and engendre. Thou shalt eke considre alle the causes, from whennes they ben sprongen. And whan thou hast examined thy conseil, as I have said, and which partie is the better and more profitable, and hast appreved it by many wise folk and olde, than shalt thou considre, if thou mayst performe it and maken of it a good ende. For certes reson wol not that any man shulde beginne a thing, but if he mighte performe it as him oughte: ne no wight shulde take upon him so hevy a charge, that he might not beren it. For the proverbe sayth; 'He that to muche embraceth distreineth litel.' And Caton saith; 'Assay to do swiche thinges as thou hast power to don, lest the charge oppresse thee so sore, that thee behoveth to weive thing that thou hast begonne.' And if so be that thou be in doute, whether thou mayst performe a thing or non, chese rather to suffre than to beginne.' And Peter Alphonse sayth; 'If thou hast might to don a thing, of which thou must repente, it is better nay than ya:' this is to sayn, that thee is better to holde thy tonge stille than for to speke. Than mayst thou understonde by stronger resons, that if thou hast power to performe a werk, of which thou shalt repente, than is thee better that thou suffre than beginne. Wel sain they that defenden every wight to assaye a thing of which he is in doute, whether he may performe it or non. And after whan ye han examined youre conseil, as I have said before, and knowen wel that ye moun performe your emprise, conferme it than sadly til it be at an ende.

"Now is it reson and time that I shewe you whan, and wherfore, that ye moun chaunge your conseil, withouten repreve. Sothly, a man may change his purpos and his conseil, if the cause ceseth, or whan a newe cas betideth. For the lawe saith, that 'upon thinges that newly betiden, behoveth newe conseil.' And Seneca sayth; 'If thy conseil is comen to the eres of thin enemies, chaunge thy conseil.' Thou mayst also chaunge thy conseil, if so be that thou find that by errour, or by other cause, harme or damage may betide. Also if thy conseil be dishoneste, other elles come of dishoneste cause, chaunge thy conseil: for the lawes sain, that 'all behestes that ben dishoneste ben of no value:' and eke, if so be that it be impossible, or may not goodly be performed or kept.

"And take this for a general reule, that every conseil that is affermed so strongly, that it may not be chaunged for no condition that may betide, I say that thilke conseil is wicked."

This Melibeus, whan he had herd the doctrine of his wif dame Prudence, answered in this wise. "Dame," quod he, "as yet unto this time ye han wel and covenably taught me, as in general, how I shal governe me in the chesing and in the withholding of my conseillours; but now wold I fain that ye wold condescend in especial, and telle me how liketh you, or what semeth you by oure conseillours that we han chosen in our present nede."

"My lord," quod she, "I beseche you in alle humblesse, that ye wol not wilfully replie agein my resons, ne distempre your herte, though I speke thing that you displese; for God wote that, as in min entente, I speke it for your beste, for youre honour and for youre profite eke, and sothly I hope that youre benignitee wol taken it in patience. And trosteth me wel," quod she, "that youre conseil as in this cas ne shulde not (as to speke proprely) be called a conseilling, but a motion or a meving of folie, in which conseil ye han erred in many a sondry wise.

"First and forward, ye han erred in the assembling of youre conseillours; for ye sholde first han cleped a fewe folk to youre conseil, and after ye mighte han shewed it to mo folk, if it hadde be nede. But certes ye han sodeinly cleped to your conseil a gret multitude of peple, ful chargeant and ful anoyous for to here. Also ye han erred, for ther as ye shulde han only cleped to youre conseile youre trewe frendes, olde and wise, ye han cleped straunge folk, yonge folk, false flaterers, and enemies reconciled, and folk that don you reverence withouten love. And eke ye han erred, for ye han brought with you to youre conseil ire, coveitise, and hastifnesse, the which three thinges ben contrary to every conseil honest and profitable: the which three thinges ye ne han not amientissed or destroyed, neither in youreself ne in youre conseillours, as you ought. Ye han erred also, for ye han shewed to youre conseillours youre talent and youre affections to make werre anon, and for to do vengeaunce, and they han espied by youre wordes to what thing ye ben enclined: and therfore han they conseilled you rather to youre talent, than to youre profite. Ye han erred also, for it semeth that you sufficeth to han ben conseilled by thise conseillours only, and with litel avis, wheras in so high and so gret a nede, it had ben necessarie mo conseillours, and more deliberation to performe your emprise. Ye han erred also, for ye han not examined your conseil in the foresaid manere, ne in due manere, as the cas requireth. Ye han erred also, for ye han maked no division betwix youre conseillours; this is to sayn, betwix youre trewe frendes and youre feined conseillours: ne ye han not knowe the wille of your frendes, olde and wise, but ye han cast alle hir wordes in an hochepot, and enclined your herte to the more part and to the greter nombre, and ther be ye condescended; and sith ye wot wel that

men shuln alway finde a greter nombre of fooles than of wise men, and therfore the conseillings that ben at congregations and multitude of folk, ther as men take more regard to the nombre, than to the sapience of persones, ye seen wel, that in swiche conseillings fooles han the maistrie." Melibeus answered and said agein: "I graunte wel that I have erred; but ther as thou hast told me herebeforne, that he n'is not to blame that chaungeth his conseil in certain cas, and for certain and just causes, I am al redy to chaunge my conseil right as thou wolt devise. The proverbe sayth; 'for to don sinne is mannish, but certes for to persevere long in sinne is werke of the divel."

To this sentence answered anon dame Prudence, and saide; "Examineth" (quod she) "wel your conseil, and let us see the which of hem han spoken most resonably, and taught you best conseil. And for as much as the examination is necessarie, let us beginne at the surgiens and at the physiciens, that first spaken in this mater. I say that physiciens and surgiens han sayde you in youre conseil discretly, as hem oughte: and in hir speche saiden ful wisely, that to the office of hem apperteineth to don to every wight honour and profite, and no wight to anoye, and after hir craft to don gret diligence unto the cure of hem which that they han in hir governaunce. And, sire, right as they han answered wisely and discretly, right so rede I that they be highly and soverainly guerdoned for hir noble speche, and eke for they shulden do the more ententif besinesse in the curation of thy dere doughter. For al be it so that they ben your frendes, therfore shullen ye not suffren, that they serve you for nought, but ye oughte the rather guerdone hem, and shewe hem youre largesse. And as touching the proposition, which the physiciens entreteden in this cas, this it to sain, that in maladies, that a contrarie is warished by another contrarie: I wold fain knowe how ye understonde thilke text, and what is youre sentence," "Certes," quod Melibeus, "I understonde it in this wise; that right as they han don me a contrarie, right so shulde I don hem another; for right as they han venged hem upon me and don me wrong, right so shall I venge me upon hem, and don hem wrong, and than have I cured a contrarie by another."

"Lo, lo," quod dame Prudence, "how lightly is every man enclined to his owen desire and his owen plesaunce! Certes" (quod she) "the wordes of the physiciens ne shulden not han ben understonden in that wise; for certes wickednesse is not contrarie to wickednesse, ne vengeaunce to vengeaunce, ne wrong to wrong, but they ben semblable: and therfore a vengeaunce is not warished by another vengeaunce, ne a wrong by another wrong, but everich of hem encreseth and aggreggeth other. But certes the wordes of the physiciens shulden ben understonde in this wise; for good and wickednesse ben two contraries, and pees and werre, vengeaunce and suffraunce, discord and accord, and many other thinges: but certes, wickednesse shal be warished by goodnesse, discord by accord, werre by pees, and so forth of other thinges. And hereto accordeth seint Poule the apostle in many places: he saith, 'Ne yelde not harme for harme, ne wicked speche for wicked speche, but do wel to him that doth to thee harme, and blesse him that saith to thee harme.' And in many other places he amonesteth pees and accord. But now wol I speke to you of the conseil, which that was yeven to you by the men of lawe, and the wise folk, and old folke, that sayden alle by on accord as ye han herd beforne, that over alle thinges ye shuln do youre diligence to kepe youre persone, and to warnestore your house: and saiden also, that in this cas you oughte for to werchen ful avisely and with gret deliberation. And, sire, as to the first point, that toucheth the keping of youre persone, ye shuln understond, that he that hath werre, shal ever more devoutly and mekely preien beforne alle thinges, that Jesu Crist of his mercie wol han him in his protection, and ben his soveraine helping at his nede: for certes in this world there is no wight that may be conseilled ne kept suffisantly, withoute the keping of oure lord Jesu Crist. To this sentence accordeth the prophete David that sayth: 'If God ne kepe the citee, in idel waketh he that kepeth it.' Now, sire, than shuln ye committe the keping of youre persone to youre trewe frendes, that ben appreved and yknowe, and of hem shuln ye axen helpe, youre persone for to kepe. For Caton saith: 'If thou have nede of helpe, axe it of thy frendes, for ther n'is non so good a physicien as thy trewe frend.' And after this than shuln ye kepe you fro alle straunge folk, and fro lieres, and have alway in suspect hir compaignie. For Piers Alphonse sayth: 'Ne take no compaignie by the way of a straunge man, but if so be that thou have knowen him of lenger time: and if so be that he falle into thy compaignie paraventure withouten thin assent, enquere than, as subtilly as thou maist, of his conversation, and of his lif beforne, and feine thy way, saying thou wolt go thider as thou wolt not go: and if he bere a spere, hold thee on the right side, and if he bere a swerd, hold thee on his left side.' And after this than shuln ye kepe you wisely from alle swiche manere peple as I have sayed before, and hem and hir conseil eschue. And after this than shuln ye kepe you in swiche manere, that for any presumption of youre strengthe, that ye ne despise not, ne account not the might of your adversary so lite, that ye let the keping of youre persone for your presumption; for every wise man dredeth his enemie. And Salomon sayth; 'Welful is he that of alle hath drede; for certes he that thurgh the hardinesse of his herte, and thurgh the hardinesse of himself, hath to gret presumption, him shal evil betide.' Than shuln ye evermo countrewaite emboyssements, and alle espiaile. For Senek sayth, that 'the wise man that dredeth harmes, eschueth harmes; ne he ne falleth into perils, that perils eschueth.' And al be it so, that it seme that thou art in siker place, yet shalt thou alway do thy diligence in keping of thy persone; this is to sayn, ne be not negligent to kepe thin persone, not only fro thy gretest enemy, but also fro thy leste enemy. Senek sayth; 'A man that is wel avised, he dredeth his leste enemie.' Ovide sayth, that 'the litel wesel wol slee the gret bull and the wilde hart.' And the book sayth; 'A litel thorne may prikke a king ful sore, and a litel hound wol hold the wilde bore.' But natheles, I say not thou shalt be so coward, that thou doute wher as is no drede. The book saith, 'that som men [han taught hir deceivour, for they han to muche dreded] to be deceived.' Yet shalt thou drede to be empoysoned; and [therfore shalt thou] kepe thee fro the compagnie of scorners: for the book sayth, 'With scorners ne make no compagnie, but flee hir wordes as venime.'

"Now as to the second point, wheras youre wise conseillours conseilled you to warnestore your hous with gret diligence, I wolde fain knowe how that ye understoode thilke wordes, and what is your sentence."

Melibeus answered and saide; "Certes I understond it in this wise, that I shal warnestore min hous with toures, swiche as han castelles and other manere edifices, and armure, and artelries, by which thinges I may my persone and myn hous so kepen and defenden, that min enemies shuln ben in drede min hous for to approche."

To this sentence answered anon Prudence. "Warnestoring" (quod she) "of heighe toures and of grete edifices, is with grete costages and with grete travaille; and whan that they ben accompliced, yet ben they not worth a stre, but if they ben defended by trewe frendes, that ben olde and wise. And understonde wel, that the greteste and strongeste garneson that a riche man may have, as wel to kepen his persone as his goodes, is, that he be beloved with his subgets, and with his neighe-boures. For thus sayth Tullius, that 'ther is a maner garneson, that no man may venquish ne discomfite, and that is a lord to be beloved of his citizeins, and of his peple.'

"Now, sire, as to the thridde point, wheras youre olde and wise conseillours sayden, that you ne oughte not sodeinly ne hastily proceden in this nede, but that you oughte purveyen and appareilen you in this cas, with gret diligence and gret deliberation; trewely, I trowe, that they sayden right wisely and right soth. For Tullius sayth: 'In every nede er thou beginne it, appareile thee with gret diligence.' Than say I, that in vengeaunce taking, in werre, in bataille, and in warnestoring er thou beginne, I rede that thou appareile thee therto, and do it with gret deliberation.' For Tullius sayth, that 'longe appareiling tofore the battaille, maketh short victorie.' And Cassiodorus sayth; 'The garneson is stronger, whan it is longe time avised.'

"But now let us speken of the conseil that was accorded by youre neighebours, swiche as don you reverence withouten love; youre olde enemies reconciled; your flatereres, that conseilled you certain thinges prively, and openly conseilled you the contrarie; the yonge folk also, that conseilled you to venge you, and to make werre anon. Certes, sire, as I have sayde beforne ye han gretly erred to han cleped swiche maner folk to youre conseil, which conseillours ben ynough reproved by the resons aforesaid. But natheles, let us now descende to the special. Ye shul first proceden after the doctrine of Tullius. Certes the trouthe of this matere or of this conseil nedeth not diligently to enquere, for it is wel wist, which they ben that han don to you this trespas and vilanie, and how many trespasours, and in what manere they han don to you all this wrong, and all this vilanie. And after this, than shuln ye examine the second condition, which that the same Tullius addeth in this matere. For Tullius putteth a thing, which that he clepeth consenting: this is to sayn, who ben they, and which ben they, and how many, that consenten to thy conseil in thy wilfulnesse, to don hastif vengeaunce. And let us considre also who ben they, and how many ben they, and which ben they, that consenteden to youre adversaries. As to the first point, it is wel knowen which folk they be that consenteden to youre wilfulnesse. For trewely, all tho that conseileden you to maken sodein werre, ne ben not youre frendes. Let us now considre which ben they that ye holden so gretly youre frendes, as to youre persone: for al be it so that ye be mighty and riche, certes ye ne ben but allone: for certes ye ne han no child but a doughter, ne ye ne han no brethren, ne cosins germains, ne non other nigh kinrede, wherfore that youre enemies for drede shulde stinte to plede with you, or to destroye youre persone. Ye knowen also, that your richesses moten ben dispended in diverse parties; and whan that every wight hath his part, they ne wollen taken but litel regard to venge youre deth. But thin enemies ben three, and they han many brethren, children, cosins, and other nigh kinrede: and though so were, that thou haddest slain of hem two or three, yet dwellen ther ynow to wreken hir deth, and to slee thy persone. And though so be that youre kinrede be more stedefast and siker than the kin of your adversaries, yet natheles youre kinrede is but a fer kinrede; they ben but litel sibbe to you, and the kin of youre enemies ben nigh sibbe to hem. And certes as in that, hir condition is better than youres. Than let us considre also of the conseilling of hem that conseilled you to take sodein vengeance, whether it accorde to reson: and certes, ye knowe wel, nay; for as by right and reson, ther may no man taken vengeaunce on no wight, but the juge that hath the jurisdiction of it, whan it is ygraunted him to take thilke vengeaunce hastily, or attemprely, as the lawe requireth. And yet moreover of thilke word that Tullius clepeth consenting, thou shalt considre, if thy might and thy power may consente and suffice to thy wilfulnesse, and to thy conseillours: and certes, thou mayest wel say, that nay; for sikerly, as for to speke proprely, we moun do nothing but only swiche thing as we moun don rightfully: and certes rightfully ye ne mowe take no vengeance, as of your propre auctoritee. Than mowe ye sen that your power ne consenteth not, ne accordeth not to your wilfulnesse. Now let us examine the thridde point, that Tullius clepeth consequent. Thou shalt understonde, that the vengeaunce that thou purposest for to take, is the consequent, and therof folweth another vengeance, peril, and werre, and other damages withouten nombre, of which we ben not ware, as at this time. And as touching the fourthe point, that Tullius clepeth engendring, thou shalt consider, that this wrong which that is don to thee, is engendred of the hate of thin enemies, and of the vengeaunce taking upon that wold engender another vengeaunce, and muchel sorwe and wasting of richesses, as I sayde ere.

"Now, sire, as to the point, that Tullius clepeth causes, which that is the last point, thou shalt understonde, that the wrong that thou hast received, hath certaine causes, which that clerkes clepen *oriens*, and *efficiens*, and *causa longinqua*, and *causa propinqua*, this is to sayn, the fer cause, and the nigh cause. The fer cause is almighty God, that is cause of alle thinges: the ner cause, is thin three enemies; the cause accidental was hate; the cause material, ben the five woundes of thy doughter; the cause formal, is the maner of hir werking, that broughten ladders, and clomben in at thy windowes; the cause final was for to slee thy doughter; it letted not in as muche as in hem was. But for to speke of the fer cause, as to what ende they shuln come, or what shal finally betide of hem in this cas,

ne can I not deme, but by conjecting and supposing: for we shuln suppose, that they shuln come to a wicked ende, because that the book of Decrees sayth: 'Selden or with gret peine ben causes ybrought to a good ende, whan they ben badly begonne.'

"Now, sire, if men wold axen me, why that God suffred men to do you this vilanie, certes I can not wel answer, as for no sothfastnesse. For the Apostle sayth, that 'the sciences, and the jugements of oure Lord God Almighty ben ful depe; ther may no man comprehend ne serche hem suffisantly.' Natheles, by certain presumptions and conjectings, I hold and beleve, that God, which that is ful of justice and of rightwisenesse, hath suffered this betide, by just cause resonable.

"Thy name is Melibee, this is to sayn, a man that drinketh hony. Thou hast dronke so muche hony of swete temporel richesses, and delices, and honours of this world, that thou art dronken, and hast forgetten Jesu Crist thy creatour: thou ne hast not don to him swiche honour and reverence as thee ought, ne thou ne hast wel ytaken kepe to the wordes of Ovide, that sayth: 'Under the honey of the goodes of thy body is hid the venime that sleth the soule.' And Salomon sayth: 'If thou hast founden hony, ete of it that sufficeth; for if thou ete of it out of mesure, thou shalt spewe, and be nedy and poure.' And peraventure Crist hath thee in despit, and hath tourned away fro thee his face, and his eres of misericorde; and also he hath suffred, that thou hast ben punished in the manere that thou hast ytrespased. Thou hast don sinne again oure Lord Crist, for certes the three enemies of mankind, that is to sayn, the flesh, the fend, and the world, thou hast suffred hem entre into thin herte wilfully, by the windowes of thy body, and hast not defended thyself suffisantly agein hir assautes, and hir temptations, so that they han wounded thy soule in five places, this is to sayn the dedly sinnes that ben entred into thyn herte by thy five wittes: and in the same manere our Lord Crist hath wold and suffred, that thy three enemies ben entred into thyn hous by the windowes, and han ywounded thy doughter in the foresayd manere."

"Certes," quod Melibee, "I see wel that ye enforce you muchel by wordes to overcomen me, in swiche manere, that I shal not venge me on mine enemies, shewing me the perils and the evils that mighten falle of this vengeaunce: but who so wolde considre in alle vengeaunces the perils and evils that mighten sue of vengeaunce taking, a man wold never take vengeaunce, and that were harme: for by the vengeaunce taking ben the wicked men dissevered fro the goode men. And they that han will to do wickednesse, restreinen hir wicked purpos, whan they sen the punishing and the chastising of the trespasours." [To this answered dame Prudence: "Certes," quod she, "I graunte you that of vengeaunce taking cometh muche evil and muche good; but vengeaunce taking apperteineth not to everich on, but only to juges, and to hem that han the jurisdiction over the trespasours;] and yet say I more, that right as a singuler persone sinneth in taking vengeaunce of another man, right so sinneth the juge, if he do no vengeaunce of hem that it han deserved. For Senek sayth thus: 'That maister' (he sayth) 'is good, that preveth shrewes.' And Cassiodore saith: 'A man dredeth to do outrages, whan he wot and knoweth, that it displeseth to the juges and soveraines.' And another sayth: 'The juge that dredeth to do right, maketh men shrewes.' And Seint Poule the Apostle sayth in his Epistle, whan he writeth unto the Romaines, that 'the juges beren not the spere withouten cause, but they beren it to punishe the shrewes and misdoers, and for to defende the goode men.' If ye wiln than take vengeaunce of youre enemies, ye shuln retourne or have your recours to the juge, that hath the jurisdiction upon hem, and he shal punishe hem, as the lawe axeth and requireth."

"A," sayd Melibee, "this vengeaunce liketh me nothing. I bethink me now, and take hede how that fortune hath norished me fro my childhode, and hath holpen me to passe many a stronge pas: now wol I assayen hire, trowing, with Goddes helpe, that she shal helpe me my shame for to venge."

"Certes," quod Prudence, "if ye wol werke by my conseil, ye shuln not assaye fortune by no way: ne ye ne shuln not lene or bowe unto hire, after the wordes of Senek; for thinges that ben folily don, and tho that ben don in hope of fortune, shuln never come to good ende. And as the same Senek sayth: 'The more clere and the more shining that fortune is, the more brotel and the soner broke she is.' Trusteth not in hire, for she n'is not stedefast ne stable: for whan thou trowest to be most siker and seure of hire helpe, she wol faille and deceive thee. And wheras ye sayn, that fortune hath norished you fro youre childhode, I say that in so muchel ye shuln the lesse truste in hire, and in hire wit. For Senek saith: 'What man that is norished by fortune, she maketh him a gret fool.' Now than sin ye desire and axe vengeaunce, and the vengeaunce, that is don after the lawe and before the juge, ne liketh you not, and the vengeaunce, that is don in hope of fortune, is perilous and uncertain, than have ye non other remedie, but for to have your recours unto the soveraine juge, that vengeth alle vilanies, and wronges; and he shal venge you, after that himself witnesseth, wheras he saith; 'Leveth the vengeaunce to me, and I shal do it'."

Melibeus answered: "If I ne venge me of the vilanie that men han don to me, I sompne or warne hem, that han don to me vilanie, and alle other, to do me another vilanie. For it is written; 'If thou take no vengeaunce of an olde vilany, thou sompnest thin adversaries to do thee a newe vilanie:' and also for my suffraunce, men wolden do me so muche vilanie, that I might neither bere it ne susteine; and so shulde I ben put and holden over lowe. For som men sain, 'In muchel suffring shul many thinges falle unto thee, which thou shalt not mowe suffre'."

"Certes," quod Prudence, "I graunte you wel, that overmuchel suffraunce is not good, but yet ne folweth it not therof, that every persone to whom men don vilanie, shuld take of it vengeaunce: for that apperteineth and longeth all only to the juges, for they shul venge the vilanies and injuries: and therfore tho two auctoritees, that ye han sayd above, ben only understonden in the juges: for whan they suffren overmuchel the wronges and vilanies to be don, withouten punishing, they sompne not a man all only for to do newe wronges, but they commaunden it: al so as a wise mansayth, that 'the juge that correcteth not the sinner, commaundeth and biddeth him do sinne.' And the juges and soveraines mighten in hir lond so muche suffre of the shrewes and misdoers, that they shulden by swiche

suffruance, by proces of time, wexen of swiche power and might, that they shuld putte out the the juges and the soveraines from hir places, and atte laste maken hem lese hir lordshippes.

"But now let us putte, that ye have leve to venge you: I say ye be not of might and power, as now to venge you: for if ye wol maken comparison unto the might of youre adversaries, ye shuln finde in many thinges, that I have shewed you er this, that hir condition is better than youres, and therfore say I, that it is good as now, that ye suffre and be patient.

"Forthermore ye knowen wel, that after the commune saw, it is a woodnesse, a man to strive with a stronger, or a more mighty man than he is himself: and for to strive with a man of even strengthe, that is to say, with as strong a man as he is, it is peril; and for to strive with a weker man, it is folie; and therfore shulde a man flee striving, as muchel as he mighte. For Salomon sayth: 'It is a gret worship to a man to kepe him fro noise and strif.' And if it so happe, that a man of greter mighte and strengthe than thou art, do thee grevaunce: studie and besie thee rather to stille the same grevaunce, than for to venge thee. For Senek sayth, that 'he putteth him in a gret peril, that striveth with a greter man than he is himself.' And Catou sayth; 'If a man of higher estat or degree, or more mighty than thou, do thee anoye or grevance, suffre him: for he that ones hath greved thee, may another time releve thee and helpe thee.' Yet sette I cas, ye have bothe might and licence for to venge you, I say that ther ben ful many thinges that shuln restreine you of vengeance taking, and make you for to encline to suffre, and for to han patience in the wronges that han ben don to you. First and forward, if ye wol considre the defautes that ben in youre owen persone, for which defautes God hath suffred you have this tribulation, as I have sayd to you herebeforne. For the poete sayth, that 'we oughten patiently taken the tribulations that comen to us, whan that we thinken and consideren, that we han deserved to have hem.' And Seint Gregorie sayth, that 'whan a man considereth wel the nombre of his defautes and of his sinnes, the peines and the tribulations that he sufereth, semen the lesse unto him.' And in as muche as him thinketh his sinnes more hevy and grevous, in so muche semeth his peine the lighter and the esier unto him. Also ye owen to encline and bowe youre herte, to take the patience of oure Lord Jesu Crist, as sayth Seint Peter in his epistles. 'Jesu Crist' (he saith) 'hath suffred for us, and yeven ensample to every man to folwe and sue him, for he did never sinne, ne never came ther a vilains word out of his mouth. Whan men cursed him, he cursed hem nought; and whan men beten him, he manaced hem nought.' Also the gret patience, which seintes, that ben in Paradis, han had in tribulations that they han suffred, withouten hir desert or gilt, oughte muchel stirre you to patience. Forthermore, ye shulde enforce you to have patience, considering that the tribulations of this world but litel while endure, and sone passed ben and gon, and the joye that a man seketh to han by patience in tribulations is perdurable; after that the apostle sayth in his epistle; 'The joye of God,' he sayth, 'is perdurable,' that is to sayn, everlasting. Also troweth and beleveth stedfastly, that he n'is not wel ynorished ne wel ytaught, that cannot have patience, or wol not receive patience. For Salomon sayth, that 'the doctrine and wit of a man is knowen by patience.' And in another place he sayeth, that 'he that is patient, governeth him by gret prudence.' And the same Salomon saith: 'The angrie and wrathful man maketh noises, and the patient man attempreth and stilleth hem.' He saith also, 'It is more worth to be patient than for to be right strong.' And he that may have the lordshipe of his owen herte, is more to preise, than he that by his force or strengthe taketh gret cities. And therfore sayth Seint James in his epistle, that 'patience is a gret vertue of perfection'."

"Certes," quod Melibee, "I graunte you, dame Prudence, that patience is a gret vertue of perfection, but every man may not have the perfection that ye seken, ne I am not of the nombre of the right parfit men: for min herte may never be in pees, unto the time it be venged. And al be it so, that it was gret peril to min enemies to do me a vilanie in taking vengeaunce upon me, yet token they non hede of the peril, but fulfilleden hir wicked will and hir corage: and therfore me thinketh men oughten not repreve me, though I put me in a litel peril for to venge me, and though I do a gret excesse, that is to sayn, that I venge on outrage by another."

"A," quod dame Prudence, "ye sayn your will and as you liketh; but in no cas of the world a man shulde not don outrage ne excesse, for to venge him. For Cassidore sayth, that 'as evil doth he that vengeth him by outrage, as he that doth the outrage.' And therfore ye shuln venge you after the ordre of right, that is to sayn, by the lawe, and not by excesse, ne by outrage. And also if you would venge you of the outrage of youre adversaries, in other manere than right commaundeth, ye sinnen. And therfore sayth Senek, that 'a man shal never venge shrewednesse by shrewednesse:' And if ye say that right axeth a man to defende violence by violence, and fighting by fighting: certes ye say soth, whan the defence is don withouten intervalle, or withouten tarying or delay, for to defende him, and not for to venge. And it behoveth, that a man putte swiche attemperaunce in his defence, that men have no cause ne mater to repreve him, that defendeth him, of outrage and excesse, for elles were it againe reson. Parde ye knowen wel, that ye maken no defence as now, for to defende you, but for to venge you: and so sheweth it, that ye han no will to do youre dede attemprely: and therfore me thinketh that patience is good. For Salomon sayth, that 'he that is not patient, shal have gret harme'."

"Certes," quod Melibee, "I graunte you, that whan a man is impatient and wrothe, of that that toucheth him not, and that apperteineth not unto him, though it harme him it is no wonder. For the lawe saith, that 'he is coupable that entremeteth or medleth with swiche thing, as apperteineth not unto him.' And Salomon saith, that 'he that entremeteth of the noise or strif of another man, is like to him that taketh a straunge hound by the eres: for right as he that taketh a straunge hound by the eres is otherwhile bitten with the hound, right in the same wise, it is reson that he have harme, that by his impatience medleth him of the noise of another man, wheras it apperteineth not unto him.' But ye knowe wel, that this dede, that is to sayn, my greef and my disese, toucheth me

right nigh. And therfore though I be wroth and impatient, it is no mervaille: and (saving your grace) I cannot see that it might gretly harme me, though I took vengeaunce, for I am richer and more mighty than min enemies ben: and wel knowe ye, that by money and by having grete possessions, ben alle thinges of this world governed. And Salomon sayth, that 'alle thinges obeye to money'."

Whan Prudence had herd hire husbond avaunte him of his richesse and of his money, dispreising the power of his adversaries, she spake and sayd in this wise: "Certes, dere sire, I graunte you that ye ben riche and mighty, and that richessses ben good to hem that han wel ygeten hem, and that wel conne usen hem. For right as the body of a man may not liven withouten soul, no more may it liven withouten temporel goodes, and by richesses may a man gete him grete frendes. And therfore sayth Pamphilus: 'If a netherdes doughter' (he sayth) 'be riche, she may chese of a thousand men, which she wol take to hire husbond: for of a thousand men on wol not forsaken hire ne refusen hire.' And this Pamphilus saith also: 'If thou be right happy, that is to sayn, if thou be right riche, thou shalt finde a gret nombre of felawes and frendes; and if thy fortune chaunge, that thou wexe poure, farewel frendshipe and felawshipe, for thou shalt be al allone withouten any compaignie, but if it be the compaignie of poure folk.' And yet sayth this Pamphilus moreover, that 'they that ben bond and thralle of linage, shuln be made worth and noble by richesses.' And right so as by richesses ther comen many goodes, right so by poverte come ther many harmes and eviles: for gret poverte constreineth a man to do many eviles. And therfore clepeth Cassiodore poverte the moder of ruine, that is to sayn, the moder of overthrowing or falling doun. And therfore sayth Piers Alphonse: 'On of the gretest adversitees of this world, is whan a free man by kinde, or of birthe, is constreined by poverte to eten the almesse of his enemie.' And the same sayth Innocent in on of his bookes: he sayth, that 'sorweful and mishappy is the condition of a poure begger, for if he axe not his mete, he dieth for hunger, and if he axe, he dieth for shame: and algates necessitee constreineth him to axe.' And therfore sayth Salomon, that 'better it is to die, than for to have swiche poverte.' And as the same Salomon sayth: 'better is it to die of bitter deth, than for to liven in swiche wise.' By thise resons that I have said unto you, and by many other resons that I coude saye, I graunte you that richesses ben good to hem that wel geten hem, and to hem that wel usen tho richesses: and therfore wol I shewe how ye shuln behave you in gadering of youre richesses, and in what manere ye shuln usen hem.

"First, ye shuln geten hem withouten gret desir, by good leiser, sokingly, and not over hastifly, for a man that is to desiring to gete richesses, abandoneth him first to thefte and alle other eviles. And therfore sayth Salomon: 'He that hasteth him to besily to wexe riche, he shal be non innocent.' He sayth also, that 'the richesse that hastily cometh to a man, sone and lightly goeth and passeth from a man, but that richesse that cometh litel and litel, wexeth alway, and multiplieth.' And, sire, ye shulen gete richesses by youre wit and by youre travaille, unto youre profite, and that withouten wrong or harme doing to any other persone. For the lawe sayth: 'Ther maketh no man himself riche, if he do harme to another wight;' this is to say, that nature defendeth and forbedeth by right, that no man maketh himself riche, unto the harme of another persone. And Tullius sayth, that 'no sorwe, ne no drede of deth, ne nothing that may falle unto a man, is so muchel ageins nature, as a man to encrese his owen profite, to harme of another man.' And though the grete men and the mighty men geten richesses more lightly than thou, yet shalt thou not ben idel ne slowe to do thy profite, for thou shalt in alle wise flee idelnesse. For Salomon sayth, that 'idelnesse techeth a man to do many eviles.' And the same Salomon sayth, that 'he that travailleth and besieth him to tillen his lond, shal ete bred: but he that is idel, and casteth him to no besinesse ne occupation, shal falle into poverte, and die for hunger.' And he that is idel and slow, can never find covenable time for to do his profite. For ther is a versifiour sayth, that 'the idel man excuseth him in winter, because of the gret cold, and in summer by encheson of the hete.' For thise causes, sayth Caton, 'waketh and enclineth you not over muchel to slepe, for over muchel reste norisheth and causeth many vices.' And therfore sayth Seint Jerome: 'Doeth som good dedes, that the devil, which is our enemie, ne finde you not unoccupied, for the devil ne taketh not lightly unto his werking swiche as he findeth occupied in goode werkes.'

"Than thus in geting richesses ye musten flee idelnesse. And afterward ye shuln usen the richesses, which ye han geten by youre wit and by youre travaille, in swiche manere, that men holde you not to scarce ne to sparing, ne fool-large, that is to say, over large a spender: for right as men blamen an avaricious man, because of his scareitee and chincherie, in the same wise is he to blame, that spendeth over largely. And therfore saith Canton: 'Use,' (sayth he) 'the richesses that thou hast ygeten in swiche manere, that men have no matere ne cause to calle thee nother wretche ne chinche: for it is a gret shame to a man to have a poure berte and a riche purse.' He sayth also: 'The goodes that thou hast ygeten, use hem by mesure, that is to sayn, spende mesurably; for they that folily wasten and dispenden the goodes that they han, whan they han no more propre of hir owen, than they shapen hem to take the goodes of another man.' I say than that ye shuln flee avarice, using youre richesses in swiche manere, that men sayn not that your richesses ben yheried, but that ye have them in youre might, and in youre welding. For a wise man repreveth the avaricious man, and sayth thus in two vers. 'Wherto and why berieth a man his goodes by his gret avarice, and knoweth wel, that nedes must he die, for deth is the end of every man, as in this present lif? and for what cause or encheson joineth he him, of knitteth he him so fast unto his goodes, that alle his wittes mown not disseven him, or departen him from his goodes, and knoweth wel, or ought to knowe, that whan he is ded, he shal nothing bere with him out of this world?' And therfore sayth Seint Augustine, that 'the avaricious man is likened unto Helle, that the more it swalweth, the more desire it hath to swalwe and devoure.' And as wel as ye wolde eschue to be called an avaricious man

or chinche, as wel shuld ye kepe you and governe you in swiche a wise, that men calle you not foollarge. Therfore saith Tullius: 'The goodes of thin hous ne shuld not ben hid ne kept so close, but that they might ben opened by pitee and debonairetee;' that is to sayn, to yeve hem part that han gret nede; 'ne thy goodes shulden not ben so open, to be every mannes goodes.' Afterward, in geting of youre richesses, and in using of hem, ye shuln alway have three thinges in youre herte, that is to say, oure Lord God, conscience, and good name. First, ye shuln have God in youre herte, and for no richesse ye shuln do no thing, which may in any manere displese God that is your creatour and maker. For after the word of Salomon; 'It is better to have a litel good with love of God, than to have muchel good, and lese the love of his Lord God.' And the prophete sayth, that 'better it is to ben a good man, and have litel good and tresor, than to be holden a shrewe, and have grete richesses.' And yet I say forthermore, that ye shulden alway do youre besinesse to gete you richesses, so that ye gete hem with good conscience. And the apostle sayth, that 'ther n'is thing in this world of which we shulden have so gret joye, as whan our conscience bereth us good witnesse.' And the wise man sayth, 'The substaunce of a man is ful good, whan sinne is not in mannes conscience.' Afterward, in geting of youre richesses, and in using of hem, ye must have gret besinesse and gret diligence, that youre good name be alway kept and conserved. For Salomon sayth, that 'beter it is, and more it availeth a man to have a good name, than for to have grete richesses:' and therfore he sayth in another place: 'Do grete diligence' (sayth Salomon) 'in keping of thy frendes, and of thy good name, for it shal lenger abide with thee, than any tresor, be it never so precious.' And certes, he shulde not be called a gentilman, that after God and good conscience, alle thinges left, ne doth his diligence and besinesse, to kepen his good name. And Cassiodore sayth, that 'it is a signe of a gentil herte, whan a man loveth and desireth to have a good name.' And therfore sayth Seint Augustine, that 'ther ben two thinges that arn right necessarie and nedeful; and that is good conscience, and good los;' that is to sayn, good conscience to thin owen persone inward, and good los for thy neighebour outward. And he that trosteth him so muchel in his good conscience, that he despiseth and setteth at nought his good name or los, and recketh not though he kepe not his good name, n'is but a cruel cherl.

"Sire, now have I shewed you ye shulden do in geting richesses, and how ye shuln usen hem: and I see wel that for the trust that ye han in youre richesses, ye wiln meve werre and bataille. I conseille you that ye beginne no bataille ne werre, in trust of youre richesses, for they ne sufficen not werres to mainteine. And therfore sayth a philosophre: 'that man that desireth and wol algates han werre, shal never have suffisaunce: for the richer that he is, the greter dispenees must he make, if he wol have worship and victorie.' And Salomon saith, that 'the greter richesses that a man hath, the mo dispendours he hath.' And, dere sire, al be it so, that for your richesses ye moun have muchel folk, yet behoveth it not, ne it is not good to beginne werre, wheras ye moun in other manere have pees, unto youre worship and profite: for the victorie of batailles that ben in this world, lith not in gret nombre or multitude of peple, ne in the vertue of man, but it lith in the will and in the hond of oure Lord God Almighty. And therfore Judas Machabeus, which was Goddes knight, whan he shuld fight again his adversarie, that hadde a greter nombre and a greter multitude of folk, and strenger than was the peple of this Machabee, yet he recomforted his litel compagnie, and sayd right in this wise: 'Al so lightly' (sayd he) 'may our Lord God Almighty yeve victorie to a fewe folk, as to many folk; for the victorie of a bataille cometh not by the gret nombre of peple, but it cometh from oure Lord God of Heven.' And, dere sire, for as muchel as ther is no man certaine, if it be worthy that God yeve him victorie or not, after that Salomon sayth, 'Therfore every man shulde gretly drede werres to beginne': and because that in batailles fallen many perils, and it happeth other while, that as sone is the gret man slain, as the litel man;' and, as it is ywritten in the second book of Kinges, 'The dedes of batailles ben aventurous, and nothing certain, for as lightly is on hurt with a spere as another;' and for ther is gret peril in werre; therfore shulde a man flee and eschue werre in as muchel as a man may goodly. For Salomon sayth: 'He that loveth peril, shal falle in peril'."

After that dame Prudence had spoken in this manere, Melibee answerd and saide: "I see wel, dame Prudence, that by youre faire wordes and by youre resons, that ye han shewed me, that the werre liketh you nothing: but I have not yet herd your conseil, how I shal do in this nede."

"Certes," quod she, "I conseille you that ye accorde with youre adversaries, and that ye have pees with hem. For Seint James sayth in his epistle, that 'by concorde and pees, the smale richesses wexen grete, and by debat and discorde grete richesses fallen doun.' And ye knowen wel, that on of the gretest and moste soveraine thing, that is in this world, is unitee and pees. And therfore sayde oure Lord Jesu Crist to his apostles in this wise: 'Wel happy and blessed ben they that loven and purchasen pees; for they ben called the children of God'." "A," quod Melibee, "now see I wel, that ye loven not min honour, ne my worshipe. Ye knowen wel that min adversaries han begonne this debat and brige by hir outrage, and ye see wel, that they ne requeren ne prayen me not of pees, ne they axen not to be reconciled; wol ye than that I go and meke me, and obeye me to hem, and crie hem mercie? Forsoth that were not my worshipe: for right as men sayn, that overgret homlinesse engendreth dispreising, so fareth it by to gret humilitee or mekenesse."

Than began dame Prudence to make semblaunt of wrathe, and sayde: "Certes, Sire, (sauf your grace) I love youre honour and youre profite, as I do min owen, and ever have don; ye, non other seyn never the contrary: and if I had sayde, that ye shulde han purchased the pees and the reconciliation, 'I ne hadde not muchel mistake me, ne sayde amis. For the wise man sayth: 'The dissention beginneth by another man, and the reconciling beginneth by thyself.' And the prophete saith: 'Flee shrewednesse and do goodnesse; seke pees and folwe it, in as muchel as in thee is.' Yet say I not, that ye shuln rather pursue to your adversaries for pees, than they shuln to you: for I

know wel that ye ben so hard-herted, that ye wol do nothing for me; and Salomon sayth: 'He that hath over hard an herte, atte laste he shal mishappe and mistide'."

Whan Melibee had herd dame Prudence make semblaunt of wrath, he sayde in this wise. "Dame, I pray yon that ye be not displesed of thinges that I say, for I know wel that I am angry and wroth, and that is no wonder; and they that ben wroth, woten not wel what they don, ne what they sayn. Therfore the prophete sayth, that 'troubled eyen han no clere sighte.' But sayth and conseilleth me as you liketh, for I am redy to do right as ye wol desire. And if ye repreve me of my folie, I am the more holden to love you and to preise you. For Salomon saith, that 'he that repreveth him that doth folie, he shal find greter graee, than he that deceiveth him by swete wordes'."

Than sayde dame Prudence; "I make no semblaunt of wrath ne of anger, but for youre grete profite. For Salomon saith: 'He is more worth, that repreveth or chideth a fool for his folie, shewing him semblaunt of wrath, than he that supporteth him and preiseth him in his misdoing, and laugheth at his folie.' And this same Salomon saith afterward, that 'by the sorweful visage of a man,' that is to sayn, by the sory and hevy countenance of a man, 'the fool correcteth and amendeth himself'."

Than said Melibee; "I shal not conne answere unto so many faire resons as ye putten to me and shewen: sayth shortly youre will and youre conseil, and I am al redy to performe and fulfille it."

Than dame Prudence discovered all hire will unto him and saide: "I conseille you," quod she, "above alle thinges that ye make pees betwene God and you, and be reconciled unto him and to his grace, for as I have sayde you herebeforen, God hath suffered you to have this tribulation and disese for youre sinnes: and if ye do as I say you, God wol sende youre adversaries unto you, and make hem falle at youre feet, redy to do youre will and youre commaundements. For Salomon sayth; 'Whan the condition of man is plesaunt and liking to God, he chaungeth the hertes of the mannes adversaries and constreineth hem to besechen him of pees and of grace.' And I pray you let me speke with your adversaries in privee place, for they shuln not knowe that it be of youre will or youre assent; and than, whan I knowe hir will and hir entente, I may conseille you the more seurely."

"Dame," quod Melibeus, "doth youre will and youre liking, for I putte me holly in youre disposition and ordinaunce."

Than dame Prudence, when she sey the good will of hire husbond, delibered unto hire, and toke avis in hire self, thinking how she might bring this nede unto goode ende. And whan she sey hire time, she sent for thise adversaries to come unto hire in to a privee place, and shewed wisely unto hem the grete goodes that comon of pees, and the grete harmes and perils that ben in werre; and saide to hem, in a goodly manere, how that hem ought have gret repentaunce of the injuries and wronges, that they hadden don to Melibeus hire lord, and unto hire and to hire doughter.

And whan they herden the goodly wordes of dame Prudence, they weren so surprised and ravished, and hadden so gret joye of hire, that wonder was to telle. "A, lady," quod they, "ye have shewed unto us the blessing of swetenesse, after the saying of David the prophete; for the reconciling, which we be not worthy to have in no manere, but we oughten requeren it with grete contrition and humilitee, ye of youre grete goodnesse have presented unto us. Now see we wel, that the science and conning of Salomon is ful trewe; for he saith, that 'swete wordes multiplien and encresen frendes, and maken shrewes to be debonaire and meke.'

"Certes," quod they, "we putten oure dede, and all oure matere and cause, al holly in youre good will, and ben redy to obeye unto the speche and commaundement of my lord Melibeus. And therfore, dere and benigne lady, we praye you and beseche you as mekely as we conne and moun, that it like unto youre grete goodnesse to fulfille in dede youre goodly wordes. For we consideren and knowelechen, that we han offended and greved my lord Melibeus out of mesure, so fer forth, that we ben not of power to maken him amendes; and therfore we oblige and binde us and oure frendes, for to do all his will and his commaundements: but peraventure he hath swiche hevinesse and swiche wrath to us ward, because of oure offence, that he wol enjoynen us swiche a peine, as we moun not bere ne susteine; and therfore, noble ladie, we beseche to youre womanly pittee to take swiche avisement in this nede, that we, ne oure frendes, ben not disherited and destroied, thurgh oure folie."

"Certes," quod Prudence, "it is an hard thing and right perilous, that a man putte him all outrely in the arbitration and jugement, and in the might and power of his enemie; for Salomon sayth: 'Leveth me, and yeveth credence to that I shall say: to thy sone, to thy wif, to thy frend, ne to thy brother, ne yeve thou never might ne maistre over thy body, while thou livest.'—Now, sith he defendeth that a man shulde not yeve to his brother, ne to his frend, the might of his body, by a strenger reson he defendeth and forbedeth a man to yeve himself to his enemy. And natheles, I conseille you that ye mistruste not my lord: for I wot wel and know verily, that he is debonaire and meke, large, curteis, and nothing desirous ne coveitous of good ne richesse: for ther is nothing in this world that he desireth, save only worshipe and honour. Forthermore I know wel, and am right sure, that he shal nothing do in this nede without-en my conseil; and I shal so werken in this cas, that by the grace of oure Lord God ye shuln be reconciled unto us."

Than saiden they with o vois; "Worshipful lady, we putten us and oure goodes al fully in youre will and disposition, and ben redy to come, what day that it like unto youre noblesse to limite us or assigne us, for to make oure obligation and bond, as strong as it liketh unto youre goodnesse, that we moun fulfille the will of you and of my lord Melibee."

Whan dame Prudence had herd the answer of thise men, she bad hem go agein prively, and she retourned to hire lord Melibee, and told him how she fond his adversaries ful repentaunt, knowleching ful lowly hir sinnes and trespas, and how they weren redy to suffren all peine, requering and preying him of mercy and pitee.

Than saide Melibee; "He is wel worthy to have pardon and foryevenesse of his sinne, that excuseth not his sinne, but knowlecheth, and repenteth him,

axing indulgence. For Senek saith: 'Ther is the remission and foryeveness, wher as the confession is; for confession is neighebour to innocence.' And therefore I assente and conferme me to have pees, but it is good that we do nought withouten the assent and will of our frendes."

Than was Prudence right glad and joyeful, and saide; "Certes, sire, ye han wel and goodly answered: for right as by the conseil, assent, and helpe of your frendes, ye han be stired to venge you and make werre, right so withouten hir conseil shul ye not accord you, ne have pees with youre adversaries. For the lawe saith: 'Ther is nothing so good by way of kinde, as a thing to be unbounde by him that it was ybounde.'"

And than dame Prudence, withouten delay or tarying, sent anon hire messageres for hir kin and for hir olde frendes, which that were trewe and wise: and told hem by ordre, in the presence of Melibee, all the matere, as it is above expressed and declared; and preied hem that they wold yeve hir avis and conseil, what were best to do in this nede. And whan Melibeus frendes hadden taken hir avis and deliberation of the foresaid matere, and hadden examined it by gret besinesse and gret diligence, they yaven ful conseil for to have pees and reste, and that Melibee shulde receive with good herte his adversaries to foryevenesse and mercy.

And whan dame Prudence had herd the assent of hire lord Melibee, and the conseil of his frendes, accord with hire will and hire entention, she was wonder glad in hire herte, and sayde: "Ther is an olde Proverbe," quod she, "sayth, that the goodnesse that thou maist do this day, do it, and abide not, ne delay it not til to morwe: and therfore I conseille, that ye sende youre messageres, swiche as ben discrete and wise, unto youre adversaries, telling hem on youre behalf, that if they wol trete of pees and of accord, that they shape hem, withouten delay or tarying, to come unto us." Which thing parfourmed was indede. And whan thise trespasours and repenting folk of hir folies, that is to sayn, the adversaries of Melibee, hadden herd what thise messageres sayden unto hem, they weren right glade and joyeful, and answerden ful mekely and benignely, yelding graces and thankinges to hir lord Melibee, and to all his compagnie: and shopen hem withouten delay to go with the messageres, and obeye to the commaundement of hir lord Melibee.

And right anon they token hir way to the court of Melibee, and token with hem som of hir trewe frendes, to make feith for hem, and for to ben hir borwes. And whan they were comen to the presence of Melibee, he saide hem thise wordes: "It stant thus," quod Melibee, "and soth it is, that ye causeles, and withouten skill and reson, han don grete injuries and wronges to me, and to my wif Prudence, and to my doughter also, for ye had entred into myn hous by violence, and have don swiche outrage, that alle men knowen wel that ye han deserved the deth: and therfore wol I know and wete of you, whether ye wol putte the punishing and chastising, and the vengeaunce of this outrage, in the will of me and of my wif, or ye wol not."

Than the wisest of hem three answered for hem alle, and saide. "Sire," quod he, "we knowen wel, that we ben unworthy to come to the court of so gret a lord and so worthy as ye ben, for we han so gretly mistaken us, and han offended and agilte in swiche wise agein youre high lordshipe, that trewely we han deserved the deth; but yet for the grete goodnesse and debonairetee, that all the world witnesseth of youre persone, we submitten us to the excellence and benignitee of youre gracious lordshipe, and ben redy to obeye to alle youre comandements, beseching you, that of youre mercyable pitee ye wol considere oure grete repentance and lowe submission, and graunte us foryevenesse of onre outragious trespas and offence: for wel we knowen, that youre liberal grace and mercie stretchen hem forther into goodnesse, than don oure outragious giltes and trespas into wickednesse; al be it that cursedly and dampnably we han agilte again youre highe lordshipe."

Than Melibee toke hem up fro the ground ful benignely, and received hir obligations, and hir bondes, by hir othes upon hir plegges and borwes, and assigned hem a certain day to retourne unto his court for to receive and accept sentence and jugement, that Melibee wolde commande to be don on hem, by the causes aforesaid; which thinges ordeined, every man retourned to his hous.

And whan that dame Prudence saw hire time, she freined and axed hire lord Melibee, what vengeance he thoughte to taken of his adversaries.

To which Melibee answerd, and saide: "Certes," quod he, "I thinke and purpose me fully to disherite hem of all that ever they han, and for to putte hem in exile for ever."

"Certes," quod dame Prudence, "this were a cruel sentence, and muchel agein reson. For ye ben riche ynough, and han no nede of other mennes good; and ye might lightly in this wise gete you a coveitous name, which is a vicious thing, and oughte to ben eschewed of every good man: for after the sawe of the Apostle, 'Coveitise is rote of alle harmes.' And therfore it were better for you to lese muchel good of your owen, than for to take of hir good in this manere. For better it is to lese good with worship, than to winne good with vilanie and shame. And every man oughte to do his diligence and his besinesse, to gete him a good name. And yet shal he not only besie him in keping his good name, but he shal also enforcen him alway to do som thing, by which he may renovelle his good name: for it is written, that 'the olde good los, or good name, of a man is sone gon and passed, whan it is not newed.' And as touching that ye sayn, that ye wol exile your adversaries, that thinketh me muchel agein reson, and out of mesure, considered the power that they han yeven you upon hemself. And it is written, that 'he is worthy to lese his privilege, that misuseth the might and the power that is yeven him.' And I sette cas, ye might enjoine hem that peine by right and by lawe, (which I trowe ye mowe not do) I say, ye might not putte it to execution peraventure, and than it were like to retourne to the werre, as it was beforn. And therfore if ye wol that men do you obeisaunce, ye must deme more curteisly, that is to sayn, ye must yeve more esie sentences and jugements. For it is written: 'He that most curteisly commandeth, to him men most obeyen.' And therfore I pray you, that in this necessitee and in this nede ye caste you to overcome youre herte. For Senek sayth, that 'he that overcometh his herte, overcometh twies.' And Tullius saith:

'ther is nothing so commendable in a gret lord, as whan he is debonaire and meke, and appeseth him lightly.' And I pray you, that ye wol now forbere to do vengeaunce, in swiche a manere, that your good name may be kept and conserved, and that men mown have cause and matere to preise you of pitee and of mercy; and that ye have no cause to repente you of thing that ye don. For Seneke saieth: 'He overcometh in an evil manere, that repenteth him of his victorie.' Wherfore I pray you let mercy be in youre herte, to the effect and entente, that God Almighty have mercy upon you in his last jugement: for Seint James saith in his Epistle: 'Jugement withoute mercy shal he do to him, that hath no mercy of another wight.'"

Whan Melibee had herd the grete skilles and resons of dame Prudence, and hire wise informations and techinges, his herte gan encline to the will of his wif, considering hire trewe entente, enforced him anon and assented fully to werken after hire conseil, and thanked God, of whom procedeth all goodnesse and all vertue, that him sent a wif of so gret discretion. And whan the day came that his adversaries shulde appere in his presence, he spake to hem ful goodly, and saide in this wise. "Al be it so, that of youre pride and high presumption and folie, and of youre negligence and unconning, ye have misborne you, and trespased unto me, yet for as muchel as I see and behold youre grete humilitee, and that ye ben sory and repentant of youre giltes, it constreineth me to do you grace and mercy: wherfore I receive you into my grace, and forgeve you outrely alle the offences, injuries, and wronges, that ye have don agein me and mine, to this effect and to this ende, that God of his endeles mercie wol at the time of oure dying forgeve us oure giltes, that we han trespased to him in this wretched world: for douteles, if we be sory and repentant of the sinnes and giltes, which we han trespased in the sight of oure Lord God, he is so free and so merciable, that he wol forgeven us oure giltes, and bringen us to the blisse that never hath ende. *Amen.*"

THE MONKES PROLOGUE.

Whan ended was the tale of Melibee,
And of Prudence and hire benignitee,
Our Hoste saide; "As I am faithful *man*,
And by the precious *corpus Madrian*,
I hadde lever than a barell of ale,
That goode lefe my wif had herde this tale:
For she n'is no thing of swiche patience,
As was this Melibeus wif Prudence.
"By Goddes bones, whan I bete my knaves,
She bringeth me the grete clobbed staves,
And cryeth; 'Slee the dogges everich on,
And breke hem bothe bak and every bon.'
"And if that any neighebour of mine
Wol not in chirche to my wif encline,
Or be so hardy to hire to trespace,
Whan she cometh home she rampeth in my face,
And cryeth; 'False coward, wreke thy wif:
By *corpus Domini*, I wol have thy knif,
And thou shalt have my distaf, and go spinne.'
Fro day til night right thus she wol beginne.
"'Alas,' she saith, 'that ever I was yshape
To wed a milksop, or a coward ape,
That wol ben overladde with every wight!
Thou darst not stonden by thy wives right.'
"This is my lif, but if that I wol fight,
And out at dore anon I mote me dight,
Or elles I am lost, but if that I
Be like a wilde leon, fool-hardy.
"I wote wel she wol do me slee som day
Som neighebour, and thanne go my way,
For I am perilous with knif in honde,
Al be it that I dare not hire withstonde:
For she is bigge in armes by my faith,
That shal he finde, that hire misdoth or saith.
But let us passe away fro this matere.
"My lord the Monk," quod he, "be mery of chere,
For ye shul telle a tale trewely.
Lo, Rouchester stondeth here faste by.
Ride forth, min owen lord, breke not our game.
But by my trouthe I can not telle youre name;
Whether shal I call you my lord Dan John,
Or Dan Thomas, or elles Dan Albon?
Of what hous be ye, by your fader kin?
I vow to God, thou hast a ful faire skin;
It is a gentil pasture ther thou gost;
Thou art not like a penaunt or a gost.
"Upon my faith thou art som officer,
Som worthy sextein, or som celerer.
For by my fadres soule, as to my dome,
Thou art a maister, whan thou art at home;
No poure cloisterer, ne non novice,
But a governour both ware and wise,
And therwithal of braunes and of bones
A right wel faring persone for the nones.
I pray to God yeve him confusion,
That first thee brought into religion.
Thou woldest han ben a tredefoul a right,
Haddest thou as grete leve, as thou hast might,
To parfourme all thy lust in engendrure,
Thou haddest begeten many a creature.
Alas! why werest thou so wide a cope?
God yeve me sorwe, but, and I were pope,
Not only thou but every mighty man,
Though he were shore ful high upon his pan,
Shuld have a wif, for al this world is lorn;
Religion hath take up all the corn
Of treding, and we borel men ben shrimpes:
Of feble trees ther comen wretched impes.
This maketh that our heires ben so sclendre
And feble, that they mown not wel engendre.
This maketh that our wives wol assaye
Religious folk, for they moun better paye
Of Venus payementes than mowen we:
God wote, no lussheberghes payen ye.
But be not wroth, my lord, though that I play;
Ful oft in game a sothe have I herd say."
This worthy Monke toke all in patience,
And saide; "I wol don *all* my diligence,
As fer as sowneth into honestee,
To tellen you a tale, or two or three.
And if you list to herken hiderward,
I wol you sayn the lif of Seint Edward;
Or elles tragedies first I wol telle,
Of which I have an hundred in my celle.
"Tragedie is to sayn a certain storie,
As olde bookes maken us memorie,
Of him that stood in gret prosperitee,
And is yfallen out of high degree
In to miserie, and endeth wretchedly.
And they ben versified commonly
Of six feet, which men clepen exametron;
In prose eke ben endited many on,

And eke in metre, in many a sondry wise.
Lo, this declaring ought ynough suffice.
"Now herkeneth, if you liketh for to here.
But first I you beseche in this matere,
Though I by ordre telle not thise thinges,
Be it of popes, emperoures, or kinges,
After hir ages, as men written finde,
But telle hem som before and som behinde,
As it now cometh to my remembrance,
Have me excused of min ignorance."

THE MONKES TALE.

I wol bewaile in manere of tragedie
The harm of hem, that stode in high degree,
And fellen so, that ther n'as no remedie
To bring hem out of hir adversitee.
For certain whan that fortune list to flee,
Ther may no man of hire the cours withholde:
Let no man trust on blinde prosperitee;
Beth ware by thise ensamples trewe and olde.

LUCIFER.

At Lucifer, though he an angel were
And not a man, at him I wol beginne.
For though fortune may non angel dere,
From high degree yet fell he for his sinne
Doun into Helle, wheras he yet is inne.
O Lucifer, brightest of angels alle,
Now art thou Sathanas, that maist not twinne
Out of miserie, in which that thou art falle.

ADAM.

Lo Adam, in the feld of Damascene
With Goddes owen finger wrought was he,
And not begeten of mannes sperme unclene,
And welte all Paradis saving o tree:
Had never worldly man so high degree
As Adam, til he for misgovernance
Was driven out of his prosperitee
To labour, and to Helle, and to meschance.

SAMPSON.

Lo Sampson, which that was annunciat
By the angel, long or his nativitee:
And was to God Almighty consecrat,
And stode in noblesse while he mighte see:
Was never swiche another as was he,
To speke of strength, and therto hardinesse:
But to his wives tolde he his secree,
Thurgh which he slow himself for wretchednesse.

Sampson, this noble and mighty champion,
Withouten wepen, save his handes twey,
He slow and all to-rente the leon,
Toward his wedding walking by the wey:
His false wife coude him so plese, and pray,
Til she his conseil knewe; and she untrewe
Unto his foos his conseil gan bewray,
And him forsoke, and toke another newe.

Three hundred foxes toke Sampson for ire,
And all hir tayles he togeder bond:
And set the foxes tayles all on fire,
For he in every tayl had knit a brond.
And they brent all the cornes in that lond,
And all hir oliveres, and vines eke.
A thousand men he slow eke with his hond,
And had no wepen, but an asses cheke.

Whan they were slain, so thursted him, that he
Was wel nie lorne, for which he gan to preye,
That God wold on his peine han som pitee,
And send him drinke, or elles moste he deye:
And of this asses cheke, that was so dreye,
Out of a wang toth sprang anon a welle,
Of which he dranke ynough, shortly to seye.
Thus halp him God, as *Judicum* can telle.

By veray force at Gasa on a night,
Maugre the Philistins of that citee,
The gates of the toun he hath up plight,
And on his bak ycaried hem hath he
High on an hill, wher as men might hem se.
O noble mighty Sampson, lefe and dere,
Haddest thou not told to women thy secree,
In all this world ne had ther ben thy pere.

This Sampson never sider drank ne wine,
Ne on his hed came rasour non ne shere,
By precept of the messager divine,
For all his strengthes in his heres were:
And fully twenty winter yere by yere
He hadde of Israel the governance:
But sone shal he wepen many a tere,
For women shuln him bringen to meschance.

Unto his lemman Dalida he told,
That in his heres all his strengthe lay,
And falsely to his fomen she him sold;
And sleping in hire barme upon a day
She made to clip or shere his here away,
And made his fomen all his craft espien;
And whan that they him fond in this array,
They bond him fast, and putten out his eyen.

But or his here was clipped or yshave,
Ther was no bond, with which men might him bind,
But now is he in prison in a cave,
Wheras they made him at the querne grinde.
O noble Sampson, strongest of mankind,
O whilom juge in glory and richesse,
Now mayest thou wepen with thin eyen blind,
Sith thou fro wele art falle in wretchednesse.

The ende of this caitif was, as I shal seye:
His fomen made a feste upon a day,
And made him as hir fool before hem pleye:
And this was in a temple of gret array.
But at the last he made a foul affray,
For he two pillers shoke, and made hem falle,
And doun fell temple and all, and ther it lay,
And slow himself, and eke his fomen alle.

This is to sayn, the princes everich on,
And eke three thousand bodies were ther slain
With falling of the gret temple of ston.
Of Sampson now wol I no more sain:
Beth ware by this ensample old and plain,
That no men tell hir conseil to hir wives
Of swiche thing, as they wold han secree fain,
If that it touch hir limmes or hir lives.

HERCULES.

Of Hercules the soveraine conquerour
Singen his werkes laude, and high renoun;
For in his time of strength he was the flour.
He slow and raft the skinne of the leon;
He of Centaures laid the host adoun;
He Harpies slow, the cruel briddes felle;
He golden apples raft fro the dragon;
He drow out Cerberus the hound of Helle.

He slow the cruel tirant Busirus,
And made his hors to fret him flesh and bon;
He slow the firy serpent venemous;
Of Achelous two hornes brake he on.
And he slow Cacus in a cave of ston;
He slow the geaunt Anteus the streng;
He slow the grisely bore, and that anon;
And bare the Hevene on his nekke long.

Was never wight sith that the world began,
That slow so many monstres, as did he;
Thurghout the wide world his name ran,
What for his strength, and for his high bountee;
And every reaume went he for to see,
He was so strong that no man might him let;
At bothe the worldes endes, saith Trophee,
In stede of boundes he a piller set.

A lemman had this noble champion,
That highte Deianire, as fresh as May;
And as thise clerkes maken mention,
She hath him sent a sherte fresh and gay:
Alas! this sherte, alas and wala wa!
Evenimed was sotilly withalle,
That or that he had wered it half a day,
It made his flesh all from his bones falle.

But natheles som clerkes hire excusen
By on, that highte Nessus, that it maked;
Be as may be, I wol hire not accusen;
But on his bak this sherte he wered al naked,
Til that his flesh was for the venim blaked:
And whan he saw non other remedie;
In hote coles he hath himselven raked,
For with no venime deigned him to die.

Thus starf this worthy mighty Hercules.
Lo, who may trust on fortune any throw?
For him that folweth all this world of pres,
Or he be ware, is oft ylaid ful lowe:
Ful wise is he, that can himselven knowe.
Beth ware, for whan that fortune list to glose,
Than waiteth she hire man to overthrowe
By swiche a way, as he wold lest suppose.

NABUCHODONOSOR.

The mighty trone, the precious tresor,
The glorious sceptre, and real majestee,
That hadde the king Nabuchodonosor,
With tonge unnethes may descrived be.
He twies wan Jerusalem the citee,
The vessell of the temple he with him ladde;
At Babiloine was his soveraine see,
In which his glorie and his delit he hadde.

The fayrest children of the blood real
Of Israel he did do gelde anon,
And maked eche of hem to ben his thral.
Amonges other Daniel was on,
That was the wisest child of everich on;
For he the dremes of the king expouned,
Wher as in Caldee clerk ne was ther non,
That wiste to what fin his dremes souned.

This proude king let make a statue of gold
Sixty cubites long, and seven in brede,
To which image bothe yonge and old
Commanded he to loute, and have in drede,
Or in a fourneis, ful of flames rede,
He shuld be brent, that wolde not obeye:
But never wold assenten to that dede
Daniel, ne his yonge felawes tweye.

This king of kinges proud was and elat;
He wend that God, that sit in majestee,
Ne might him nat bereve of his estat:
But sodenly he lost his dignitee,
And like a best him semed for to be,
And ete hey as an oxe, and lay therout:
In rain with wilde bestes walked he,
Til certain time was ycome about.

And like an egles fethers wex his heres,
His neyles like a briddes clawes were,
Til God relesed him at certain yeres,
And yaf him wit, and than with many a tore
He thanked God, and ever his lif in fere
Was he to don amis, or more trespace:
And til that time he laid was on his bere,
He knew that God was ful of might and grace.

BALTHASAR.

His sone, which that highte Balthasar,
That held the regne after his fadres day,
He by his fader conde not beware,
For proude he was of herte, and of array:
And eke an ydolaster was he ay.
His high estat assured him in pride;
But fortune cast him doun (and ther he lay)
And sodenly his regne gan devide.

A feste he made unto his lordes alle
Upon a time, and made hem blithe be,
And than his officeres gan he calle;
"Goth, bringeth forth the vessels," quod he,
"Which that my fader in his prosperitee
Out of the temple of Jerusalem heraft,
And to our highe goddes thanke we
Of honour, that our eldres with us laft."

His wif, his lordes, and his concubines
Ay dronken, while hir appetites last,
Out of thise noble vessels sondry wines.
And on a wall this king his eyen cast,
And saw an hand armles, that wrote ful fast,
For fere of whiche he queke, and siked sore.
This hand, that Balthasar so sore agast.
Wrote *Mane techel phares*, and no more.

In al that lond magicien was non,
That coud expounen what this lettre ment,
But Daniel expounded it anon,
And said; "O king, God to thy fader lent
Glorie and honour, regne, tresour, and rent;
And he was proud, and nothing God ne dradde;
And therfore God gret wretche upon him sent,
And him beraft the regne that he hadde.

"He was out cast of mannes compagnie,
With asses was his habitation;
And ete hey, as a best, in wete and drie,
Til that he knew by grace and by reson,
That God of Heven hath domination
Over every regne, and every creature:
And than had God of him compassion,
And him restored his regne and his figure.

"Eke thou, that art his sone, art proud also,
And knowest all thise thinges verily;
And art rebel to God, and art his fo.
Thou dranke eke of his vessels boldely,
Thy wif eke, and thy wenches sinfully
Dranke of the same vessels sondry wines,
And heried false goddes cursedly,
Therfore to thee yshapen ful gret pine is,

"This hand was sent fro God, that on the wall
Wrote *Mane techel phares*, trusteth me;
Thy regne is don, thou weyest nought at all;
Divided is thy regne, and it shal be
To Medes and to Perses yeven," quod he.
And thilke same night this king was slawe;
And Darius occupied his degree,
Though he therto had neither right ne lawe.

Lordinges, ensample hereby moun ye take,
How that in lordship is no sikernesse:
For whan that fortune wol a man forsake,
She bereth away his regne and his richesse,
And eke his frendes, bothe more and lesse.
For what man that hath frendes thurgh fortune,
Mishap wol make hem enemies, I gesse.
This proverbe is ful soth, and ful commune.

ZENOBIA.

Zenobia, of Palmerie the quene,
(As writen Persiens of hire noblesse)
So worthy was in armes, and so kene,
That no wight passed hire in hardinesse,
Ne in linage, ne in other gentillesse.
Of kinges blood of Perse is she descended;
I say not that she hadde most fairenesse,
But of hire shape she might not ben amended.

From hire childhode I finde that she fledde
Office of woman, and to wode she went;
And many a wilde hartes blood she shedde
With arwes brode that she to hem sent;
She was so swift, that she anon hem hent.
And whan that she was elder, she wold kille
Leons, lepards, and beres al to-rent,
And in hire armes weld hem at hire wille.

She dorst the wilde bestes dennes seke,
And rennen in the mountaignes all the night,
And slepe under the bush; and she coud eke
Wrastlen by veray force and veray might
With any yong man, were he never so wight;
Ther mighte nothing in hire armes stonde;
She kept hire maidenhode from every wight,
To no man deigned hire for to be bonde.

But at the last hire frendes han hire maried
To Odenate, a prince of that contree;
Al were it so, that she hem long taried.
And ye shul understonden, how that he
Hadde swiche fantasies as hadde she;
But natheles, whan they were knit in fere,
They lived in joye, and in felicitee,
For eche of hem had other lefe and dere.

Save o thing, that she n'olde never assente,
By no way, that he shulde by hire lie
But ones, for it was hire plaine entente
To have a childe, the world to multiplie:
And al so sone as that she might espie,
That she was not with childe with that dede,
Than would she suffer him don his fantasie
Eftsone, and not but ones out of drede.

And if she were with child at thilke east,
No more shuld he playen thilke game
Till fully fourty dayes weren past:
Than wold she ones suffre him do the same.
Al were this Odenate wild or tame,
He gate no more of hire, for thus she sayde,
It was to wives lecherie and shame,
In other cas if that men with hem playde.

Two sones by this Odenate had she,
The which she kept in vertue and lettrure.
But now unto our tale turne we:
I say, so worshipful a creature,
And wise therwith, and large with mesure,
So penible in the werre, and curteis eke,
Ne more labour might in werre endure,
Was non, though al this world men shulden seke.

Hire riche array ne mighte not be told,
As wel in vessel as in hire clothing:
She was al clad in pierrie and in gold,
And eke she lefte not for non hunting
To have of sondry tonges ful knowing,
Whan that she leiser had, and for to entend
To lernen bookes was all hire liking,
How she in vertue might hire lif dispend.

And shortly of this storie for to trete,
So doughty was hire husbond and eke she,
That they conquered many regnes grete
In the orient, with many a faire citee,
Appertenaunt unto the majestee
Of Rome, and with strong hand held hem ful fast
Ne never might hir fomen don hem flee,
Ay while that Odenates dayes last.

Hire batailles, who so list hem for to rede,
Againe Sapor the king, and other mo,
And how that all this processe fell in dede,
Why she conquered, and what title therto,
And after of hire mischefe and hire wo,
How that she was beseged, and ytake,
Let him unto my maister Petrark go,
That writeth ynough of this, I undertake.

Whan Odenate was ded, she mightily
The regnes held, and with hire propre hond
Againe hire fos she fought so cruelly,
That ther n'as king ne prince in all that lond,
That he n'as glad, if he that grace fond
That she ne wolde upon his lond werreye:
With hire they maden alliaunce by bond
To ben in pees, and let hire ride and pleye.

The emperour of Rome Claudius,
Ne, him beforn, the Romain Galien
Ne dorste never be so corageous,
Ne non Ermin, ne non Egiptien,
Ne Surrien, ne non Arabien
Within the feld ne dorste with hire fight,
Lest that she wold hem with hire hondes slen,
Or with hire meinie putten hem to flight.

In kinges habite wente hire sones two,
As heires of hir fadres regnes alle,
And Heremanno and Timolao
Hir names were, as Persiens hem calle.
But ay fortune hath in hire honey galle:
This mighty quene may no while endure,
Fortune out of hire regne made hire falle
To wretchednesse, and to misaventure.

Aurelian, whan that the governance
Of Rome came into his hondes twey,
He shope upon this quene to do vengeance,
And with his legions he toke his way
Toward Zenobie, and shortly for to say,
He made hire flee, and atte last hire hent,
And fettred hire, and eke hire children tway,
Ann wan the lond, and home to Rome he went.

Amonges other thinges that he wan,
Hire char, that was with gold wrought and pierrie,
This grete Romain, this Aurelian
Hath with him lad, for that men shuld it see.
Beforen his triumphe walketh she
With gilte chaines on hire necke honging,
Crouned she was, as after hire degree,
And ful of pierrie charged hire clothing.

Alas fortune! she that whilom was
Dredeful to kinges and to emperoures,
Now gaureth all the peple on hire, alas!
And she that helmed was in starke stoures,
And wan by force tounes stronge and toures,
Shal on hire hed now were a vitremite:
And she that bare the sceptre ful of floures,
Shal bere a distaf hire cost for to quite.

NERO.

Although that Nero were as vicious,
As any fend, that lith ful low adoun,
Yet he, as telleth us Suetonius,
This wide world had in subjectioun,
Both est and west, south and septentrioun.
Of rubies, saphires, and of perles white
Were all his clothes brouded up and doun,
For he in gemmes gretly gan delite.

More delicat, more pompous of array,
More proude, was never emperour than he;
That ilke cloth that he had wered o day,
After that time he n'olde it never see;
Nettes of gold threde had he gret plentee,
To fish in Tiber, whan him list to play;
His lustes were as law, in his degree,
For fortune as his frend wold him obay.

He Rome brente for his delicacie;
The senatours he slow upon a day,
To heren how that men wold wepe and crie;
And slow his brother, and by his suster lay.
His moder made he in pitous array,
For he hire wombe let slitten to behold
Wher he conceived was, so wala wa!
That he so litel of his moder told.

Ne tere out of his eyen for that sight
Ne came, but sayd, a faire woman was she.
Gret wonder is, how that he coud or might
Be domesman of hire dede beautee:
The wine to bringen him commanded he,
And dranke anon, non other wo he made.
Whan might is joined unto crueltee,
Alas! to depe wol the venime wade.

In youthe a maister had this emperour
To techen him lettrure and curtesie,
For of moralitee he was the flour,
As in his time, but if bookes lie.
And while this maister had of him maistrie,
He maked him so conning and so souple,
That longe time it was, or tyrannie,
Or any vice dorst in him uncouple.

This Seneka, of which that I devise,
Because Nero had of him swiche drede,
For he fro vices wold him ay chastise
Discretly, as by word, and not by dede,
"Sire," he wold say, "an emperour mote nede
Be vertuous, and haten tyrannie."
For which he made him in a bathe to blede
On bothe his armes, till he muste die.

This Nero had eke of a custumaunce
In youth ageins his maister for to rise;
Which afterward him thought a gret grevaunce,
Therfore he made him dien in this wise.
But natheles this Seneka the wise
Chees in a bathe to die in this manere,
Rather than han another turmentise:
And thus hath Nero slain his maister dere.

Now fell it so, that fortune list no lenger
The highe pride of Nero to cherice:
For though that he were strong, yet was she stronger.
She thoughte thus; "By God I am to nice
To set a man, that is fulfilled of vice,
In high degree, and emperour him calle:
By God out of his sete I wol him trice,
Whan he lest weneth, sonest shal he falle."

The peple rose upon him on a night
For his defaute, and whan he it espied,
Out of his dores anon he hath him dight
Alone, and ther he wend han ben allied,
He knocked fast, and ay the more he cried,
The faster shetten they hir dores alle:
Tho wist he wel he had himself misgied,
And went his way, no lenger dorst he calle.

The peple cried and rombled up and doun,
That with his eres herd he how they sayde,
"Wher is this false tyrant, this Neroun?"
For fere almost out of his wit he brayde,
And to his goddes pitously he preide
For socour, but it mighte not betide:
For drede of this him thoughte that he deide,
And ran into a gardin him to hide.

And in this gardin fond he cherles tweye
That saten by a fire gret and red,
And to thise cherles two he gan to preye
To slen him, and to girden of his hed,
That to his body, whan that he were ded,
Were no despit ydon for his defame.
Himself he slow, he coud no better rede,
Of which fortune lough and hadde a game.

HOLOFERNES.

Was never capitaine under a king,
That regnes mo put in subjectioun,
Ne strenger was in feld of alle thing
As in his time, ne greter of renoun,
Ne more pompous in high presumptioun,
Than Holoferne, which that fortune ay kist
So likerously, and lad him up and doun,
Til that his hed was of, or that he wist.

Not only that this world had him in awe
For lesing of richesse and libertee;
But he made every man reneie his lawe.
"Nabuchodonosor was God," sayd he;
"Non other God ne shulde honoured be."
Ageins his heste ther dare no wight trespace,
Save in Bethulia, a strong citee,
Wher Eliachim a preest was of that place.

But take kepe of the deth of Holoferne:
Amid his host he dronken lay a night
Within his tente, large as is a berne;
And yet for all his pompe and all his might,
Judith, a woman, as he lay upright
Sleping, his hed of smote, and fro his tente
Ful prively she stale from every wight,
And with his hed unto hire toun she wente.

ANTIOCHUS.

What nedeth it of king Antiochus
To tell his high and real majestee,
His gret pride, and his werkes venimous?
For swiche another was ther non as he;
Redeth what that he was in Machabe.
And redeth the proud wordes that he seid,
And why he fell from his prosperitee,
And in an hill how wretchedly he deid.

Fortune him had enhaunsed so in pride,
That verayly he wend he might attaine
Unto the sterres upon every side,
And in a balaunce weyen eche mountaine,
And all the floodes of the see restreine:
And Goddes peple had he most in hate,
Hem wold he sleen in turment and in peine,
Wening that God ne might his pride abate.

And for that Nichanor and Timothee
With Jewes were venquished mightily,
Unto the Jewes swiche an hate had he,
That he bad greithe his char ful hastily,
And swore and sayde ful despitously,
Unto Jerusalem he wold eftsone
To wreke his ire on it ful cruelly,
But of his purpos was he let ful sone.

God for his manace him so sore smote,
With invisible wound, ay incurable,
That in his guttes carfe it so and bote,
Til thatte his peines weren importable;
And certainly the wreche was resonable,
For many a mannes guttes did he peine;
But from his purpos, cursed and damnable,
For all his smerte, he n'olde him not restreine:

But bade anon apparailen his host.
And sodenly, or he was of it ware,
God daunted all his pride, and all his bost;
For he so sore fell out of his chare,
That it his limmes and his skinne to-tare,
So that he neither mighte go ne ride;
But in a chaiere men about him bare,
Alle forbrused bothe bak and side.

The wreche of God him smote so cruelly,
That thurgh his body wicked wormes crept,
And therwithal he stanke so horribly,
That non of all his meinie that him kept,
Whether so that he woke or elles slept,
Ne mighte not of him the stinke endure.
In this mischiefe he wailed and eke wept,
And knew God, Lord of every creature.

To all his host, and to himself also
Ful wlatsom was the stinke of his careine;
No man ne mighte him beren to ne fro.
And in this stinke, and this horrible peine,
He starf ful wretchedly in a mountaine.
Thus hath this robbour, and this homicide,
That many a man made to wepe and pleine,
Swiche guerdon, as belongeth unto pride.

ALEXANDER.

The storie of Alexandre is so commune,
That every wight, that hath discretioun,
Hath herd somwhat or all of his fortune,
This wide world, as in conclusioun,
He wan by strength, or for his high renoun
They weren glad for pees unto him sende.
The pride of man and bost he layd adoun,
Wher so he came, unto the worldes ende.

Comparison might never yet be maked
Betwix him and another conquerour,
For al this world for drede of him hath quaked;
He was of knighthode and of fredome flour;
Fortune him maked the heir of hire honour.
Save wine and women, nothing might asswage
His high entente in armes and labour,
So was he ful of leonin corage.

What pris were it to him, though I you told
Of Darius, and an hundred thousand mo,
Of kinges, princes, dukes, erles bold,
Whieh he conquered, and brought hem into wo?
I say, as fer as man may ride or go
The world was his, what shuld I more devise?
For though I wrote or told you ever mo
Of his knighthode, it mighte not suffice.

Twelf yere he regned as saith Machabe;
Philippus sone of Macedoine he was,
That first was king in Grece the contree.
O worthy gentil Alexandre, alas
That ever shuld thee falien swiche a cas!
Enpoisoned of thyn owen folke thou were;
Thy sis fortune hath turned into an as,
And yet for thee ne wept she never a tere.

Who shal me yeven teres to complaine
The deth of gentillesse, and of fraunchise,
That all this world-welded in his demaine,
And yet him thought it mighte not suffice?
So ful was his corage of high emprise.
Alas! who shal me helpen to endite
False fortune, and poison to despise?
The whiche two of all this wo I wite.

JULIUS CESAR.

By wisdome, manhode, and by gret labour,
From humblehede to real majestee
Up rose he Julius the conquerour,
That wan all the occident, by lond and see,
By strengthe of hond, or elles by tretee,
And unto Rome made hem tributarie;
And sith of Rome the emperour was he,
Til that fortune wexe his adversarie.

O mighty Cesar, that in Thessalie
Ageins Pompeius father thin in lawe,
That of the orient had all the chivalrie,
As fer as that the day beginneth dawe,
Thou thurgh thy knighthode hast hem take and slawe,
Save fewe folk, that with Pompeius fledde,
Thurgh which thou put all the orient in awe,
Thanke fortune, that so wel thee spedde.

But now a litel while I wol bewaile
This Pompeius, this noble governour
Of Rome, which that fled at this bataille.
I say, on of his men, a false traitour,
His hed of smote, to winnen him favour
Of Julius, and him the hed he brought:
Alas, Pompeie, of the orient conquerour,
That fortune unto swiche a fin thee brought!

To Rome again repaireth Julius
With his triumphe laureat ful hie,
But on a time Brutus and Cassius,
That ever had of his high estat envie,
Ful prively had made conspiracie
Ageins this Julius in sotil wise:
And cast the place, in which he shulde die,
With bodekins, as I shal you devise.

This Julius to the capitolie wente
Upon a day, as he was wont to gon,
And in the capitolie anon him hente
This false Brutus, and his other foon,
And stiked him with bodekins anon
With many a wound, and thus they let him lie:
But never gront he at no stroke but on,
Or elles at two, but if his storie lie.

So manly was this Julius of herte,
And so wel loved estatly honestee,
That though his dedly woundes sore smerte,
His mantel over his hippes caste he,
For no man shulde seen his privetee:
And as he lay of dying in a trance,
And wiste verily that ded was he,
Of honestee yet had he remembrance.

Lucan, to thee this storie I recommende,
And to Sueton, and Valerie also,
That of this storie writen word and ende:
How that to thise gret conqueroures two
Fortune was first a frend, and sith a fo,
No man ne trust upon hire favour long,
But have hire in await for evermo;
Witnesse on all thise conqueroures strong.

CRESUS.

The riche Cresus, whilom king of Lide,
Of whiche Cresus, Cirus sore him dradde,
Yet was he caught amiddes all his pride,
And to be brent men to the fire him ladde:
But swiche a rain doun from the welken shadde,
That slow the fire, and made to him escape:
But to beware no grace yet he hadde,
Til fortune on the galwes made him gape.

Whan he escaped was, he can not stint
For to beginne a newe werre again:
He wened wel, for that fortune him sent
Swiche hap, that he escaped thurgh the rain,
That of his foos he mighte not be slain;
And eke a sweven upon a night he mette,
Of which he was so proud, and eke so fain,
That in vengeance he all his herte sette.

Upon a tree he was, as that him thought,
Ther Jupiter him weshe, both bak and side;
And Phebus eke a faire towail him brought
To drie him with, and therfore wex his pride.
And to his doughter that stood him beside,
Which that he knew in high science habound,
He bad hire tell him what it signified,
And she his dreme began right thus expound.

"The tree" (quod she) "the galwes is to mene,
And Jupiter betokeneth snow and rain,
And Phebus with his towail clere and clene,
Tho ben the Sonnes stremes, soth to sain:
Thou shalt anhanged be, fader, certain;
Rain shal thee wash, and Sonne shal thee drie."
Thus warned him ful plat and eke ful plain
His doughter, which that called was Phanie.

Anhanged was Cresus the proude king,
His real trone might him not availle:
Tragedie is non other maner thing,
Ne can in singing crien ne bewaile,
But for that fortune alt day wol assaille
With unware stroke the regnes that ben proude
For whan men trusten hire, than wol she faille,
And cover hire bright face with a cloude.

PETER OF SPAINE.

O noble, o worthy Petro, glorie of Spaine,
Whom fortune held so high in majestee,
Wel oughten men thy pitous deth complaine.
Out of thy lond thy brother made thee flee,
And after at a sege by sotiltee
Thou were betraied, and lad unto his tent,
Wher as he with his owen hond slow thee,
Succeeding in thy regne and in thy rent.

The feld of snow, with th' egle of blak therin,
Caught with the limerod, coloured as the glede,
He brewed this cursednesse, and all this sinne;
The wicked neste was werker of this dede;
Not Charles Oliver, that toke ay hede
Of trouthe and honour, but of Armorike
Genilon Oliver, corrupt for mede,
Broughte this worthy king in swiche a brike.

PETRO, KING OF CYPRE.

O worthy Petre king of Cypre also,
That Alexandrie wan by high maistrie,
Ful many an hethen wroughtest thou ful wo,
Of which thin owen lieges had envie:
And for no thing but for thy chivalrie,
They in thy bed han slain thee by the morwe;
Thus can fortune hire whele governe and gie,
And out of joye bringen men to sorwe.

BARNABO VISCOUNT.

Of Milane grete Barnabo Viscount,
God of delit, and scourge of Lumbardie,
Why shuld I not thin infortune aecount,
Sith in estat thou clomben were so high?
Thy brothers sone, that was thy double allie,
For he thy nevew was, and sone in lawe,
Within his prison made he thee to die,
But why, ne how, n'ot I that thou were slawe.

HUGELIN OF PISE.

Of the erl Hugelin of Pise the langour
Ther may no tonge tellen for pitee.
But litel out of Pise stant a tour,
In whiche tour in prison yput was he,
And with him ben his litel children three,
The eldest scarsely five yere was of age:
Alas! fortune, it was gret crueltee
Swiche briddes for to put in swiche a cage.

Dampned was he to die in that prison,
For Roger, which that bishop was of Pise,
Had on him made a false suggestion,
Thurgh which the peple gan upon him rise,
And put him in prison, in swiche a wise,
As ye han herd; and mete and drinke he had
So smale, that wel unnethe it may suffise,
And therwithal it was ful poure and bad.

And on a day befell, that in that houre,
Whan that his mete wont was to be brought,
The gailer shette the dores of the toure;
He hered it wel, but he spake right nought.
And in his herte anon ther fell a thought,
That they for hunger wolden do him dien;
"Alas!" quod he, "alas that I was wrought!"
Therwith the teres fellen fro his eyen.

His yonge sone, that three yere was of age,
Unto him said, "Fader, why do ye wepe?
Whan will the gailer bringen our potage?
Is ther no morsel bred that ye do kepe?
I am so hungry, that I may not slepe.
Now wolde God that I might slepen ever,
Than shuld not hunger in my wombe crepe;
Ther n'is no thing, sauf bred, that me were lever."

Thus day by day this chikle began to crie,
Til in his fadres barme adoun it lay,
And saide; "Farewel, fader, I mote die;"
And kist his fader, and dide the same day.
And whan the woful fader did it sey,
For wo his armes two he gan to bite,
And saide, "Alas! fortune, and wala wa!
Thy false whele my wo all may I wite."

His children wenden, that for hunger it was
That he his armes gnowe, and not for wo,
And sayden: "Fader, do not so, alas!
But rather ete the flesh upon us two.
Our flesh thou yaf us, take our flesh us fro,
And ete ynough:" right thus they to him seide,
And after that, within a day or two,
They laide hem in his lappe adoun, and deide.

Himself dispeired eke for hunger starf,
Thus ended is this mighty erl of Pise:
From high estat fortune away him carf.
Of this tragedie it ought ynough suffice;
Who so wol here it in a longer wise,
Redeth the grete poete of Itaille,
That highte Dante, for he can it devise
Fro point to point, not o word wol he faille.

THE NONNES PREESTES PROLOGUE.

"Ho!" quod the Knight, "good sire, no more of this:
That ye han said, it right ynough ywis,
And mochel more; for litel hevinesse
Is right ynough to mochel folk, I gesse.
I say for me, it is a gret disese,
Wher as men have ben in gret welth and ese,
To heren of hir soden fall, alas!
And on the contrary is joye and gret solas,
As whan a man hath ben in poure estat,
And climbeth up, and wexeth fortunat,
And ther abideth in prosperitee:
Swiche thing is gladsom, as it thinketh me,
And of swiche thing were goodly for to telle.
"Ye," quod our Hoste, "by Seint Poules belle,
Ye say right soth; this Monk hath clapped loude:
He spake, how fortune covered with a cloude
I wote not what, and als of a tragedie
Right now ye herd: and parde no remedie
It is for to bewailen, ne complaine
That that is don; and als it is a paine,
As ye han said, to here of hevinesse.
Sire Monk, no more of this, so God you blesse;
Your tale anoyeth all this compagnie;
Swiche talking is not worth a boterflie,
For therin is ther no disport ne game:
Therfore, sire Monk, dan Piers by your name,
I pray you hertely, tell us somwhat elles,
For sikerly, n'ere clinking of your belles,
That on your bridel hang on every side,
By Heven king, that for us alle dide,
I shuld er this have fallen doun for slepe,
Although the slough had ben never so depe:
Than hadde your tale all ben tolde in vain.
For certainly, as that thise clerkes sain,
Wher as a man may have non audience,
Nought helpeth it to tellen his sentence.
And wel I wote the substance is in me,
If any thing shal wel reported be.
Sire, say somwhat of hunting, I you pray.
"Nay," quod this Monk, "I have no lust to play:
Now let another telle as I have told."
Than spake our Hoste with rude speche and bold:
And sayd unto the Nonnes Preest anon, [John,
"Come nere, thou Preest, come hither, thou sire
Telle us swiche thing, as may our hertes glade.
Be blithe, although thou ride upon a jade:
What though thyn horse be bothe foule and lene,
If he wol serve thee, recke thee not a bene:
Loke that thyn herte be mery evermo."
"Yes, Hoste," quod he, "so mote I ride or go,
But I be mery, ywis I wol be blamed."
And right anon his tale he hath attamed:
And thus he said unto us everich on,
This swete Preest, this goodly man sire John.

THE NONNES PREESTES TALE.

A POURE widewe, somdel stoupen in age,
Was whilom dwelling in a narwe cotage,
Beside a grove, stonding in a dale.
This widewe, which I tell you of my tale,
Sin thilke day that she was last a wif,
In patience led a ful simple lif.
For litel was hire catel and hire rente:
By husbondry of swiche as God hire sente,
She found hirself, and eke hire doughtren two.
Three large sowes had she, and no mo:
Three kine, and eke a sheep that highte Malle.
Ful sooty was hire boure, and eke hire halle,
In which she ete many a slender mele.
Of poinant sauce ne knew she never a dele.
No deintee morsel passed thurgh hire throte;
Hire diete was accordant to hire cote.
Repletion ne made hire never sike;
Attempre diete was all hire physike,
And exercise, and hertes suffisance.
The goute let hire nothing for to dance,
No apoplexie shente not hire hed.
No win ne dranke she, neyther white ne red:
Hire bord was served most with white and black,
Milk and broun bred, in which she fond no lack,
Seinde bacon, and somtime an ey or twey;
For she was as it were a maner dey.
A yerd she had, enclosed all about
With stickes, and a drie diche without,
In which she had a cok highte Chaunteclere,
In all the land of crowing n'as his pere.
His vois was merier than the mery orgon,
On masse daies that in the chirches gon.

Wel sikerer was his crowing in his loge,
Than is a clok, or any abbey orloge.
By nature he knew eche ascentioun
Of the equinoctial in thilke toun;
For whan degrees fiftene were ascended,
Than crew he, that it might not ben amended.
His combe was redder than the fin corall,
Enbattelled, as it were a castel wall.
His bill was black, and as the jet it shone;
Like asure were his legges and his tone;
His nailes whiter than the lilie flour,
And like the burned gold was his colour.
This gentil cok had in his governance
Seven hennes, for to don all his plesance,
Which were his susters and his paramoures,
And wonder like to him, as of coloures.
Of which the fairest hewed in the throte,
Was cleped faire damoselle Pertelote,
Curteis she was, discrete, and debonaire.
And compenable, and bare hireself so faire,
Sithen the day that she was sevennight old,
That trewelich she hath the herte in hold
Of Chaunteclere, loken in every lith:
He loved hire so, that wel was him therwith.
But swiche a joye it was to here hem sing,
Whan that the brighte Sonne gan to spring,
In swete accord: "My lefe is fare in lond."
For thilke time, as I have understond,
Bestes and briddes couden speke and sing.
And so befell, that in a dawening,
As Chaunteclere among his wives alle
Sate on his perche, that was in the halle,
And next him sate his faire Pertelote,
This Chaunteclere gan gronen in his throte,
As man that in his dreme is dretched sore.
And whan that Pertelote thus herd him rore,
She was agast, and saide, "Herte dere,
What aileth you to grone in this manere?
Ye ben a veray sleper, fy for shame."
And he answered and sayde thus; "Madame,
I pray you, that ye take it not agrefe:
By God me mette I was in swiche mischefe
Right now, that yet min herte is sore afright.
Now God" (quod he) "my sweven recche aright,
And kepe my body out of foule prisoun.
"Me mette, how that I romed up and doun
Within our yerde, wher as I saw a beste,
Was like an hound, and wold han me areste
Upon my body, and han had me ded.
His colour was betwix yelwe and red;
And tipped was his tail, and both his eres
With black, unlike the remenant of his heres.
His snout was smal, with glowing eyen twey:
Yet for his loke almost for fere I dey:
This caused me my groning douteles."
"Avoy," quod she, "fy on you herteles.
Alas!" quod she, "for by that God above
Now han ye lost myn herte and all my love;
I cannot love a coward by my faith.
For certes, what so any woman saith,
We all desiren, if it mighte be,
To have an husbond, hardy, wise, and free,
And secree, and non niggard ne no fool,
Ne him that is agast of every tool,
Ne non avantour by that God above.
How dorsten ye for shame say to your love,
That any thing might maken you aferde?
Han ye no mannes herte, and han a berde?
Alas! and con ye ben agast of swevenis?
Nothing but vanitee, God wote, in sweven is.
"Swevenes engendren of repletions,
And oft of fume, and of complexions,
Whan humours ben to habundant in a wight.
Certes this dreme, which ye han met to-night,
Cometh of the grete superfluitee
Of youre rede *colera* parde,
Which causeth folk to dreden in hir dremes
Of arwes, and of fire with rede lemes,
Of rede bestes, that they wol hem bite,
Of conteke, and of waspes gret and lite;
Right as the humour of melancolie
Causeth ful many a man in slepe to crie,
For fere of bolles, and of beres blake,
Or elles that blake devils wol hem take.
"Of other humours coud I telle also,
That werken many a man in slepe moch wo:
But I wol passe, as lightly as I can.
"Lo Caton, which that was so wise a man,
Said he not thus? 'Ne do no force of dremes'.
"Now, sire," quod she, "whan we flee for the bemes,
For Goddes love, as take som laxatif:
Up peril of my soule, and of my lif,
I conseil you the best, I wol not lie,
That both of coler, and of melancolie
Ye purge you; and for ye shul not tarie,
Though in this toun be non apoteearie,
I shal myself two herbes techen you,
That shal be for your hele, and for your prow;
And in our yerde, the herbes shall I finde,
The which han of hir propretee by kinde
To purgen you benethe, and eke above.
Sire, forgete not this for Goddes love;
Ye ben ful colerike of complexion;
Ware that the Sonne in his ascention
Ne finde you not replete of humours hote:
And if it do, I dare wel lay a grote,
That ye shul han a fever tertiane,
Or elles an ague, that may be your bane.
A day or two ye shul han digestives
Of wormes, or ye take your laxatives,
Of laureole, centaurie, and fumetere,
Or elles of ellebor, that groweth there,
Of catapuce, or of gaitre-beries,
Or herbe ive growing in our yerd, that mery is:
Picke hem right as they grow, and ete hem in.
Beth mery, husbond, for your fader kin;
Dredeth no dreme; I can say you no more."
"Madame," quod he, "*grand mercy* of your lore.
But natheles, as touching dan Caton,
That hath of wisdome swiche a gret renoun,
Though that he bade no dremes for to drede,
By God, men moun in olde bookes rede,
Of many a man, more of authoritee
Than ever Caton was, so mote I the,
That all the revers sayn of his sentence,
And han wel founden by experience,
That dremes ben significations
As wel of joye, as tribulations,
That folk enduren in this lif present.
Ther nedeth make of this non argument;
The veray preve sheweth it indede.
"On of the gretest auctores that men rede,
Saith thus; that whilom twey felawes wente
On pilgrimage in a ful good entente;
And happed so, they came into a toun,
Wher ther was swiche a congregatioun
Of peple, and eke so streit of herbergage,
That they ne founde as moche as a cotage,
In which they both might ylogged be:
Wherfore they musten of necessitee,

As for that night, departen compagnie;
And eche of hem goth to his hostelrie,
And toke his logging as it wolde falle.
" That on of hem was logged in a stalle,
Fer in a yerd with oxen of the plough;
That other man was logged wel ynough,
As was his aventure, or his fortune,
That us governeth all, as in commune.
" And so befell, that, long or it were day,
This man met in his bed, ther as he lay,
How that his felaw gan upon him calle,
And said, 'Alas! for in an oxes stalle
This night shal I be mordred, ther I lie.
Now helpe me, dere brother, or I die;
In alle haste come to me,' he saide.
" This man out his slepe for fere abraide;
But whan that he was waked of his slepe,
He turned him, and toke of this no kepe;
Him thought his dreme was but a vanitee.
Thus twies in his sleping dremed he.
" And at the thirdde time yet his felaw
Came, as him thought, and said, 'I now am slaw:
Behold my blody woundes, depe and wide.
Arise up erly, in the morwe tide,
And at the west gate of the toun' (quod he)
'A carte ful of donge ther shalt thou see,
In which my body is hid prively.
Do thilke carte arresten boldely.
My gold caused my mordre, soth to sain.'
And told him every point how he was slain
With a ful pitous face, pale of hewe.
And trusteth wel his dreme he found ful trewe.
For on the morwe, as sone as it was day,
To his felawes inne he toke his way:
And whan that he came to this oxes stalle,
After his felaw he began to calle.
" The hosteler answered him anon,
And saide, 'Sire, your felaw is agon,
As sone as day he went out of the toun.'
" This man gan fallen in suspecioun
Remembring on his dremes that he mette,
And forth he goth, no lenger wold he lette,
Unto the west gate of the toun, and fond
A dong carte, as it went for to dong lond,
That was arraied in the same wise
As ye han herde the dede man devise:
And with an hardy herte he gan to crie,
Vengeance and justice of this felonie:
'My felaw mordred is this same night,
And in this carte he lith, gaping upright.
I crie out on the ministres,' quod he,
'That shulden kepe and reulen this citee:
Harow! alas! here lith my felaw slain.'
" What shuld I more unto this tale sain?
The peple out stert, and cast the cart to ground,
And in the middel of the dong they found
The dede man, that mordred was all newe.
" O blisful God, that art so good and trewe,
Lo, how that thou bewreyest mordre alway.
Mordre wol out, that see we day by day.
Mordre is so wlatsom and abhominable
To God, that is so just and resonable,
That he ne wol not suffre it hylled be:
Though it abide a yere, or two, or three,
Mordre wol out, this is my conclusioun.
" And right anon, the ministres of the toun
Han hent the carter, and so sore him pined,
And eke the hosteler so sore engined,
That they beknew hir wickednesse anon,
And were anhanged by the necke bon.

" Here moun ye see that dremes ben to drede.
And certes in the same book I rede,
Right in the next chapitre after this,
(I gabbe not, so have I joye and blis)
Two men that wold han passed over the see
For certain cause in to a fer contree,
If that the wind ne hadde ben contrarie,
That made hem in a citee for to tarie,
That stood ful mery upon an haven side.
But on a day, agein the even tide,
The wind gan change, and blew right as hem lest.
Jolif and glad they wenten to hir rest,
And casten hem ful erly for to saile;
But to that o man fell a gret mervaile.
" That on of hem in sleping as he lay,
He mette a wonder dreme, again the day:
Him thought a man stood by his beddes side,
And him commanded, that he shuld abide,
And said him thus; 'If thou to morwe wende,
Thou shalt be drient; my tale is at an ende.'
" He woke, and told his felaw what he met,
And praied him his viage for to let,
As for that day, he prayd him for to abide.
" His felaw that lay by his beddes side,
Gan for to laugh, and scorned him ful faste.
'No dreme,' quod he, 'may so my herte agaste,
That I wol leten for to do my thinges.
I sette not a straw by thy dreminges,
For swevens ben but vanitees and japes.
Men dreme al day of oules and of apes,
And eke of many a mase therwithal;
Men dreme of thing that never was, ne shal.
But sith I see that thou wolt here abide,
And thus forslouthen wilfully thy tide,
God wot it reweth me, and have good day.'
And thus he took his leve, and went his way.
" But or that he had half his cours ysailed,
N'ot I not why, ne what meschance it ailed,
But casuelly the shippes bottom rente,
And ship and man under the water wente
In sight of other shippes ther beside,
That with him sailed at the same tide.
" And therfore, faire Pertelote so dere,
By swiche ensamples olde maist thou lere,
That no man shulde be to reccheles
Of dremes, for I say thee douteles,
That many a dreme ful sore is for to drede.
" Lo, in the lif of Seint Kenelme, I rede,
That was Kenulphus sone, the noble king
Of Mercenrike, how Kenelm mette a thing.
A litel or he were mordred on a day,
His mordre in his avision he say.
His norice him expouned every del
His sweven, and bade him for to kepe him wel
For treson; but he n'as but seven yere old,
And therfore litel tale hath he told
Of any dreme, so holy was his herte.
By God I hadde lever than my sherte,
That ye had red his legend, as have I.
" Dame Pertelote, I say you trewely,
Macrobius, that writ the avision
In Affrike of the worthy Scipion,
Affirmeth dremes, and sayth that they ben
Warning of thinges, that men after seen.
" And forthermore, I pray you loketh wel
In the Olde Testament of Daniel,
If he held dremes any vanitee.
" Rede eke of Joseph, and ther shuln ye see
Wher dremes ben somtime (I say not alle)
Warning of thinges that shuln after falle.

" Loke of Egipt the king, dan Pharao,
His baker and his boteler also,
Wheder they ne felten non effect in dremes.
Who so wol seken actes of sondry remes,
May rede of dremes many a wonder thing.
" Lo Cresus, which that was of Lydie king,
Mette he not that he sat upon a tree,
Which signified he shuld anhanged be?
" Lo hire Andromacha, Hectores wif,
That day that Hector shulde lese his lif,
She dremed on the same night beforne,
How that the lif of Hector shuld be lorne,
If thilke day he went into bataille:
She warned him, but it might not availe;
He went forth for to fighten natheles,
And was yslain anon of Achilles.
" But thilke tale is al to long to telle,
And eke it is nigh day, I may not dwelle.
Shortly I say, as for conclusion,
That I shal han of this avision
Adversitee: and I say forthermore,
That I ne tell of laxatives no store,
For they ben venimous, I wot it wel:
I hem deffie, I love hem never a del.
" But let us speke of mirthe, and stinte all this;
Madame Pertelote, so have I blis,
Of o thing God hath sent me large grace:
For whan I see the beautee of your face,
Ye ben so scarlet red about your eyen,
It maketh all my drede for to dien,
For, al so siker as *In principio,*
Mulier est hominis confusio.
(Madame, the sentence of this Latine is,
Woman is mannes joye and mannes blis.)
For whan I fele a-night your softe side,
Al be it that I may not on you ride,
For that our perche is made so narwe, alas!
I am so ful of joye and of solas,
That I deffie bothe sweven and dreme."
And with that word he flew doun fro the beme,
For it was day, and eke his hennes alle;
And with a chuk he gan hem for to calle,
For he had found a corn, lay in the yerd.
Real he was, he was no more aferd;
He fethered Pertelote twenty time,
And trade hire eke as oft er it was prime.
He loketh as it were a grim leoun;
And on his toos he rometh up and doun,
Him deigned not to set his feet to ground:
He chukketh, whan he hath a corn yfound,
And to him rennen than his wives alle.
Thus real, as a prince is in his halle,
Leve I this Chaunteclere in his pasture;
And after wol I tell his aventure.
Whan that the month in which the world began,
That highte March, whan God first maked man,
Was complete, and ypassed were also,
Sithen March ended, thritty dayes and two,
Befell that Chaunteclere in all his pride,
His seven wives walking him beside,
Cast up his eyen to the brighte Sonne,
That in the signe of Taurus hadde yronne
Twenty degrees and on, and somwhat more:
He knew by kind, and by non other lore,
That it was prime, and crew with blisful steven.
" The Sonne," he said, is clomben up on Heven
Twenty degrees and on and more ywis.
Madame Pertelote, my worldes blis,
Herkeneth thise blisful brides how they sing,
And see the freshe floures how they spring;
Ful is min herte of revel, and solas."
But sodenly him fell a sorweful cas;
For ever the latter ende of joye is wo:
God wote that worldly joye is sone ago:
And if a rethor coude faire endite,
He in a chronicle might it saufly write,
As for a soverayne notabilitee.
Now every wise man let him herken me:
This story is al so trewe, I undertake,
As is the book of Launcelot du lake,
That women holde in ful gret reverence.
Now wol I turne agen to my sentence.
A col fox, ful of sleigh iniquitee,
That in the grove had wonned yeres three,
By high imagination forecast,
The same night thurghout the hegges brast
Into the yerd, ther Chaunteclere the faire
Was wont, and eke his wives, to repaire:
And in a bedde of wortes stille he lay,
Till it was passed undern of the day,
Waiting his time on Cheunteclere to falle:
As gladly don thise homicides alle,
That in await liggen to mordre men.
O false mordrour, rucking in thy den!
O newe Scariot, newe Genelon!
O false dissimulour, o Greek Sinon,
That broughtest Troye al utterly to sorwe!
O Chaunteclere, accursed be the morwe,
That thou into thy yerd flew fro the bemes:
Thou were ful wel ywarned by thy dremes,
That thilke day was perilous to thee.
But what that God forewote most nedes be,
After the opinion of certain clerkes.
Witnesse on him, that any parfit clerk is,
That in scole is gret altercation
In this matere, and gret disputison,
And hath ben of a hundred thousand men.
But I ne cannot boult it to the bren,
As can the holy doctour Augustin,
Or Boece, or the bishop Bradwardin,
Whether that Goddes worthy foreweting
Streineth me nedly for to don a thing,
(Nedely clepe I simple necessitee)
Or elles if free chois be granted me
To do that same thing, or to do it nought,
Though God forewot it, or that it was wrought;
Or if his weting streineth never a-del,
But by necessitee condicionel.
I wol not han to don of swiche matere;
My tale is of a cok, as ye may here,
That took his conseil of his wif with sorwe
To walken in the yerd upon the morwe,
That he had met the dreme, as I you told.
Womennes conseiles ben ful often cold;
Womannes conseil brought us first to wo,
And made Adam fro Paradis to go,
Ther as he was ful mery, and wel at ese.
But for I n'ot, to whom I might displese,
If I conseil of women wolde blame,
Passe over, for I said it in my game.
Rede auctours, wher they trete of swiche matere,
And what they sayn of women ye mown here,
Thise ben the cokkes wordes, and not mine;
I can non harme of no woman devine.
Faire in the sond, to bath hire merily,
Lith Pertelote, and all hire susters by,
Agein the Sonne, and Chaunteclere so free
Sang merier than the mermaid in the see,
For Phisiologus sayth sikerly,
How that they singen wel and merily.

And so befell that as he cast his eye
Among the wortes on a boterflie,
He was ware of this fox that lay ful low.
Nothing ne list him thanne for to crow,
But cried anon cok, cok, and up he sterte,
As man that was affraied in his herte.
For naturelly a beest desireth flee
Fro his contrarie, if he may it see,
Though he never erst had seen it with his eye.
This Chaunteclere, whan he gan him espie,
He wold han fled, but that the fox anon
Said; "Gentil sire, alas! what wol ye don?
Be ye affraid of me that am your frend?
Now certes, I were worse than any fend,
If I to you wold harme or vilanie.
I n'am not come your conseil to espie.
But trewely the cause of my coming
Was only for to herken how ye sing:
For trewely ye han as mery a steven,
As any angel hath, that is in Heven;
Therwith ye han of musike more feling,
Than had Boece, or any that can sing.
My lord your fader (God his soule blesse)
And eke your moder of hire gentillesse
Han in myn hous yben, to my gret ese:
And certes, sire, ful fain wold I you plese.
But for men speke of singing, I wol sey,
So mote I brouken wel min eyen twey,
Save you, ne herd I never man so sing,
As did your fador in the morwening.
Certes it was of herte all that he song.
And for to make his vois the more strong,
He wol so peine him, that with both his eyen
He muste winke, so loud he wolde crien,
And stonden on his tiptoon therwithal,
And stretchen forth his necke long and smal.
And eke he was of swiche discretion,
That ther n'as no man in no region,
That him in song or wisdom mighte passe.
I have wel red in dan Burnel the asse
Among his vers, how that ther was a cok,
That, for a preestes sone yave him a knok
Upon his leg, while he was yonge and nice,
He made him for to lese his benefice.
But certain ther is no comparison
Betwix the wisdom and discretion
Of youre fader, and his subtilitee.
Now singeth, sire, for Seinte Charitee,
Let see, can ye your fader contrefete?"
This Chaunteclere his winges gan to bete,
As man that coud not his treson espie,
So was he ravished with his flaterie.
Alas! ye lordes, many a false flatour
Is in your court, and many a losengeour,
That pleseth you wel more by my faith,
Than he that sothfastnesse unto you saith.
Redeth Ecclesiast of flaterie,
Beth ware, ye lordes, of hire trecherie.
This Chaunteclere stood high upon his toos
Stretching his necke, and held his eyen cloos,
And gan to crowen loude for the nones:
And dan Russel the fox stert up at ones,
And by the garget hente Chaunteclere,
And on his back toward the wood him bere.
For yet ne was ther no man that him sued.
O destinee, that maist not ben eschued!
Alas, that Chaunteclere flew fro the bemes!
Alas, his wif ne raughte not of dremes!
And on a Friday fell all this meschance.
O Venus that art goddesse of plesance,
Sin that thy servant was this Chaunteclere,
And in thy service did all his powere,
More for delit, than world to multiplie,
Why wolt thou suffre him on thy day to die?
O Gaufride, dere maister soverain,
That, whan thy worthy king Richard was slain
With shot, complainedest his deth so sore,
Why ne had I now thy science and thy lore,
The Friday for to chiden, as did ye?
(For on a Friday sothly slain was he)
Than wold I shew you how that I coud plaine
For Chaunteleres drede, and for his paine.
Certes swiche cry, ne lamentation
N'as never of ladies made, whan Ilion
Was wonne, and Pirrus with his streite swerd
Whan he had hent king Priam by the herd,
And slain him, (as saith us *Eneidos*)
As maden all the hennes in the cloos,
Whan they had seen of Chaunteclere the sight.
But soverainly dame Pertelote shright,
Ful louder than did Hasdruballes wif,
Whan that hire husbond hadde ylost his lif,
And that the Romaines hadden brent Cartage,
She was so ful of torment and of rage,
That wilfully into the fire she sterte,
And brent hireselven with a stedfast herte.
O woful hennes, right so criden ye,
As, whan that Nero brente the citee
Of Rome, cried the senatoures wives,
For that hir husbonds losten alle hir lives;
Withouten gilt this Nero hath hem slain.
Now wol I turne unto my tale agen.
The sely widewe, and hire doughtren two,
Herden thise hennes crie and maken wo,
And out at the dores sterten they anon,
And saw the fox toward the wode is gon,
And bare upon his back the cok away:
They criden, out! "Harow and wala wa!
A ha the fox!" and him they ran,
And eke with staves many another man;
Ran Colle our dogge, and Talbot, and Gerlond,
And Malkin, with hire distaf in hire hond;
Ran cow and calf, and eke the very hogges
So fered were for berking of the dogges,
And shouting of the men and women eke,
They ronnen so, hem thought hir hertes breke.
They yelleden as fendes don in Helle:
The dokes crieden as men wold hem quelle:
The gees for fere flewen over the trees,
Out of the hive came the swarme of bees,
So hidous was the noise, a *benedicite!*
Certes he Jakke Straw, and his meinie,
Ne maden never shoutes half so shrille,
Whan that they wolden any Fleming kille,
As thilke day was made upon the fox.
Of bras they broughten beemes and of box,
Of horn and bone, in which they blew and pouped,
And therwithal they shriked and they houped;
It semed, as the Heven shulde falle.
Now, good men, I pray you herkeneth alle;
Lo, how fortune turneth sodenly
The hope and pride eke of hire enemy.
This cok that lay upon the foxes bake,
In all his drede, unto the fox he spake,
And sayde; "Sire, if that I were as ye,
Yet wolde I sayn, (as wisly God helpe me)
Turneth agein, ye proude cherles alle;
A veray pestilence upon you falle.
Now am I come unto the wodes side,
Maugre your hed, the cok shal here abide;

I wol him ete in faith, and that anon."
The fox answered, " In faith it shal be don:"
And as he spake the word, al sodenly
The cok brake from his mouth deliverly,
And high upon a tree he flew anon.
And whan the fox saw that the cok was gon,
" Alas!" quod he, " o Chaunteclere, alas!
I have" (quod he) " ydon to you trespas,
In as moche as I maked you aferd,
Whan I you hente, and brought out of your yerd;
But, sire, I did it in no wikke entente:
Come doun, and I shal tell you what I mente.
I shal say sothe to you, God helpe me so."
" Nay then," quod he, " I shrewe us bothe two.
And first I shrewe myself, bothe blood and bones,
If thou begile me oftener than ones.
Thou shalt no more thurgh thy flaterie
Do me to sing and winken with myn eye.
For he that winketh, whan he shulde see,
Al wilfully, God let him never the." [chance,
" Nay," quod the fox, " but God yeve him mes-
That is so indiscrete of governance,
That jangleth, whan that he shuld hold his pees."
Lo, which it is for to be reccheles
And negligent, and trust on flaterie.
But ye that holden this tale a folie,
As of a fox, or of a cok, or hen,
Taketh the moralitee therof, good men.
For Seint Poule sayth, " that all that writen is,
To our doctrine it is ywritten ywis.
Taketh the fruit, and let the chaf be stille."
Now, goode God, if that it be thy wille,
As saith my lord, so make us all good men;
And bring us to thy highe blisse. *Amen.*

" Sire Nonnes Preest," our Hoste sayd anon,
" Yblessed be thy breche and every ston;
This was a mery tale of Chaunteclere.
But by my trouthe, if thou were seculere,
Thou woldest ben a tredefoule a right:
For if thou have corage as thou hast might,
Thee were nede of hennes, as I wene,
Ye mo than seven times seventene.
Se, whiche braunes hath this gentil preest,
So gret a necke, and swiche a large breest!
He loketh as a sparhauk with his eyen;
Him nedeth not his colour for to dien
With Brasil, ne with grain of Portingale.
" But, sire, faire falle you for your tale."
And after that, he with ful mery chere
Sayd to another, as ye shuln here.

.....

THE SECOND NONNES TALE.

The ministre and the norice unto vices,
Which that men clepe in English idelnesse,
That porter at the gate is of delices,
To eschuen, and by hire contrary hire oppresse,
That is to sain, by leful besinesse,
Wel oughte we to don al our entente,
Lest that the fend thurgh idelnesse us hente.

For he that with his thousand cordes slie
Continuelly us waiteth to beclappe,
Whan he may man in idelnesse espie,
He can so lightly cacche him in a trappe,
Til that a man be hent right by the lappe,
He n'is not ware the fend hath him in hond:
Wel ought us werche, and idelnesse withstond.

And though men dradden never for to die,
Yet see men wel by reson douteles,
That idelnesse is rote of slogardie,
Of which ther never cometh no good encrees,
And see that slouthe holdeth hem in a lees,
Only to slepe, and for to ete and drinke,
And to devouren all that other swinke.

And for to put us from swiche idelnesse,
That cause is of so gret confusion,
I have here don my feithful besinesse
After the legende in translation
Right of thy glorious lif and passion,
Thou with thy gerlond, wrought of rose and lilie,
Thee mene I, maid and martir Seinte Cecilie.

And thou, that arte floure of virgines all,
Of whom that Bernard list so wel to write,
To thee at my beginning first I call,
Thou comfort of us wretches, do me endite
Thy maidens deth, that wan thurgh hire merite
The eternal lif, and over the fend victorie,
As man may after reden in hire storie.

Thou maide and mother, doughter of thy son,
Thou wel of mercy, sinful soules cure,
In whom that God of bountee chees to won;
Thou humble and high over every creature,
Thou nobledest so fer forth our nature,
That no desdaine the maker had of kinde
His son in blood and flesh to clothe and winde.

Within the cloystre blisful of thy sides,
Toke mannes shape the eternal love and pees,
That of the trine compas Lord and gide is,
Whom erthe, and see, and Heven out of relees
Ay herien; and thou, virgine wemmeles,
Bare of thy body (and dweltest maiden pure)
The creatour of every creature.

Assembled is in thee magnificence
With mercy, goodnesse, and with swiche pitee,
That thou, that art the sonne of excellence,
Not only helpest hem that praien thee,
But oftentime of thy benignitee
Ful freely, or that men thin helpe beseche,
Thou goest beforne, and art hir lives leche.

Now helpe, thou meke and blisful faire maide,
Me flemed wretch, in this desert of galle;
Thinke on the woman Cananee, that saide
That whelpes eten som of the cromes alle
That from hir lordes table ben yfalle;
And though that I, unworthy son of Eve,
Be sinful, yet accepteth my beleve.

And for that feith is ded withouten werkes,
So for to werken yeve me wit and space,
That I be quit from thennes that most derke is;
O thou, that art so faire and ful of grace,
Be thou min advocat in that high place,
Ther as withouten ende is songe Osanne,
Thou Cristes mother, doughter dere of Anne.

And of thy light my soule in prison light,
That troubled is by the contagion
Of my body, and also by the wight
Of erthly lust, and false affection:
O haven of refute, o salvation
Of hem that ben in sorwe and in distresse,
Now help, for to my werk, I wol me dresse.

Yet pray I you that reden that I write,
Foryeve me, that I do no diligence
This ilke storie subtilly to endite.
For both have I the wordes and sentence
Of him, that at the seintes reverence
The storie wrote, and folowed hire legende,
And pray you that ye wol my werk amende.

First wol I you the name of Seinte Cecilie
Expoune, as men may in hire storie see:
It is to sayn in English, Hevens lilie,
For pure chastnesse of virginitee,
Or for she whitnesse had of honestee,
And grene of conscience, and of good fame
The swote savour, Lilie was hire name.

Or Cecilie is to sayn, the way to blinde,
For she ensample was by good teching;
Or elles Cecilie, as I writen finde,
Is joined by a maner conjoining
Of Heven and *Lia*, and here in figuring
The Heven is set for thought of holinesse,
And *Lia*, for hire lasting besinesse.

Cecilie may eke be sayd in this manere,
Wanting of blindnesse, for hire grete light
Of sapience, and for hire thewes clere.
Or elles lo, this maidens name bright
Of Heven and *Leos* cometh, for which by right
Men might hire wel the Heven of peple calle,
Ensample of good and wise werkes alle:

For *Leos* peple in English is to say;
And right as men may in the Heven see
The Sonne and Mone, and sterres every way,
Right so men gostly, in this maiden free
Sawen of faith the magnanimitee,
And eke the clerenesse hole of sapience,
And sondry werkes, bright of excellence.

And right so as thise philosophres write,
That Heven is swift and round, and eke brenning,
Right so was faire Cecilie the white
Ful swift and besy in every good werking,
And round and hole in good persevering,
And brenning ever in charitee ful bright:
Now have I you declared what she hight.

This maiden bright Cecile, as hire lif saith,
Was come of Romaines and of noble kind,
And from hire cradel fostred in the faith
Of Crist, and bare his Gospel in hire mind:
She never cesed, as I writen find,
Of hire prayere, and God to love and drede,
Beseching him to kepe hire maidenhede.

And whan this maiden shuld until a man
Ywedded be, that was ful yonge of age,
Which that ycleped was Valerian,
And day was comen of hire marriage,
She ful devout and humble in hire corage,
Under hire robe of gold, that sat ful faire,
Had next hire flesh yclad hire in an haire.

And while that the organs maden melodie,
To God alone thus in hire hert song she;
"O Lord, my soule and eke my body gie
Unwemmed, lest that I confounded be."
And for his love that died upon the tree,
Every second or thridde day she fast,
Ay bidding in hire orisons ful fast.

The night came, and to bedde must she gon
With hire husbond, as it is the manere,
And prively she said to him anon;
"O swete and wel beloved spouse dere,
Ther is a conseil, and ye wol it here,
Which that right fayn I wold unto you saie,
So that ye swere, ye wol it not bewraie."

Valerian gan fast unto hire swere,
That for no cas, ne thing that mighte be,
He shulde never to non bewraien here;
And than at erst thus to him saide she;
"I have an angel which that loveth me,
That with gret love wher so I wake or slepe,
Is redy ay my body for to kepe;

"And if that he me felen out of drede,
That ye me touch or love in vilanie,
He right anon wol sleen you with the dede,
And in your youthe thus ye shulden die.
And if that ye in clene love me gie,
He wol you love as me, for your clenenesse,
And shew to you his joye and his brightnesse."

This Valerian, corrected as God wold,
Answerd again, "If I shal trusten thee,
Let me that angel seen, and him behold;
And if that it a veray angel be,
Than wol I don as thou hast prayed me;
And if thou love another man forsothe
Right with this swerd than wol I slee you bothe."

Cecile answered anon right in this wise;
"If that you list, the angel shul ye see,
So that ye trow on Crist, and you baptise;
Goth forth to Via Apia" (quod she)
"That fro this toun ne stant but miles three,
And to the poure folkes that ther dwellen
Say hem right thus, as that I shal you tellen.

"Tell hem, that I Cecile you to hem sent
To shewen you the good Urban the old,
For secree nedes, and for good entent;
And whan that ye Seint Urban an behold,
Tell him the wordes which I to you told;
And whan that he hath purged you fro sinne,
Than shal ye seen that angel er ye twinne."

Valerian is to the place gon,
And right as he was taught by hire lerning,
He fond this holy old Urban anon
Among the seintes buriels louting:
And he anon withouten tarying
Did his message, and whan that he it tolde,
Urban for joye his hondes gan upholde.

The teres from his eyen let he falle;
"Almighty Lord, o Jesu Crist," quod he,
"Sower of chast conseil, hierde of us alle,
The fruit of thilke seed of chastitee
That thou hast sow in Cecile, take to thee:
Lo, like a besy bee withouten gile
Thee serveth ay thin owen thral Cecile.

"For thilke spouse, that she toke but newe
Ful like a fiers leon, she sendeth here
As meke as ever was any lambe to ewe."
And with that word anon ther gan apere
An old man, clad in white clothes clere,
That had a book with lettres of gold in hond,
And gan before Valerian to stond.

Valerian, as ded, fell doun for drede,
Whan he him saw; and up he hent him tho,
And on his book right thus he gan to rede;
"O Lord, on faith, on God withouten mo,
On Cristendom, and fader of all also
Aboven all, and over all every wher:"
Thise wordes all with gold ywriten were.

Whan this was red, than said this olde man,
"Levest thou this thing or no? say ye or nay."
"I leve all this thing," quod Valerian,
"For sother thing than this, I dare wel say,
Under the Heven no wight thinken may."
Tho vanished the olde man, he n'iste wher,
And pope Urban him cristened right ther.

Valerian goth home, and fint Cecilie
Within his chambre with an angel stonde:
This angel had of roses and of lilie
Corones two, the which he bare in honde,
And first to Cecile, as I understonde,
He yaf that on, and after gan he take
That other to Valerian hire make.

"With body clene, and with unwemmed thought
Kepeth ay wel thise corones two" quod he,
From Paradis to you I have hem brought,
Ne never mo ne shul they roten be,
Ne lese hire swete savour, trusteth me,
Ne never wight shal seen hem with his eye,
But he be chaste, and hate vilanie.

"And thou, Valerian, for thou so sone
Assentedest to good conseil, also
Say what thee list, and thou shalt han thy bone."
"I have a brother," quod Valerian tho,
"That in this world I love no man so,
I pray you that my brother may have grace
To know the trouth, as I do in this place."

The angel sayd; "God liketh thy request,
And bothe with the palme of martirdome
Ye shullen come unto his blisful rest."
And with that word, Tiburce his brother come.
And whan that he the savour undernome,
Which that the roses and the lilies cast,
Within his herte he gan to wonder fast,

And said; "I wonder this time of the yere
Whennes that swete savour cometh so
Of roses and lilies, that I smelle here;
For though I had hem in min hondes two,
The savour might in me no deper go:
The swete smel, that in min herte I find,
Hath changed me all in another kind."

Valerian saide; "Two corones han we
Snow-white and rose-red, that shinen clere,
Which that thin eyen han no might to see:
And as thou smellest hem thurgh my praiere,
So shalt thou seen hem, leve brother dere,
If it so be thou wolt withouten slouthe
Beleve aright, and know the veray trouthe."

Tiburce answered; "Saith thou this to me
In sothnesse, or in dreme herken I this?"
"In dremes," quod Valerian, "han we be
Unto this time, brother min, ywis:
But now at erst in trothe our dwelling is." [wise?"
"How wost thou this," quod Tiburce, "in what
Quod Valerian; "That shal I thee devise.

"The angel of God hath me the trouth ytaught,
Which thou shalt seen, if that thou wilt reney
The idoles, and be clene, and elles naught."
[And of the miracle of thise corones twey
Seint Ambrose in his preface list to sey;
Solempnely this noble doctour dere
Commendeth it, and saith in this manere.

The palme of martirdome for to receive,
Seinte Cecilie, fulfilled of Goddes yeft,
The world and eke hir chambre gan she weive;
Witnesse Tiburces and Ceciles shrift,
To which God of his bountee wolde shift
Corones two, of floures wel smelling,
And made his angel hem the corones bring.

The maid hath brought thise men to blisse above;
The world hath wist what it is worth certain
Devotion of chastitee to love.]
Tho shewed him Cecile all open and plain,
That all idoles ni's but a thing in vain,
For they ben dombe, and therto they ben deve,
And charged him with his idoles for to leve.

"Who so that troweth not this, a best he is,"
Quod this Tiburce, "if that I shall not lie."
And she gan kisse his brest whan she herd this,
And was ful glad he coude trouth espie:
"This day I take thee for min allie,"
Saide this blisful faire maiden dere;
And after that she said as ye may here.

"Lo, right so as the love of Crist" (quod she)
"Made me thy brothers wif, right in that wise
Anon for mine allie here take I thee,
Sithen that thou wolt thin idoles despise.
Goth with thy brother now and thee baptise,
And make the clene, so that thou maist behold
The angels face, of which thy brother told."

Tiburce answered, and saide; "Brother dere,
First tell me whither I shal, and to what man.
To whom?" quod he; "Com forth with goode cheer,
I wol thee lede unto the pope Urban."
"To Urban? brother min Valerian,"
Quod tho Tiburce, "wilt thou me thider lede?
Me thinketh that it were a wonder dede.

"Ne menest thou not Urban" (quod he tho)
"That is so often damned to be ded,
That woneth in halkes alway to and fro,
And dare not ones putten for his hed?
Men shuld him brennen in a fire so red,
If he were found, or that men might him spie,
And we also, to bere him compagnie.

"And while we seken thilke divinitee,
That is yhid in Heven prively,
Algate ybrent in this world shuld we be."
To whom Cecile answered boldely;
"Men mighten dreden wel and skilfully
This life to lese, min owen dere brother,
If this were living only and non other.

"But ther is better lif in other place,
That never shal be lost, ne drede thee nought
Which Goddes sone us tolde thurgh his grace,
That fadres sone which alle thinges wrought;
And all that wrought is with a skilful thought,
The gost, that from the fader gan procede,
Hath souled hem withouten any drede,

" By word and by miracle he Goddes sone,
Whan he was in this world, declared here,
That ther is other lif ther men may wone."
To whom answerd Tiburce; " O suster dere,
Ne saidest thou right now in this manere,
Ther n'as but o God, lord in sothfastnesse,
And now of three how mayst thou bere witnesse?"

" That shal I tell," quod she, " or that I go.
Right as a man hath sapiences three,
Memorie, engine, and intellect also,
So in o being of divinitee
Three persones mowen ther righte wel be."
Tho gan she him ful besily to preche
Of Cristes soude, and of his peines teche,

And many pointes of his passion;
How Goddes sone in this world was withhold
To don mankinde pleine remission,
That was ybound in sinne and cares cold.
All this thing she unto Tiburce told,
And after this Tiburce in good entent,
With Valerian to pope Urban he went,

That thanked God, and with glad herte and light
He cristened him, and made him in that place
Parfite in his lerning and Goddes knight.
And after this Tiburce gat swiche grace,
That every day he saw in time and space
The angel of God, and every maner bone
That he God axed, it was sped ful sone.

It were ful hard by ordre for to sain
How many wonders Jesus for hem wrought.
But at the last, to tellen short and plain,
The sergeaunts of the toun of Rome hem sought,
And hem before Almache the prefect brought,
Which hem apposed, and knew all hire entent,
And to the image of Jupiter hem sent;

And said; " Who so wol nought do sacrifice,
Swap of his hed, this is my sentence here."
Anon thise martyrs, that I you devise,
On Maximus, that was an officere
Of the prefectes, and his corniculere,
Hem hent, and whan he forth the seintes lad,
Himself he wept for pitee that he had.

Whan Maximus had herd the seintes lore,
He gate him of the turmentoures leve,
And lad hem to his hous withouten more;
And with hir preching, or that it were eve,
They gonnen fro the turmentours to reve,
And fro Maxime, and fro his folk eche on
The false faith, to trowe in God alone.

Cecilie came, whan it was waxen night,
With preestes, that hem cristened all yfere;
And afterward, whan day was waxen light,
Cecilie hem said with a ful stedfast chere;
" Now, Cristes owen knightes leve and dere,
Caste all away the werkes of derkenesse,
And armeth you in armes of brightnesse.

" Ye han forsoth ydon a gret bataille;
Your cours is don, your faith han ye conserved;
Goth to the croune of lif that may not faille;
The right ful juge, which that ye han served,
Shal yeve it you, as ye han it deserved."
And whan this thing was said, as I devise,
Men ledde hem forth to don the sacrifice.

But whan they weren to the place ybrought,
To tellen shortly the conclusioun,
They n'olde encense, ne sacrifice right nought,
But on hir knees they setten hem adoun,
With humble herte and sad devotioun,
And losten bothe hir hedes in the place;
Hir soules wenten to the king of grace.

This Maximus, that saw this thing betide,
With pitous teres told it anon right,
That he hir snules saw to Heven glide
With angels, ful of clerenesse and of light;
And with his word converted many a wight.
For which Almachius did him to-bete
With whip of led, til he his lif gan lete.

Cecilie him toke, and buried him anon
By Tiburce and Valerian softely,
Within hir burying place, under the ston.
And after this Almachius hastily
Bad his ministers fetchen openly
Cecile, so that she might in his presence
Don sacrifice, and Jupiter encense.

But they converted at hire wise lore
Wepten ful sore, and yaven ful credence
Unto hire word, and crieden more and more;
" Crist, Goddes sone, withouten difference
Is veray God, this is all our sentence,
That hath so good a servant him to serve:
Thus with o vois we trowen though we sterve."

Almachius, that herd of this doing,
Bad fetchen Cecile, that he might hire see:
And alderfirst, lo, this was his axing;
" What maner woman arte thou?" quod he.
" I am a gentilwoman born," quod she.
" I axe thee," quod he, " though it thee greve,
Of thy religion and of thy beleve."

" Why then began your question folily,"
Quod she, " that woldest two answers conclude
In o demand? ye axen lewedly."
Almache answerd to that similitude,
" Of whennes cometh thin answering so rude?"
" Of whennes?"(quod she, whan that she was freined)
" Of conscience, and of good faith unfeined."

Almachius said; " Ne takest thou non hede
Of my power?" and she him answerd this;
" Your might" (quod she) " ful litel is to drede;
For every mortal mannes power n'is
But like a bladder full of wind ywis:
For with a nedles point, whan it is blow,
May all the bost of it be laid ful low."

" Ful wrongfully begonnest thou," (quod he)
" And yet in wrong is al thy perseverance:
Wost thou not how our mighty princes free
Have thus commanded and made ordinance,
That every cristen wight shal han penance
But if that he his Cristendome withseye,
And gon al quite, if he wol it reneye?"

" Your princes erren, as your nobley doth,"
Quod tho Cecile, " and with a wood sentence
Ye make us gilty, and it is not soth:
For ye that knowen wel our innocence,
For as moche as we don ay reverence
To Crist, and for we bere a cristen name,
Ye put on us a crime and eke a blame.

" But we that knowen thilke name so
For vertuous, we may it not withseye."
Almache answered; " Chese on of thise two,
Do sacrifice, or Cristendom reneye,
That thou mow now escapen by that wey."
At which this holy blisful fayre maid
Gan for to laughe, and to the juge said:

" O juge confuse in thy nicetee,
Woldest thou that I reneye innocence?
To maken me a wicked wight" (quod she)
" Lo, he dissimuleth here in audience,
He stareth and wodeth in his advertence."
To whom Almachius said; " Unsely wretch,
Ne wost thou not how far my might may stretch?

" Han not our mighty princes to me yeven
Ya bothe power and eke auctoritee
To maken folk to dien or to liven?
Why spekest thou so proudly than to me?"
" I ne speke nought but stedfastly," quod she,
" Not proudely, for I say, as for my side,
We haten dedly thilke vice of pride.

" And if thou drede not a soth for to here,
Than wol I shewe al openly by right,
That thou hast made a ful gret lesing here.
Thou saist, thy princes han thee yeven might
Both for to slee and for to quiken a wight,
Thou that ne maist but only lif bereve,
Thou hast non other power ne no leve.

" But thou maist sayn, thy princes han thee maked
Ministre of deth; for if thou speke of me,
Thou liest; for thy power is ful naked."
" Do way thy boldnesse," said Almachius tho,
" And sacrifice to our goddes, er thou go.
I recke not what wrong that thou me proffre,
For I can suffre it as a philosophre.

" But thilke wronges may I not endure,
That thou spekest of our goddes here," quod he.
Cecile answerd; " O nice creature,
Thou saidest no word sin thou spake to me,
That I ne knew therwith thy nicetee,
And that thou were in every maner wise
A lewed officer, a vain justice.

" Ther lacketh nothing to thin utter eyen
That thou n'art blind; for thing that we seen alle
That is a ston, that men may wel espien,
That ilke ston a god thou wolt it calle.
I rede thee let thin hond upon it falle,
And tast it wel, and ston thou shalt it find,
Sin that thou seest not with thin eyen blind.

" It is a shame that the peple shal
So scornen thee, and laugh at thy folie:
For comunly men wot it wel over al,
That mighty God is in his Hevens hie;
And thise images, wel maist thou espie,
To thee ne to hemself may not profite,
For in effect they be not worth a mite."

Thise and swiche other wordes saide she,
And he wex wroth, and bade men should hire lede
Home til hire house, " and in hire hous" (quod he)
" Brenne hire right in a bath, with flames rede."
And as he bade, right so was don the dede;
For in a bathe they gonne hire faste shetten,
And night and day gret fire they under betten.

The longe night, and eke a day also,
For alf the fire, and eke the bathes hete,
She sate al cold, and felt of it no wo,
It made hire not a drope for to swete:
But in that bath hire lif she muste lete,
For he Almache, with a ful wicke entent,
To sleen hire in the bath his sonde sent.

Three strokes in the nekke he smote hire tho
The turmentour, but for no maner chance
He mighte not smite all hire nekke atwo:
And for ther was that time an ordinance
That no man shulde don man swiche penance,
The fourthe stroke to smiten, soft or sore,
This turmentour ne dorste do no more;

But half ded, with hire nekke ycorven then
He left hire lie, and on his way is went.
The cristen folk, which that aboute hire were,
With shetes han the blood ful faire yhent:
Three dayes lived she in this turment,
And never ceased hem the faith to teche,
That she had fostred hem, she gan to preche.

And hem she yaf hire mebles and hire thing,
And to the pope Urban betoke hem tho,
And said; " I axed this of Heven king,
To have respit three dayes and no mo,
To recommend to you, or that I go,
Thise soules, lo, and that I might do werche
Here of min hous perpetuelfich a cherche."

Seint Urban, with his dekenes prively
The body fette, and buried it by night
Among his other seintes honestly:
Hire hous the cherche of Seinte Cecile hight;
Seint Urban halowed it, as he wel might,
In which unto this day in noble wise
Men don to Crist and to his seinte servise.

THE

CHANONES YEMANNES PROLOGUE.

Whan that tolde was the lif of Seinte Cecile,
Er we had ridden fully five mile,
At Boughton under Blee us gan atake
A man, that clothed was in clothes blake,
And undernethe he wered a white surplis.
His hakeney, which that was al pomelee gris,
So swatte, that it wonder was to see,
It semed as he had priked miles three.
The horse eke that his Yeman rode upon,
So swatte, that unnethes might he gon.
About the peytrel stood the fome ful hie,
He was of fome as flecked as a pie.
A male tweifold on his croper lay,
It semed that he caried litel array,
Al light for sommer rode this worthy man.
And in my herte wondren I began
What that he was, til that I understode,
How that his cloke was sowed to his hode;
For which whan I had long avised me,
I demed him some chanon for to be.
His hat heng at his back doun by a las,
For he had ridden more than trot or pas,
He had ay priked like as he were wode.
A clote-lefe he had laid under his hode

For swete, and for to kepe his hed fro hete.
But it was joye for to seen him swete;
His forehed dropped, as a stillatorie
Were ful of plaintaine or of paritorie.
And whan that he was come, he gan to crie,
"God save" (quod he) "this joly compagnie.
Fast have I priked" (quod he) "for your sake,
Because that I wolde you atake,
To riden in this mery compagnie."
His Yeman was eke ful of curtesie,
And saide; "Sires, now in the morwe tide
Out of your hostelrie I saw you ride,
And warned here my lord and soverain,
Which that to riden with you is ful fain,
For his disport; he loveth dalíance."
"Frend, for thy warning God yeve thee good chance,"
Than said our Hoste; "certain it wolde seme
Thy lord were wise, and so I may wel deme;
He is ful joconde also dare I leye;
Can he ought tell a mery tale or twele,
With which he gladen may this compagnie?"
"Who, sire? my lord? Ye, sire, withouten lie,
He can of mirth and eke of jolitee
Not but ynough; also, sire, trusteth me,
And ye him knew al so wel as do I,
Ye wolden wondre how wel and craftily
He coude werke, and that in sondry wise.
He hath take on him many a gret emprise,
Which were ful harde for any that is here
To bring about, but they of him it lere.
As homely as he rideth amonges you,
If ye him knew, it wold be for your prow:
Ye wolden not forgon his acquaintanee
For mochel good, I dare lay in balance
All that I have in my possession.
He is a man of high discression,
I warne you wel, he is a passing man.
"Wel," quod our Hoste, "I pray thee tell me than,
Is he a clerk, or non? tell what he is."
"Nay, he is greter than a clerk ywis,"
Saide this Yeman, "and in wordes fewe,
Hoste, of his craft somwhat I wol you shewe.
"I say, my lord can swiche a subtiltee,
(But all his craft ye moun not wete of me,
And somwhat help I yet to his werking)
That all the ground on which we been riding
Til that we come to Canterbury toun,
He coud al clene turnen up so doun,
And pave it all of silver and of gold."
And whan this Yeman had this tale ytolde
Unto our Hoste, he said; "*Benedicite*,
This thing is wonder mervaillous to me,
Sin that thy lord is of so high prudence,
Because of which men shulde him reverence,
That of his worship rekketh he so lite;
His overest sloppe it is not worth a mité
As in effect to him, so mote I go;
It is all baudy and to-tore also.
Why is thy lord so sluttish I thee preye,
And is of power better cloth to beye,
If that his dede accorded with thy speche?
Telle me that, and that I thee beseche."
"Why?" quod this Yeman, "wherto axe ye me?
God helpe me so, for he shal never the:
(But I wol not avowen that I say,
And therfore kepe it secree I you pray)
He is to wise in faith, as I beleve.
Thing that is overdon, it wol not preve
Aright, as clerkes sain, it is a vice;
Wherfore in that I hold him lewed and nice.
For whan a man hath overgret a wit,
Ful oft him happeth to misusen it:
So doth my lord, and that me greveth sore.
God it amende, I can say now no more."
"Therof no force, good yeman," quod our Host,
"Sin of the conning of thy lord thou wost,
Telle how he doth, I pray thee hertily,
Sin that he is so crafty and so sly.
Wher dwellen ye, if it to tellen be?"
"In the subarbes of a toun," quod he,
"Lurking in hernes and in lanes blinde,
Wheras thise robbours and thise theves by kinde
Holden hir privee fereful residence,
As they that dare not shewen hir presence,
So faren we, if I shal say the sothe."
"Yet," quod our Hoste, "let me talken to the;
Why art thou so discoloured of thy face?"
"Peter," quod he, "God yeve it harde grace,
I am so used the hote fire to blow,
That it hath changed my colour I trow;
I n'am not wont in no mirrour to prie,
But swinke sore, and lerne to multiplie.
We blundren ever, and poren in the fire,
And for all that we faille of our desire,
For ever we lacken our conclusion.
To mochel folk we don illusion,
And borwe gold, be it a pound or two,
Or ten or twelve, or many sommes mo,
And make hem wenen at the leste wey,
That of a pound we connen maken twey,
Yet is it false; and ay we han good hope
It for to don, and after it we grope:
But that science is so fer us beforne,
We mowen not, although we had it sworne,
It overtake, it slit away so fast;
It wol us maken beggers at the last."
While this Yeman was thus in his talking,
This Chanon drew him nere, and herd all thing
Which this yeman spake, for suspecion
Of mennes speche ever had this Chanon:
For Caton sayth, that "he that gilty is,
Demeth all thing be spoken of him ywis:"
That was the cause, he gan so nigh him drawe
To his Yeman, to herken all his sawe,
And thus he saide unto his Yeman tho;
"Hold thou thy pees, and speke no wordes mo:
For if thou do, thou shalt it dere abie.
Thou sclaundrest me here in this compagnie,
And eke discoverest that thou shuldest hide."
"Ye," quod our Hoste, "tell on, what so betide;
Of all his thretening recke not a mite."
"In faith," quod he, "no more I do but lite."
And whan this Chanon saw it wold not be,
But his Yeman wold tell his privetee,
He fled away for veray sorwe and shame.
"A," quod the Yeman, "here shal rise a game:
All that I can anon I wol you telle,
Sin he is gon; the foule fend him quelle;
For never hereafter wol I with him mete
For peny ne for pound, I you behete.
He that me broughte first unto that game,
Er that he die, sorwe have he and shame.
For it is ernest to me by my faith;
That fele I wel, what that any man saith;
And yet for all my smert, and all my grief,
For all my sorwe, labour, and meschief,
I coude never leve it in no wise.
Now wolde God my wit mighte suffice

To tellen all that longeth to that art;
But natheles, yet wol I tellen part;
Sin that my lord is gon, I wol not spare,
Swiche thing as that I know, I wol declare."

THE

CHANONES YEMANNES TALE.

With this Chanon I dwelt have seven yere,
And of his science am I never the nere:
All that I had, I have ylost therby,
And God wot, so han many mo than I.
Ther I was wont to be right fresh and gay
Of clothing, and of other good array,
Now may I were an hose upon min hed;
And wher my colour was both fresh and red,
Now is it wan, and of a leden hewe;
(Who so it useth, so shal he it rewe)
And of my swinke yet blered is min eye;
Lo which avantage is to multiplie!
That sliding science hath me made so bare,
That I have no good, wher that ever I fare;
And yet I am endetted so therby
Of gold, that I have borwed trewely,
That while I live, I shal it quiten never;
Let every man be ware by me for ever.
What maner man that casteth him therto,
If he continue, I hold his thrift ydo;
So help me God, therby shal he nat winne,
But empte his purse, and make his wittes thinne.
And whan he, thurgh his madnesse and folie,
Hath lost his owen good thurgh jupartie,
Than he exciteth other folk therto,
To lese hir good as he himself hath do.
For unto shrewes joye it is and ese
To have hir felawes in peine and disese.
Thus was I ones lerned of a clerk;
Of that no charge; I wol speke of our werk.
Whan we be ther as we shuln exercise
Our elvish craft, we semen wonder wise,
Our termes ben so clergial and queinte.
I blow the fire til that myn herte feinte.
What shuld I tellen eche proportion
Of thinges, whiche that we werchen upon,
As on five or six unces, may wel be,
Of silver, or som other quantitee?
And besie me to tellen you the names,
As orpiment, brent bones, yren squames,
That into poudre grounden ben ful smal?
And in an erthen pot how put is al,
And salt yput in, and also pepere,
Beforn thise poudres that I speke of here,
And wel ycovered with a lampe of glas?
And of moche other thing which that ther was?
And of the pottes and glasses engluting,
That of the aire might passen out no thing?
And of the esy fire, and smert also,
Which that was made? and of the care and wo,
That we had in our materes subliming,
And in amalgaming, and calcening
Of quiksilver, ycleped mercurie crude?
For all our sleightes we can not conclude.
Our orpiment, and sublimed mercurie,
Our grounden litarge eke on the porphurie,
Of eche of thise of unces a certain
Not helpeth us, our labour is in vain.
Ne, neyther our spirites ascentioun,
Ne our materes that lien al fix adoun,
Mown in our werking nothing us availe;
For lost is all our labour and travaille,
And all the cost a twenty devil way
Is lost also, which we upon it lay.
Ther is also ful many another thing,
That is unto our craft apperteining,
Though I by ordre hem nat rehersen can,
Because that I am a lewed man,
Yet wol I telle hem, as they come to minde,
Though I ne cannot set hem in hir kinde,
As bole armoniak, verdegrese, boras;
And sondry vessels made of erthe and glas,
Our urinales, and our descensories,
Viols, croslettes, and sublimatories,
Cucuribtes, and alembikes eke,
And other swiche gere, dere ynough a leke,
What nedeth it for to reherse hem alle?
Wateres rubifying, and bolles galle,
Arsenik, sal armoniak, and brimston?
And herbes coude I tell eke many on,
As egremoine, valerian, and lunarie,
And other swiche, if that me list to tarie;
Our lampes brenning bothe night and day,
To bring about our craft if that we may;
Our fourneis eke of calcination,
And of wateres albification,
Unslekked lime, chalk, and gleire of an ey,
Poudres divers, ashes, dong, pisse, and cley,
Sered pokettes, sal peter, and vitriole;
And divers fires made of wode and cole;
Sal tartre, alcaly, and salt preparat,
And combust materes, and coagulat;
Cley made with hors and mannes here, and oile
Of tartre, alum, glas, berme, wort, and argoile,
Rosalgar, and other materes enbibing;
And eke of our materes encorporing,
And of our silver citrination,
Our cementing, and fermentation,
Our ingottes, testes, and many thinges mo.
I wol you tell as was me taught also
The foure spirites, and the bodies sevene
By ordre, as oft I herd my lord hem nevene.
The firste spirit quiksilver cleped is;
The second orpiment; the thridde ywis
Sal armoniak, and the fourth brimston.
The bodies sevene eke, lo hem here anon.
Sol gold is, and Luna silver we threpe;
Mars iren, Mercurie quiksilver we clepe:
Saturnus led, and Jupiter is tin,
And Venus coper, by my fader kin.
This cursed craft who so wol exercise,
He shal no good have, that him may suffice,
For all the good he spendeth theraboute
He lesen shal, therof have I no doute.
Who so that listeth uttren his folie,
Let him come forth and lernen multiplie:
And every man that hath ought in his cofre,
Let him appere, and wex a philosophre,
Ascaunce that craft is so light to lere.
Nay, nay, God wot, al be he monk or frere,
Preest or chanon, or any other wight,
Though he sit at his book both day and night
In lerning of this elvish nice lore,
All is in vain, and parde mochel more
To lerne a lewed man this subtiltee;
Fie, speke not therof, for it wol not be.
And conne he letterure, or conne he non,
As in effect, he shal finde it all on;
For bothe two by my salvation
Concluden in multiplication

Ylike wel, whan they have all ydo;
This is to sain, they faillen bothe two.
Yet forgate I to maken rehersaile
Of waters corosif, and of limaile,
And of bodies mollification,
And also of hir induration,
Oiles, ablusions, metal fusible,
To tellen all, wold passen any bible,
That o wher is; wherfore as for the best
Of all thise names now wol I me rest;
For as I trow, I have you told ynow
To reise a fend, al loke he never so row.
A, nay, let be; the philosophres ston,
Elixer cleped, we seken fast eche on,
For had we him, than were we siker ynow;
But unto God of Heven I make avow,
For all our craft, whan we han all ydo,
And all our sleight, he wol not come us to.
He hath ymade us spenden mochel good,
For sorwe of which almost we waxen wood,
But that good hope crepeth in our herte,
Supposing ever, though we sore smerte,
To ben releved of him afterward.
Swiche supposing and hope is sharpe and hard.
I warne you wel it is to seken ever.
That future *temps* hath made men dissever,
In trust therof, from all that ever they had,
Yet of that art they conne not waxen sad,
For unto hem it is a bitter swete;
So semeth it; for ne had they but a shete
Which that they might wrappen hem in a-night,
And a bratt to walken in by day-light,
They wold hem sell, and spend it on this craft;
They conne not stinten, til no thing be laft.
And evermore, wher ever that they gon,
Men may hem kennen by smell of brimston;
For all the world they stinken as a gote;
Hir savour is so rammish and so hote,
That though a man a mile from hem be,
The savour wol enfect him, trusteth me.
Lo, thus by smelling and thred-bare array,
If that men list, this folk they knowen may.
And if a man wol axe hem prively,
Why they be clothed so unthriftily,
They right anon wol rounen in his ere,
And saien, if that they espied were,
Men wolde hem sle, because of hir science:
Lo, thus thise folk betraien innocence.
Passe over this, I go my tale unto.
Er that the pot be on the fire ydo
Of metals with a certain quantitee,
My lord hem tempereth, and no man but he;
(Now he is gon, I dare say boldely)
For as men sain, he can don craftily;
Algate I wote wel he hath swiche a name,
And yet ful oft he renneth in a blame;
And wete ye how? ful oft it falleth so,
The pot to-breketh, and farewel all is go.
Thise metales ben of so gret violence,
Our walles may not make hem resistence,
But if they weren wrought of lime and ston;
They percen so, that thurgh the wall they gon;
And som of hem sinke doun into the ground,
(Thus have we lost by times many a pound)
And som are scattered all the flore aboute;
Som lepen into the roof withouten doute.
Though that the fend not in our sight him shewe,
I trow that he be with us, thilke shrewe,
In Helle, wher that he is lord and sire,
Ne is ther no more wo, rancour, ne ire.
Whan that our pot is broke, as I have sayde,
Every man chit, and holt him evil apayde.
Som sayd "it was long on the fire-making;"
Som sayd, "nay, it was long on the blowing?"
(Than was I ferd, for that was min office)
"Straw," quod the thridde, "ye ben fewed and nice,
It was not tempred as it ought to be."
"Nay," quod the fourthe, "stint and herken me;
Because our fire was not made of beche,
That is the cause, and other non, so the iche."
I can not tell wheron it was along,
But wel I wot gret strif is us among.
"What?" quod my lord, "ther a'is no more to don,
Of thise perils I wol beware eftsone.
I am right siker, that the pot was crased.
Be as be may, be ye no thing amased.
As usage is, let swepe the flore as swithe;
Plucke up your hertes and be glad and blithe."
The mullok on an hepe ysweped was,
And on the flore ycast a canevas,
And all this mullok in a sive ythrowe,
And sifted, and ypicked many a throwe.
"Parde," quod on, "somwhat of our metall
Yet is ther here, though that we have not all.
And though this thing mishapped hath as now,
Another time it may be wel ynow.
We mosten put our good in aventure;
A marchant parde may not ay endure,
Trusteth me wel, in his prosperitee:
Somtime his good is drenched in the see,
And somtime cometh it sauf unto the lond."
"Pees," quod my lord, "the next time I wol fond
To bring our craft all in another plite,
And but I do, sires, let me have the wite:
Ther was defaute in somwhat, wel I wote."
Another sayd, "the fire was over hote."
But be it hote or cold, I dare say this,
That we concluden ever more amis:
We faille alway of that which we wold have,
And in our madnesse evermore we rave.
And whan we be together everich on,
Every man semeth a Salomon.
But all thing, which that shineth as the gold,
Ne is no gold, as I have herd it told;
Ne every apple that is faire at eye,
Ne is not good, what so men clap or crie.
Right so, lo, fareth it amonges us.
He that semeth the wisest by Jesus
Is most fool, whan it cometh to the prefe;
And he that semeth trewest, is a thefe.
That shal ye know, or that I from you wende,
By that I of my tale have made an ende.
Ther was a chanon of religioun
Amonges us, wold enfect all a toun,
Though it as gret were as was Ninive,
Rome, Alisaundre, Troie, or other three.
His sleightes and his infinite falsenesse
Ther coude no man writen, as I gesse,
Though that he mighte live a thousand yere;
In all this world of falsenesse n'is his pere.
For in his termes he wol him so winde,
And speke his wordes in so slie a kinde,
Whan he comunen shal with any wight,
That he wol make him doten anon right,
But it a fend be, as himselven is.
Ful many a man hath he begiled er this,
And wol, if that he may live any while:
And yet men gon and riden many a mile
Him for to seke, and have his acquaintance,
Not knowing of his false governance.

And if you lust to yeve me audience,
I wol it tellen here in your presence.
But, worshipful chanons religious,
Ne demeth not that I sclander your hous,
Although that my tale of a chanon be.
Of every order som shrew is parde:
And God forbede that all a compagnie
Shuld rewe a singuler mannes folie.
To sclander you is no thing min entent,
But to correcten that is mis I ment.
This tale was not only told for you,
But eke for other mo: ye wote wel how
That among Cristes aposteles twelve
Ther was no traitour but Judas himselve:
Than why shuld al the remenant have blame,
That giltles were? by you I say the same.
Save only this, if ye wol herken me,
If any Judas in your covent be,
Remeveth him betimes, I you rede,
If shame or los may causen any drede.
And be no thing displesed I you pray,
But in this cas herkeneth what I say.
In London was a preest, an annuellere,
That therin dwelled hadde many a yere,
Which was so plesant and so servisable
Unto the wif, ther as he was at table,
That she wold suffer him no thing to pay
For borde ne clothing, went he never so gay;
And spending silver had he right ynow:
Therof no force; I wol proceed as now,
And tellen forth my tale of the chanon,
That broughte this preest to confusion.
This false chanon came upon a day
Unto the preestes chambre, ther he lay,
Beseching him to lene him a certain
Of gold, and he wold quite it him again.
"Lene me a marke" quod he, "but dayes three,
And at my day I wol it quiten thee.
And if it so be, that thou finde me false,
Another day hang me up by the halse."
This preest him toke a marke, and that as swith,
And this chanon him thanked often sith,
And toke his leve, and wente forth his wey:
And at the thridde day brought his money;
And to the preest he toke his gold again,
Wherof this preest was wonder glad and fain.
"Certes," quod he, "nothing anoieth me
To lene a man a noble, or two, or three,
Or what thing were in my possession,
Whan he so trewe is of condition,
That in no wise he breken wol his day:
To swiche a man I can never say nay."
"What?" quod this chanon, "shuld I be untrewe?
Nay, that were thing fallen al of the newe.
Trouth is a thing that I wol ever kepe,
Unto the day in which that I shal crepe
Into my grave, and elles God forbede:
Beleveth this as siker as your crede.
God thanke I, and in good time be it sayde,
That ther n'as never man yet evil apayde
For gold ne silver that he to me lent,
Ne never falshede in min herte I ment.
"And, sire," (quod he) "now of my privetee,
Sin ye so goodlich have ben unto me,
And kithed to me so gret gentillesse,
Somwhat, to quiten with your kindenesse,
I wol you shewe, and if you lust to lere
I wol you techen pleinly the manere,
How I can werken in philosophie.
Taketh good heed, ye shuln wel sen at eye,
That I wol do a maistrie or I go."
"Ye?" quod the preest, "ye, sire, and wol ye so?
Mary therof I pray you hertily."
"At your commandement, sire, trewely,
Quod the chanon, "and elles God forbede."
Lo, how this thefe coude his service bede.
Ful soth it is that swiche profered service
Stinketh, as witnessen thise olde wise;
And that ful sone I wol it verifie
In this chanon, rote of all trecherie,
That evermore delight hath and gladnesse
(Swiche fendly thoughtes in his herte empresse)
How Cristes peple he may to meschief bring.
God kepe us from his false dissimuling.
Nought wiste this preest with whom that he delt,
Ne of his harme coming nothing he felt.
O sely preest, o sely innocent,
With covetise anon thou shalt be blent;
O graceles, ful blind is thy conceite,
For nothing art thou ware of the disceite,
Which that this fox yshapen hath to thee;
His wily wrenches thou ne mayst not flee.
Wherfore to go to the conclusion
That referreth to thy confusion,
Unhappy man, anon I wol me hie
To tellen thin unwit and thy folie,
And eke the falsenesse of that other wretch,
As ferforth as that my conning wol stretch.
This chanon was my lord, ye wolden wene;
Sire Hoste, in faith, and by the Heven quene,
It was another chanon, and not he,
That can an hundred part more subtiltee.
He hath betraied folkes many a time;
Of his falsenesse it dulleth me to rime.
Ever whan that I speke of his falshede
For shame of him my chekes waxen rede;
Algates they beginnen for to glowe,
For rednesse have I non, right wel I knowe,
In my visage, for fumes diverse
Of metals, which ye have herd me reherse,
Consumed han and wasted my rednesse.
Now take hede of this chanons cursednesse.
"Sire," quod the chanon, "let your yeman goa
For quiksilver, that we it had anon;
And let him bringen unces-two or three;
And whan he cometh, as faste shul ye see
A wonder thing, which ye saw never er this."
"Sire," quod the preest, "it shal be don ywis."
He bad his servant fetchen him this thing,
And he al redy was at his bidding,
And went him forth, and came anon again
With this quiksilver, shortly for to sain,
And toke thise unces three to the chanoun;
And he hem laide wel and faire adoun,
And bad the servant coles for to bring,
That he anon might go to his werking."
The coles right anon weren yfet,
And this chanon toke out a crosselet
Of his bosome, and shewed it to the preest.
"This instrument," quod he, "which that thou seest,
Take in thyn hond, and put thyself therin
Of this quiksilver an unce, and here begin
In the name of Crist to wex a philosophre.
Ther be ful fewe, which that I wolde profre
To shewen hem thus muche of my science:
For here shul ye see by experience,
That this quiksilver I wol mortifie,
Right in your sight anon withouten lie,
And make it as good silver and as fine,
As ther is any in your purse or mine,

Or elles wher; and make it malliable;
And elles holdeth me false and unable
Amonges folk for ever to appere.
"I have a pouder here that cost me dere,
Shal make all good, for it is cause of all
My conning, which that I you shewen shall.
Voideth your man, and let him be therout;
And shet the dore, while we ben about
Our privetee, that no man us espie,
While that we werke in this philosophie."
All, as he bade, fulfilled was in dede.
This ilke servant anon right out yede,
And his maister shette the dore anon,
And to hir labour spedily they gon.
This preest at this cursed chanons bidding,
Upon the fire anon he set this thing,
And blew the fire, and besied him ful fast.
And this chanon into the crosselet cast
A pouder, n'ot I never wherof it was
Ymade, other of chalk, other of glas,
Or somwhat elles, was not worth a flie,
To blinden with this preest; and bade him hie
The coles for to couchen all above
The crosselet; "for in tokening I thee love,"
(Quod this chanon) "thine owen hondes two
Shal werken all thing which that here is do."
"*Grand mercy*," quod the preest, and was ful glad,
And couched the coles as the chanon bad.
And while he besy was, this fendly wretch,
This false chanon (the foule fend him fetch)
Out of his bosom toke a bechen cole,
In which ful subtilly was made an hole,
And therin put was of silver limaile
An unce, and stopped was withouten faile
The hole with wax, to kepe the limaile in.
And understandeth, that this false gin
Was not made ther, but it was made before;
And other thinges *I* shal tell you more
Hereafterward, which that he with him brought;
Er he came ther, him to begile he thought,
And so he did, or that they went atwin:
Til he had torned him, could he not blin.
It dulleth me, whan that I of him speke;
On his falshede fain wold I me awreke,
If I wist how, but he is here and ther,
He is so variaunt, he abit no wher.
But taketh hede, sires, now for Goddes love.
He toke his cole, of which I spake above,
And in his hond he bare it prively,
And whiles the preest couched besily
The coles, as I tolde you er this,
This chanon sayde; "Frend, ye don amis;
This is not couched as it ought to be,
But sone I shal amenden it," quod he.
"Now let me meddle therwith but a while,
For of you have I pitee by Seint Gile.
Ye ben right hot, I see wel how ye swete;
Have here a cloth and wipe away the wete."
And whiles that the preest wiped his face,
This chanon toke his cole, with sory grace,
And laied it above on the midward
Of the crosselet, and blew wel afterward,
Til that the coles gonnen fast to bren.
"Now yeve us drinke," quod this chanon then,
"As swithe all shal be wel, I undertake.
Sitte we doun, and let us mery make."
And whanne that this chanones bechen cole
Was brent, all the limaile out of the hole
Into the crosselet anon fell adoun;
And so it muste nedes by resoun,
Sin it above so even couched was;
But therof wist the preest nothing, alas!
He demed all the coles ylike good,
For of the sleight he nothing understood.
And whan this alkymistre saw his time,
"Riseth up, sire preest," quod he, "and stondeth by me;
And for I wote wel ingot have ye non,
Goth, walketh forth, and bringeth a chalk ston;
For I wol make it of the same shap,
That is an ingot, if I may have hap.
Bring eke with you a bolle or elles a panne
Ful of water, and ye shul wel see thanne
How that our besinesse shal thrive and preve.
And yet, for ye shul have no misbeleve
No wrong conceit of me in your absence,
I ne wol not ben out of your presence,
But go with you, and come with you again."
The chambre dore, shortly for to sain,
They opened and shet, and went hir wey,
And forth with hem they caried the key,
And camen again withouten any delay.
What shuld I tarien all the longe day?
He toke the chalk, and shope it in the wise
Of an ingot, as I shal you devise;
I say, he toke out of his owen sleve.
A teine of silver (yvel mote he cheve)
Which that ne was but a just unce of weight.
And taketh heed now of his cursed sleight;
He shop his ingot, in length and in brede
Of thilke teine, withouten any drede,
So slily, that the preest it not espide;
And in his sleve again he gan it hide;
And from the fire he toke up his matere,
And in the ingot it put with mery chere:
And in the water-vessel he it cast,
Whan that him list, and bad the preest as fast,
"Loke what ther is; put in thin hond and grope;
Thou shalt ther finden silver as I hope.
What, devel of Helle! shuld it elles be?
Shaving of silver, silver is parde."
He put his hond in, and toke up a teine
Of silver fine, and glad in every veine
Was this preest, whan he saw that it was so.
"Goddes blessing, and his mothers also,
And alle Halwes, have ye, sire chanon,"
Sayde this preest, "and *I* hir malison,
But, and ye vouchesauf to techen me
This noble craft and this subtilitee,
I wol be your in all that ever I may."
Quod the chanon, "Yet wol I make assay
The second time, that ye mow taken hede,
And ben expert of this, and in your nede
Another day assay in min absence
This discipline, and this crafty science.
Let take another unce," quod he tho,
"Of quiksilver, withouten wordes mo,
And do therwith as ye have don er this
With that other, which that now silver is."
The preest him besieth all that ever he can
To don as this chanon, this cursed man,
Commandeth him, and faste blewe the fire,
For to come to the effect of his desire.
And this chanon right in the mene while
Al redy was this preest eft to begile,
And for a countenance in his hond bare
An holow stikke, (take kepe and beware)
In the ende of which an unce and no more
Of silver limaile put was, as before
Was in his cole, and stopped with wax wel
For to kepe in his limaile every del.

And while this preest was in his besinesse,
This chanon with his stikke gan him dresse
To him anon, and his pouder cast in,
As he did erst, (the devil out of his skin
Him torne, I pray to God, for his falshede,
For he was ever false in thought and dede)
And with his stikke, above the crosselet,
That was ordained with that false get,
He stirreth the coles, til relenten gan
The wax again the fire, as every man,
But he a fool be, wote wel it mote nede.
And all that in the stikke was out yede,
And in the crosselet hastily it fell.
Now, goode sires, what wol ye bet than wel?
Whan that this preest was thus begiled again,
Supposing nought but trouthe, soth to sain,
He was so glad, that I can not expresse
In no manere his mirth and his gladnesse,
And to the chanon he profered eftsone
Body and good: "Ye," quod the chanon, "sone,
Though poure I be, crafty thou shalt me finde:
I warne thee wel, yet is ther more behinde.
"Is ther any coper here within?" said he.
"Ye, sire," quod the preest, "I trow ther be."
"Elles go beie us som, and that as swithe.
Now, goode sire, go forth thy way and hie the."
He went his way, and with the coper he came,
And this chanon it in his hondes name,
And of that coper weyed out an unce.
To simple is my tonge to pronounce,
As minister of my wit, the doublenesse
Of this chanon, rote of all cursednesse.
He semed frendly, to hem that knew him nought,
But he was fendly, both in werk and thought.
It werieth me to tell of his falsenesse;
And natheles yet wol I it expresse,
To that entent men may beware therby,
And for non other cause trewely.
He put this coper into the crosselet,
And on the fire as swithe he hath it set,
And cast in pouder, and made the preest to blow,
And in his werking for to stoupen low,
As he did erst, and all n'as but a jape;
Right as him list the preest he made his ape.
And afterward in the ingot he it cast,
And in the panne put it at the last
Of water, and in he put his owen hond;
And in his sleve, as ye beforen hond
Herde me tell, he had a silver teine;
He slily toke it out, this cursed heine,
(Unweting this preest of his false craft)
And in the pannes botome he it laft.
And in the water rombled to and fro,
And wonder prively toke up also
The coper teine, (not knowing thilke preest)
And hid it, and him hente by the brest,
And to him spake, and thus said in his game;
"Stoupeth adoun; by God ye be to blame;
Helpeth me now, as I did you whilere;
Put in your hond, and loketh what is there."
The preest toke up this silver teine anon;
And thanne said the chanon, "Let us gon
With thise three teines which that we han wrought,
To som goldsmith, and wete if they ben ought:
For by my faith I n'olde for my hood
But if they weren silver fine and good,
And that as swithe wel preved shal it be."
Unto the goldsmith with thise teines three
They went anon, and put hem in assay
To fire and hammer: might no man say nay,
But that they weren as hem ought to be.
This soted preest, who was gladder than he?
Was never brid gladder agains the day,
Ne nightingale in the seson of May
Was never non, that list better to sing,
Ne lady lustier in carolling,
Or for to speke of love and womanhede,
Ne knight in armes don a hardy dede
To stonden in grace of his lady dere,
Than hadde this preest this craft for to lere;
And to the chanon thus he spake and seid;
"For the love of God, that for us alle deid,
And as I may deserve it unto you,
What shal this receit cost? telleth me now."
"By our lady," quod this chanon, "it is dere.
I warne you wel, that, save I and a frere,
In Englelond ther can no man it make."
"No force," quod he; "now, sire, for Goddes sake,
What shall I pay? telleth me, I you pray."
"Ywis," quod he, "it is ful dere I say.
Sire, at o word, if that you list it have,
Ye shal pay fourty pound, so God me save;
And n'ere the frendship that ye did er this
To me, ye shulden payen more ywis."
This preest the sum of fourty pound anon
Of nobles fet, and toke hem everich on
To this chanon, for this ilke receit.
All his werking n'as but fraud and deceit.
"Sire preest," he said, "I keep for to have no loos
Of my craft, for I wold it were kept cloos;
And as ye love me, kepeth it secree:
For if men knewen all my subtiltee,
By God they wolden have so gret envie
To me, because of my philosophie,
I shuld be ded, ther were non other way."
"God it forbede," quod the preest, "what ye say.
Yet had I lever spenden all the good
Which that I have, (and elles were I wood)
Than that ye shuld fallen in swiche meschefe."
"For your good will, sire, have ye right good prefe,"
Quod the chanon, "and farewel, *grand mercy*."
He went his way, and never the preest him sey
After that day: and whan that this preest shold
Maken assay, at swiche time as he wold,
Of this receit, farewel, it n'olde not be.
Lo, thus bejaped and begiled was he:
Thus maketh he his introduction
To bringen folk to hir destruction.
Considereth, sires, how that in eche estat
Betwixen men and gold ther is debat,
So ferforth that unnethes is ther non.
This multiplying so blint many on,
That in good faith I trowe that it be
The cause gretest of swiche scarsitee.
Thise philosophres speke so mistily
In this craft, that men cannot come therby,
For any wit that men have now adayes.
They mow wel chateren, as don thise jayes,
And in hir termes set hir lust and peine,
But to hir purpos shul they never atteine.
A man may lightly lerne, if he have ought,
To multiplie, and bring his good to nought.
Lo, swiche a lucre is in this lusty game;
A mannes mirth it wol turne al to grame,
And emptien also gret and hevy purses,
And maken folk for to purchasen curses
Of hem, that han therto hir good ylent.
O, fy for shame, they that han be brent,

Alas! can they not flee the fires hete?
Ye that it use, I rede that ye it lete,
Lest ye lese all; for bet than never is late:
Never to thriven, were to long a date.
Though ye prolle ay, ye shul it never find:
Ye ben as bold as is Bayard the blind,
That blondereth forth, and peril casteth non:
He is as bold to renne agains a ston,
As for to go besides in the way:
So faren ye that multiplien, I say.
If that your eyen cannot seen aright,
Loketh that youre mind lacke not his sight.
For though ye loke never so brode and stare,
Ye shul not win a mite on that chaffare,
But wasten all that ye may rape and renne.
Withdraw the fire, lest it to faste brenne;
Medleth no more with that art, I mene;
For if ye don, your thrift is gon ful clene.
And right as swithe I wol you tellen here
What philosophres sain in this matere.
Lo, thus saith Arnolde of the newe toun,
As his Rosarie maketh mentioun,
He saith right thus, withouten any lie;
Ther may no man Mercurie mortifie,
But it be with his brothers knowleching.
Lo, how that he, whiche firste said this thing,
Of philosophres father was, Hermes:
He saith, how that the dragon douteles
Ne dieth not, but if that he be slain
With his brother. And this is for to sain,
By the dragon Mercury, and non other,
He understood, and brimstone by his brother,
That out of Sol and Luna were ydrawe.
And therfore, said he, "Take heed to my sawe.
Let no man besie him this art to seche,
But if that he the entention and speche
Of philosophres understonden can;
And if he do, he is a lewed man.
"For this science and this conning" (quod he)
"Is of the secree of secrees parde."
Also ther was a disciple of Plato,
That on a time said his maister to,
As his book Senior wol bere witnesse,
And this was his demand in sothfastnesse:
"Telle me the name of thilke privee ston."
And Plato answerd unto him anon;
"Take the ston that Titanos men name."
"Whiche is that?" quod he. "Magnetia is the same."
Saide Plato. "Ye, sire, and is it thus?
This is *ignotum per ignotius*.
What is magnetia, good sire, I pray?"
"It is a water that is made, I say,
Of the elementes foure," quod Plato.
"Tell me the rote, good sire," quod he tho,
"Of that water, if that it be your will."
"Nay, nay," quod Plato, "certain that I n'ill.
The philosophres were sworne everich on,
That they ne shuld discover it unto non,
Ne in no book it write in no manere;
For unto God it is so lefe and dere,
That he wol not that it discovered be,
But wher it liketh to his deitee
Man for to enspire, and eke for to defende
Whom that him liketh; lo, this is the ende."
Than thus conclude I, sin that God of Heven
Ne wol not that the philosophres neven,
How that a man shal come unto this ston,
I rede as for the best to let it gon.
For who so maketh God his adversary,
As for to werken any thing in contrary
Of his will, certes never shal he thrive,
Though that he multiply terme of his live.
And ther a point; for ended is my tale.
God send every good man bote of his bale.

THE MANCIPLES PROLOGUE.

WETE ye not wher stondeth a litel toun,
Which that yeleped is Bob up and doun,
Under the Blee, in Canterbury way?
Ther gon our Hoste to jape and to play,
And sayde; "Sires, what? Dun is in the mire.
Is ther no man for praiere ne for hire,
That wol awaken our felaw behind?
A thefe him might ful lightly rob and bind.
See how he nappeth, see, for cockes bones,
As he wold fallen from his hors atones.
Is that a coke of London, with mesehance?
Do him come forth, he knoweth his penance;
For he shal tell a tale by my fey,
Although it be not worth a botel hey.
Awake, thou Coke," quod he, "God yeve thee sorwe,
What aileth thee to slepen by the morwe?
Hast thou had fleen al night, or art thou dronke?
Or hast thou with som quene al night yswonke,
So that thou mayst not holden up thin hed?"
This Coke, that was ful pale and nothing red,
Sayd to our Hoste; "So God my soule blesse,
As ther is falle on me swiche hevinesse,
N'ot I nat why, that me were lever to slepe,
Than the best gallon wine that is in Chepe."
"Wel," quod the Manciple, "if it may don ese
To thee, sire Coke, and to no wight displese,
Which that here rideth in this compagnie,
And that our Hoste wol of his curtesie,
I wol as now excuse thee of thy tale;
For in good faith thy visage is ful pale:
Thin eyen dasen, sothly as me thinketh,
And wel I wot, thy breth ful soure stinketh,
That sheweth wel thou art not wel disposed:
Of me certain thou shalt not ben yglosed.
See how he galpeth, lo, this dronken wight,
As though he wold us swalow anon right.
Hold close thy mouth, man, by thy father kin:
The devil of Helle set his foot therin!
Thy cursed breth enfecten wol us alle:
Fy, stinking swine, fy, foul mote thee befalle.
A, taketh heed, sires, of this lusty man.
Now, swete sire, wol ye just at the fan?
Therto, me thinketh, ye be wel yshape.
I trow that ye have dronken win of ape,
And that is whan men playen with a straw."
And with this speche the Coke waxed all wraw,
And on the Manciple he gan nod fast
For lacke of speche; and doun his hors him cast,
Wher as he lay, til that men him up toke.
This was a faire chivachee of a coke:
Alas that he ne had hold him by his ladel!
And er that he agen were in the sadel,
Ther was gret shoving bothe to and fro
To lift him up, and mochel care and wo,
So unweldy was this sely palled gost:
And to the Manciple than spake our Host.
"Because that drinke hath domination
Upon this man, by my salvation
I trow he lewedly wol tell his tale.
For were it win, or old or moisty ale,

That he hath dronke, he speketh in his nose,
And sneseth fast, and eke he hath the pose.
He also hath to don more than ynough
To kepe him on his capel out of the slough:
And if he falle from of his capel eftsone,
Than shul we alle have ynough to done
In lifting up his hevy dronken cors.
Tell on thy tale, of him make I no force.
" But yet, Manciple, in faith thou art to nice,
Thus openly to repreve him of his vice:
Another day he wol paraventure
Recleimen thee, and bring thee to the lure:
I mene, he speken wol of smale thinges,
As for to pinchen at thy rekeninges,
That were not honest, if it came to prefe."
Quod the Manciple, "That were a gret mescheefe:
So might he lightly bring me in the snare.
Yet had I lever payen for the mare,
Which he rit on, than he shuld with me strive.
I wol not wrathen him, so mote I thrive;
That that I spake, I sayd it in my bourd.
And wete ye what? I have here in my gourd
A draught of win, ye of a ripe grape,
And right anon ye shul seen a good jape.
This Coke shal drinke therof, if that I may;
Up peine of my lif he wol not say nay.
And certainly, to tellen as it was,
Of this vessell the Coke dranke fast, (alas!
What nedeth it? he dranke ynough beforne)
And whan he hadde pouped in his horne,
To the Manciple he toke the gourd again.
And of that drinke the Coke was wonder fain,
And thonked him in swiche wise as he coude.
Than gan our Hoste to laughen wonder loude,
And sayd; "I see wel it is necessary
Wher that we gon good drinke with us to cary;
For that wol turnen rancour and disese
To accord and love, and many a wrong apese.
" O Bacchus, Bacchus, blessed be thy name,
That so canst turnen ernest into game;
Worship and thonke be to thy deitee.
Of that matere ye get no more of me.
Tell on thy tale, Manciple, I thee pray."
" Wel, sire," quod he, " now herkeneth what I say."

THE MANCIPLES TALE.

Whan Phebus dwelled here in Erth adoun,
As olde bookes maken mentioun,
He was the moste lusty bacheler
Of all this world, and eke the best archer.
He slow Phiton the serpent, as he lay
Sleping agains the sonne upon a day;
And many another noble worthy dede
He with his bow wrought, as men mowen rede.
Playen he conde on every minstralcie,
And singen, that it was a melodie
To heren of his clere vois the soun.
Certes the king of Thebes, Amphioun,
That with his singing walled the citee,
Coud never singen half so wel as he.
Therto he was the semelieste man,
That is or was, sithen the world began;
What nedeth it his feture to descrive?
For in this world n'is non so faire on live,
He was therwith fulfilled of gentillesse,
Of honour, and of parsite worthinesse.

This Phebus, that was flour of bachelerie,
As wel in fredom, as in chivalrie,
For his disport, in signe eke of victorie
Of Phiton, so as telleth us the storie,
Was wont to beren in his hond a bowe.
Now had this Phebus in his hous a crowe,
Which in a cage he fostred many a day,
And taught it speken, as men teche a jay.
Whit was this crowe, as is a snow-whit swan,
And contrefete the speche of every man
He coude, whan he shulde tell a tale.
Therwith in all this world no nightingale
Ne coude by an hundred thousand del
Singen so wonder merily and wel.
Now had this Phebus in his hous a wif,
Which that he loved more than his lif,
And night and day did ever his diligence
Hire for to plese, and don hire reverence:
Save only, if that I the soth shal sain,
Jelous he was, and wold have kept hire fain,
For him were loth yjaped for to be;
And so is every wight in swiche degree;
But all for nought, for it availeth nought.
A good wif, that is clene of werk and thought,
Shuld not be kept in non await certain:
And trewely the labour is in vain
To kepe a shrewe, for it wol not be.
This hold I for a veray nicetee,
To spillen labour for to kepen wives;
Thus writen olde clerkes in hir lives.
But now to purpos, as I first began.
This worthy Phebus doth all that he can
To plesen hire, wening thurgh swiche plesance,
And for his manhood and his governance,
That no man shulde put him from hire grace:
But God it wote, ther may no man embrace
As to destreine a thing, which that nature
Hath naturelly set in a creature.
Take any brid, and put it in a cage,
And do all thin entente, and thy corage,
To foster it tendrely with mete and drinke
Of alle deintees that thou canst bethinke,
And kepe it al so clenely as thou may;
Although the cage of gold be never so gay,
Yet had this brid, by twenty thousand fold,
Lever in a forest, that is wilde and cold,
Gon eten wormes, and swiche wretchednesse.
For ever this brid will don his besinesse
To escape out of his cage whan that he may:
His libertee the brid desireth ay.
Let take a cat, and foster hire with milke
And tendre flesh, and make hire couche of silke,
And let hire see a mous go by the wall,
Anon she weiveth milke and flesh, and all,
And every deintee that is in that hous,
Swiche appetit hath she to ete the mous.
Lo, here hath kind hire domination,
And appetit fleineth discretion.
A she-wolf hath also a vilains kind;
The lewedeste wolf that she may find,
Or less of reputation, wol she take
In time whan hire lust to have a make.
All thise ensamples speke I by thise men
That ben untrewe, and nothing by women.
For men have ever a likerous appetit
On lower thing to parforme hir delit
Than on hir wives, be they never so faire,
Ne never so trewe, ne so debonaire.
Flesh is so newefangle, with meschance,
That we ne con in nothing have plesance,

That souneth unto vertue any while.
This Phebus, which that thought upon no gile,
Disceived was for all his jolitee:
For under him another hadde she,
A man of litel reputation,
Nought worth to Phebus in comparison:
The more harme is; it happeth often so;
Of which ther cometh mochel harme and wo.
And so befell, whan Phebus was absent,
His wif anon hath for hire lemman sent.
Hire lemman? certes that is a knavish speche.
Forveve it me, and that I you beseche.
The wise Plato sayth, as ye now rede,
The word must nede accorden with the dede,
If men shul tellen proprely a thing,
The word must cosin be to the werking.
I am a boistous man, right thus say I;
Ther is no difference trewely
Betwix a wif that is of high degree,
(If of hire body dishonest she be)
And any poure wenche, other than this,
(If it so be they werken both amis)
But, for the gentil is in estat above,
She shal be cleped his lady and his love;
And, for that other is a poure woman,
She shal be cleped his wenche and his lemman:
And God it wote, min owen dere brother,
Men lay as low that on as lith that other.
Right so betwix a titeles tiraunt
And an outlawe, or elles a thefe erraunt,
The same I say, ther is no difference,
(To Alexander told was this sentence)
But, for the tyrant is of greter might
By force of meinie for to sle doun right,
And brennen hous and home, and make all plain,
Lo, therfore is he cleped a capitain;
And, for the outlawe hath but smale meinie,
And may not do so gret an harme as he,
Ne bring a contree to so gret meschiefe,
Men clepen him an outlawe or a thefe.
But, for I am a man not textuel,
I wol not tell of textes never a del;
I wol go to my tale, as I began.
Whan Phebus wif had sent for hire lemman,
Anon they wroughten all hir lust volage.
This white crowe, that heng ay in the cage,
Behold hir werke, and sayde never a word:
And whan that home was come Phebus the lord;
This crowe sang, "Cuckow, cuckow, cuckow."
"What? brid," quod Phebus, "what singest thou now?
Ne were thou wont so merily to sing, [now?
That to my herte it was a rejoysing
To here thy vois? alas! what song is this?"
"By God," quod he, "I singe not amis."
"Phebus," (quod he) "for all thy worthinesse,
For all thy beautee, and all thy gentillesse,
For all thy song, and all thy minstralcie,
For all thy waiting, blered is thin eye,
With on of litel reputation,
Not worth to thee as in comparison
The mountance of a gnat, so mote I thrive;
For on thy bedde thy wif I saw him swive."
What wol you more? the crowe anon him told,
By sade tokenes, and by wordes bold,
How that his wif had don hire lecherie
Him to gret shame, and to gret vilanie;
And told him oft, he sawe it with his eyen.
This Phebus gan awayward for to wrien;
Him thought his woful herte brast atwo.
His bowe he bent, and set therin a flo;

And in his ire he hath his wif yslain:
This is the effect, ther is no more to sain,
For sorwe of which he brake his minstralcie,
Both harpe and lute, giterne, and sautrie;
And eke he brake his arwes, and his bowe;
And after that thus spake he to the crowe.
"Traitour," quod he, "with tonge of scorpion,
"Thou hast me brought to my confusion:
Alas that I was wrought! why n'ere I dede?"
"O dere wif, o gemme of lustyhede,
That were to me so sade, and eke so trewe,
Now liest thou ded, with face pale of hewe,
Ful gilteles, that durst I swere ywis.
"O rakel hond, to do so foule a mis.
O troubled wit, o ire reccheles,
That unavised smitest gilteles.
O wantrust, ful of false suspecion,
Wher was thy wit and thy discretion?
"O, every man beware of rakelnesse,
Ne trowe no thing withouten strong witnesse,
Smite not to sone, er that ye weten why,
And beth avised wel and sikerly,
Or ye do any execution
Upon your ire for suspection.
Alas! a thousand folk hath rakel ire
Fully fordon, and brought hem in the mire.
Alas! for sorwe I wol myselven sle."
And to the crowe, "O false thefe," said he,
I wol thee quite anon thy false tale.
Thou song whilom, like any nightingale,
Now shalt thou, false thefe, thy song forgon,
And eke thy white fethers everich on,
Ne never in all thy lif ne shalt thou speke;
Thus shul men on a traitour ben awreke.
Thou and thin ofspring ever shul be blake,
Ne never swete noise shul ye make,
But ever crie ageins tempest and rain,
In token, that thurgh thee my wif is slain."
And to the crowe he stert, and that anon,
And pulled his white fethers everich on,
And made him blak, and raft him all his song
And eke his speche, and out at dore him flong
Unto the devil, which I him betake;
And for this cause ben alle crowes blake.
Lordings, by this ensample, I you pray,
Beth ware, and taketh kepe what that ye say;
Ne telleth never man in all your lif,
How that another man hath dight his wif;
He wol you haten mortally certain.
Dan Salomon, as wise clerkes sain,
Techeth a man to kepe his tonge wel;
But as I sayd, I am not textuel.
But natheles thus taughte me my dame;
"My sone, thinke on the crowe a Goddes name.
My sone, kepe wel thy tonge, and kepe thy frend;
A wicked tongue is werse than a fend:
My sone, from a fende men may hem blesse.
My sone, God of his endelesse goodnesse
Walled a tonge with teeth, and lippes eke,
For man shuld him avisen what he speke.
My sone, ful often for to mochel speche
Hath many a man ben spilt, as clerkes teche;
But for a litel speche avisedly
Is no man shent, to speken generally.
My sone, thy tonge shuldest thou restreine
At alle time, but whan thou dost thy peine
To speke of God in honour and prayere.
The firste vertue, sone, if thou wolt lere,
Is to restreine, and kepen wel thy tonge;
Thus leren children, whan that they be yonge.

My sone, of mochel speking evil avised,
Ther lesse speking had ynough suffised, [taught;
Cometh mochel harme; thus was me told and
In mochel speche sinne wanteth naught.
Wost thou wherof a rakel tonge serveth?
Right as a swerd forcutteth and forkerveth
An arme atwo, my dere sone, right so
A tonge cutteth frendship all atwo.
A jangler is to God abhominable.
Rede Salomon, so wise and honourable,
Rede David in his Psalmes, rede Senek.
My sone, speke not, but with thyn hed thou beck,
Dissimule as thou were defe, if that thou here
A janglour speke of perilous matere.
The Fleming sayth, and lerne if that thee lest,
That 'litel jangling causeth mochel rest.'
My sone, if thou no wicked word hast said,
Thee thar not dreden for to be bewraid;
But he that hath missayd, I dare wel sain,
He may by no way clepe his word again.
Thing that is sayd is sayd, and forth it goth,
Though him repent, or be him never so loth,
He is his thral, to whom that he hath sayd
A tale, of which he is now evil apaid.
My sone, beware, and be non auctour newe
Of tidings, whether they ben false or trewe;
Wher so thou come, amonges high or lowe,
Kepe wel thy tonge, and thinke upon the crowe."

THE PERSONES PROLOGUE.

By that the Manciple had his tale ended,
The Sonne fro the south line was descended
So lowe, that it ne was not to my sight
Degrees nine and twenty as of hight.
Foure of the clok it was tho, as I gesse,
For enleven foot, a litel more or lesse,
My shadow was at thilke time, as there,
Of swiche feet as my lengthe parted were
In six feet equal of proportion.
Therwith the Mones exaltation,
In mene Libra, alway gan ascende,
As we were entring at the thorpes ende.
For which our Hoste, as he was wont to gie,
As in this cas, our jolly compagnie,
Said in this wise; "Lordings, everich on,
Now lacketh us no tales mo than on.
Fulfilled is my sentence and my decree;
I trowe that we han herd of eche degree.
Almost fulfilled is myn ordinance;
I pray to God so yeve him right good chance,
That telleth us this tale lustily.
"Sire preest," quod he, "art thou a vicary?
Or art thou a Person? say soth by thy fay.
Be what thou be, ne breke thou not our play;
For every man save thou, hath told his tale.
Unbokel, and shew us what is in thy male.
For trewely me thinketh by thy chere,
Thou shuldest knitte up wel a gret matere.
Tell us a fable anon, for cockes bones."
This Person him answered al at ones;
"Thou getest fable non ytold for me,
For Poule, that writeth unto Timothe,
Repreveth hem that weiven sothfastnesse,
And tellen fables, and swiche wretchednesse.
Why shuld I sowen draf out of my fist,
Whan I may sowen whete, if that me list?
For which I say, if that you list to here
Moralitee, and vertuous matere,
And than that ye wol yeve me audience,
I wold ful fain at Cristes reverence
Don you plesance leful, as I can.
But trusteth wel, I am a sotherne man,
I cannot geste, rom, ram, ruf, by my letter,
And, God wote, rime hold I but litel better.
And therfore if you list, I wol not glose,
I wol you tell a litel tale in prose,
To knitte up all this feste, and make an ende:
And Jesu for his grace wit me sende
To shewen you the way in this viage
Of thilke parfit glorious pilgrimage,
That hight Jerusalem celestial.
And if ye vouchesauf, anon I shal
Beginne upon my tale, for which I pray
Tell your avis, I can no better say.
"But natheles this meditation
I put it ay under correction
Of clerkes, for I am not textuel;
I take but the sentence, trusteth me wel.
Therfore I make a protestation,
That I wol standen to correction."
Upon this word we han assented sone:
For, as us semed, it was for to don,
To enden in som vertuous sentence,
And for to yeve him space and audience;
And bade our Hoste he shulde to him say,
That alle we to tell his tale him pray.
Our Hoste had the wordes for us alle:
"Sire preest," quod he, "now faire you befalle;
Say what you list, and we shul gladly here."
And with that word he said in this manere;
"Telleth," quod he, "your meditatioun,
But hasteth you, the Sonne wol adoun.
Beth fructuous, and that in litel space,
And to do wel God sende you his grace."

THE PERSONES TALE.

Our swete Lord God of Heaven, that no man wol perish, but wol that we comen all to the knowleching of him, and to the blisful lif that is pardurable, amonesteth us by the prophet Jeremie, that sayth in this wise: Stondeth upon the wayes, and seeth and axeth of the olde pathes; that is to say, of olde sentences; which is the good way: and walketh in that way, and ye shul finde refreshing for your soules. Many ben the wayes spirituel that leden folk to our Lord Jesu Crist, and to the regne of glory: of which wayes, ther is a ful noble way, and wel covenable, which may not faille to man ne to woman, that thurgh sinne hath misgon fro the right way of Jerusalem celestial; and this way is cleped penance; of which man shuld gladly herken and enqueren with all his herte, to wete, what is penance, and whennes it is cleped penance, and how many maneres ben of actions or werkings of penance, and how many spiees ther ben of penance, and which thinges apperteinen and behoven to penance, and which thinges distroublen penance.

Seint Ambrose sayth, that penance is the plaining of man for the gilt that he hath don, and no more to do any thing for which him ought to plaine. And som doctour sayth: Penance is the waymenting of man that sorweth for his sinne, and peineth himself, for he hath misdon. Penance;

with certain circumstances, is veray repentance of man, that holdeth himself in sorwe and other peine for his giltes: and for he shal be veray penitent, he shal first bewailen the sinnes that he hath don, and stedfastly purposing in his herte to have shrift of mouth, and to don satisfaction, and never to don thing, for which him ought more to bewayle or complaine, and to continue in good werkes: or elles his repentance may not availe. For as Seint Isidor sayth: He is a japer and a gabber, and not veray repentant, that eftsones doth thing, for which him oweth to repent. Weping, and not for to stint to do sinne, may not availe. But natheles, men shuld hope, that at every time that man falleth, be it never so oft, that he may arise thurgh penance, if he have grace: but certain, it is gret doute. For as saith Seint Gregorie: Unnethes ariseth he out of sinne, that is charged with the charge of evil usage. And therfore repentant folk, that stint for to sinne, and forlete sinne or that sinne forlete hem, holy chirche holdeth hem siker of hir salvation. And he that sinneth, and verailly repenteth him in his last day, holy chirche yet hopeth his salvation, by the grete mercy of our Lord Jesu Crist, for his repentance; but take ye the siker and certain way.

And now sith I have declared you, what thing is penance, now ye shul understond, that ther ben three actions of penance. The first is, that a man be baptised after that he hath sinned. Seint Augustine sayth: But he be penitent for his old sinful lif, he may not beginne the newe clene lif: for certes, if he be baptised without penitence of his old gilt, he receiveth the marke of baptisme, but not the grace, ne the remission of his sinnes, til he have veray repentance. Another defaute is, that men don dedly sinne after that they have received baptisme. The thridde defaute is, that men fall in venial sinnes after hir baptisme, fro day to day. Therof sayth Seint Augustine, that penance of good and humble folk is the penance of every day.

The spices of penance ben three. That on of hem is solempne, another is commune, and the thridde privee. Thilke penance, that is solempne, is in two maneres; as to be put out of holy chirche in lenton, for slaughter of children, and swiche maner thing. Another is whan a man hath sinned openly, of which sinne the fame is openly spoken in the contree: and than holy chirche by jugement distreyneth for to do open penance. Commun penance is, that preestes enjoinen men in certain cas: as for to go paraventure naked on pilgrimage, or bare foot. Privee penance is thilke, that men don all day for privee sinnes, of which we shrive us prively, and receive privee penance.

Now shalt thou understond what is behoveful and necessary to every parfit penance; and this stont on three thinges; contrition of herte, confession of mouth, and satisfaction. For which sayth Seint John Chrisostome: Penance distreineth a man to accept benignely every peine, that him is enjoined, with contrition of herte, and shrift of mouth, with satisfaction, and werking of all maner humilitee. And this is fruitful penance ayenst tho three thinges, in which we wrathen our Lord Jesu Crist: this is to say, by delit in thinking, by rechelesnesse in speking, and by wicked sinful werking. And ayeust these wicked giltes is penance, that may be likened unto a tree.

The rote of this tree is contrition, that hideth him in the herte of him that is veray repentant, right as the rote of the tree hideth him in the erthe. Of this rote of contrition springeth a stalke, that bereth branches and lever of confession, and fruit of satisfaction. Of which Crist sayth in his gospell: Doth ye digne fruit of penitence; for by this fruit mow men understonde and knowe this tree, and not by the rote that is hid in the herte of man, ne by the branches, ne the leves of confession. And therfore our Lord Jesu Crist saith thus: By the fruit of hem shal ye knowe hem. Of this rote also springeth a seed of grace, which seed is moder of sikernesse, and this seed is eger and hote. The grace of this seed springeth of God, thurgh remembrance on the day of dome, and on the peines of Helle. Of this matere saith Salomon, that in the drede of God man forletteth his sinne. The hete of this sede is the love of God, and the desiring of the joye perdurable. This hete draweth the herte of man to God, and doth him hate his sinne. For sothly, ther is nothing that savoureth so sote to a child, as the milke of his norice, ne nothing is to him more abhominable than that milke, whan it is medled with other mete. Right so the sinful man that loveth his sinne, him semeth, that it is to him most swete of any thing; but fro that time that he loveth sadly our Lord Jesu Crist, and desireth the lif perdurable, ther is to him nothing more abhominable. For sothly the lawe of God is the love of God. For which David the prophet sayth: I have loved thy lawe, and hated wickednesse: he that loveth God, kepeth his lawe and his word. This tree saw the prophet Daniel in spirit, upon the vision of Nabuchodonosor, whan he counseiled him to do penance. Penance is the tree of lif, to hem that it receiven: and he that holdeth him in veray penance, is blisful, after the sentence of Salomon.

In this penance or contrition man shal understond foure thinges; that is to say, what is contrition; and which ben the causes that moven a man to contrition; and how he shuld be contrite; and what contrition availeth to the soule. Than is it thus, that contrition is the veray sorwe that a man receiveth in his herte for his sinnes, with sad purpos to shriven him, and to do penance, and never more to don sinne. And this sorwe shal be in this maner, as sayth Seint Bernard: It shal ben hevy and grevous, and ful sharpe and poinant in herte; first, for a man hath agilted his Lord and his creatour; and more sharpe and poinant, for he hath agilted his father celestial; and yet more sharpe and poinant, for he hath wrathed and agilted him that boughte him, that with his precious blod hath delivered us fro the bondes of sinne, and fro the crueltee of the devil, and fro the peines of Helle.

The causes that ought to meve a man to contrition ben sixe. First, a man shal remembre him of his sinnes. But loke that that remembrance ne be to him no delit, by no way, but grete shame and sorwe for his sinnes. For Job sayth: Sinful men don werkes worthy of confession. And, therfore sayth Ezechiel: I wol remembre me all the yeres of my lif, in the bitternesse of my herte. And God sayth, in the Apocalipse: Remembre you fro whens that ye ben fall, for before the time that ye sinned, ye weren children of God, and limmes of the regne of God; but for your sinne ye ben waxen thral and foule; membres of the fende; hate of angels; sclaunder of holy chirche, and fode of the false serpent; perpetuel matere of the fire of

Helle; and yet more foule and abhominable, for ye trespassen so oft times, as doth the hound that torneth again to ete his owen spewing; and yet fouler, for your long continuing in sinne, and your sinful usage, for which ye be roten in your sinnes, as a beest in his donge." Swiche manere thoughtes make a man to have shame of his sinne, and no delit; as God saith, by the prophet Ezechiel: Ye shul remembre you of your wayes, and they shul displese you. Sothly, sinnes ben the waies that lede folk to Hell.

The second cause that ought to make a man to have disdeigne of sinne is this, that, as saith Seint Peter, Who so doth sinne, is thral to sinne, and sinne putteth a man in gret thraldom. And, therfore, sayth the prophet Ezechiel: I went sorweful, and had disdeigne of myself. Certes, wel ought a man have disdeigne of sinne, and withdrawe him fro that thraldom and vilany. And lo, what sayth Seneke in this mater. He saith thus: Though I wist, that neither God ne man shuld never know it, yet wold I have disdeigne for to do sinne. And the same Seneke also sayth: I am borne to greter thinges, than to be thral to my body, or for to make of my body a thral. Ne a fouler thral may no man, ne woman, make of his body, than fer to yeve his body to sinne. Al were it the foulest chorle, or the foulest woman that liveth, and lest of value, yet is he than more foule, and more in servitude. Ever fro the higher degree that man falleth, the more is he thral, and more to God and to the world vile and abhominable. O good God, wel ought a man have disdeigne of sinne, sith that thurgh sinne, ther he was free, he is made bond. And therfore sayth Seint Augustine: If thou hast disdeigne of thy servant, if he offend or sinne, have thou than disdeigne, that thou thy self shuldest do sinne. Take reward of thin owen value, that thou ne be to foule to thyself. Alas! wel oughten they than have disdeigne to be servants and thralles to sinne, and sore to be ashamed of hemself, that God of his endles goodnesse hath sette in high estat, or yeve hem witte, strength of body, hele, beautee, or prosperitee, and bought hem fro the deth with his herte blood, that they so unkindly agains his gentillesse, quiten him so vilainsly to slaughter of hir owen soules. O good God! ye women that ben of gret beautee, remembreth you on the proverbe of Salomon, that likeneth a faire woman, that is a fool of hire body, to a ring of gold that is worne in the groine of a sowe: for right as a sowe wroteth in every ordure, so wroteth she hire beautee in stinking ordure of sinne.

The thridde cause, that ought to meve a man to contrition, is drede of the day of dome, and of the horrible peines of Helle. For as seint Jerome sayth: At every time that me remembreth of the day of dome, I quake: for whan I ete or drinke, or do what so I do, ever semeth me that the trompe sowneth in min eres: riseth ye up that ben ded, and cometh to the jugement. O good God! moche ought a man to drede swiche a jugement, ther as we shul be alle, as seint Poule sayth, before the streit jugement of oure Lord Jesu Crist; wheras he shal make à general congregation, wheras no man may be absent; for certes ther availeth non essoine ne non excusation; and not only, that our defautes shul be juged, but eke that all our werkes shul openly be knowen. And, as sayth Seint Bernard, "ther ne shal no pleting availe, ne no sleight: we shal yeve rekening of everich idle word. Ther shal we have a juge that may not be deceived ne corrupt; and why? for certes, all our thoughtes ben discovered, as to him: ne for prayer, ne for mede, he wil not be corrupt. And therfore saith Salomon: The wrath of God ne wol not spare no wight, for prayer ne for yeft. And therfore at the day of dome ther is non hope to escape. Wherfore, as sayth Seint Anselme: Ful gret anguish shal the sinful folk have at that time: ther shal be the sterne and wroth juge sitting above, and under him the horrible pitte of Helle open, to destroy him that wolde not beknowen his sinnes, which sinnes shullen openly be shewed before God and before every creature: and on the left side, mo Divels than any herte may thinke, for to hary and drawe the sinful soules to the pitte of Helle: and within the hertes of folk shal be the biting conscience, and without forth shal be the world all brenning. Whither than shal the wretched soule flee to hide him? Certes he may not hide him, he must come forth and shewe him. For certes, as saith Seint Jerome: The erth shal cast him out of it, and the see, and also the aire, that shal be ful of thonder clappes and lightnings. Now sothly, who so wil remembre him of these thinges, I gesse that his sinnes shal not torne him to delit, but to grete sorwe, for drede of the peine of Helle. And therfore saith Job to God: Suffer, Lord, that I may a while bewaile and bewepe, or I go without retorning to the derke londe, ycovered with the derkenesse of deth; to the londe of misese and of derkenesse, wheras is the shadowe of deth; wheras is non ordre ne ordinance, but grisly drede that ever shal last. Lo, here may ye see, that Job prayed respite a while, to bewepe and waile his trespas: for sothely on day of respite is better than all the tresour of this world. And for as moche as a man may acquite himself before God by penitence in this world, and not by tresour, therfore shuld he pray to God to yeve him respite a while, to bewepen and bewailen his trespas: for certes, all the sorwe that a man might make fro the beginning of the world, n'is but a litel thing, at regard of the sorwe of Helle. The cause why that Job clepeth Helle the londe of derkenesse; understondeth, that he clepeth it londe or erth, for it is stable and never shal faile; and derke, for he that is in Helle hath defaute of light nature; for certes the derke light, that shal come out of the fire that ever shal brenne, shall torne hem alto peine that be in Helle, for it sheweth hem the horrible divels that hem turmenten. Covered with the derkenesse of deth; that is to say, that he that is in Helle, shal have defaute of the sight of God; for certes the sight of God is the lif perdurable. The derknesse of deth, ben the sinnes that the wretched man hath don, which that distroublen him to see the face of God, right as a derke cloud betwene us and the Sonne. It is londe of misese, because that ther ben three maner of defautes ayenst three thinges that folk of this world han in this present lif; that is to say, honoures, delites, and richesses. Ayenst honour have they in Helle shame and confusion: for wel ye wote, that men clepen honour the reverence that man doth to man; but in Helle is non honour ne reverence; for certes no more reverence shal be don ther to a king; than a knave. For which God sayth by the prophet Jeremie: The folk, that me despisen, shal be in despite. Honour is also cleped gret lordeship. Ther shal no wight

serven other, but of harme and turment. Honour is also cleped gret dignitee and highnesse; but in Helle shal they be alle frotroden of divels. As God saith: The horrible divels shul gon and comen upon the hedes of dampned folk: and this is, for as moche as the higher that they were in this present lif, the more shul they be abated and defouled in Helle. Ayenst the richesse of this world shul they have misese of poverte, and this poverte shal be in foure thinges: in defaute of tresour; of which David sayth: The riche folk that embraceden and oneden all hir herte to tresour of this world, shul slepe in the sleping of deth, and nothing ne shul they find in hir hondes of all hir tresour. And moreover, the mesese of Helle shal be in defaute of mete and drink. For God sayth thus by Moyses: They shul be wasted with honger, and the briddes of Helle shul devoure hem with bitter deth, and the gall of the dragon shal ben hir drinke, and the venime of the dragon hir morsels. And further over hir misese shal be in defaute of clothing, for they shul be naked in body, as of clothing, save the fire in which they breme, and other filthes; and naked shul they be in soule, of all maner vertues, which that is the clothing of the soule. Wher ben than the gay robes, and softe sheles, and the fyn shertes? Lo, what sayth God of Heven by the prophet Esaie, that under hem shul be strewed mothes, and hir covertures shul ben of wormes of Helle. And further, over hir misese shal be in defaute of frendes, for he is not poure that hath good frendes: but ther is no frend; for neither God ne no good creature shal be frend to hem, and everich of hem shal hate other with dedly hate. The sonnes and the doughters shal rebel ayenst father and mother, and kinred ayenst kinred, and chiden, and despisen eche other, both day and night, as God sayth by the prophet Micheas. As the loving children, that whilom loveden so fleshly, everich of hem wold eten other if they might. For how shuld they love togeder in the peines of Helle, whan they hated eche other in the prosperitee of this lif? For truste wel, hir fleshly love was dedly hate. As saith the prophet David: Who su that loveth wickednesse, he hateth his owen soule, and who so hateth his owen soule, certes he may love non other wight in no manere: and therfore in Helle is no solace ne no frendship, but ever the more kinredes that ben in Helle, the more cursing, the more chiding, and the more dedly hate ther is among hem. And further over ther they shul have defaute of all maner delites, for certes delites ben after the appetites of the five wittes; as sight, hering, smelling, savouring, and touching. But in Helle hir sight shall be ful of derkenesse and of smoke, and hir eyen ful of teres; and hir hering ful of waimenting and grinting of teeth, as sayth Jesu Crist: hir nosethirles shul be ful of stinking; and, as saith Esay the prophet, hir savouring shal be ful of bitter galle; and touching of all hir body, shal be covered with fire that never shal quenche, and with wormes that never shal die, as God sayth by the mouth of Esay. And for as moche as they shul not wene that they mow dien for peine, and by deth flee peine, that mow they understonde in the word of Job, that sayth; ther is the shadow of deth. Certes a shadowe hath likenesse of the thing of which it is shadowed, but shadowe is not the same thing of which it is shadowed: right so fareth the peine of Helle; it is like deth, for the horrible anguish; and why? for i peineth hem ever as though they shuld die anou but certes they shul not dien. For as sayth Sein Gregory: To wretched caitifes shal be deth withouten deth, and ende withouten ende, and defaute withouten failing; for hir deth shal alway live, and hir ende shal ever more beginne, and hir defaute shal never faile. And therfore sayth Seint John the Evangelist: They shul folow deth, and they shul not finde him, and they shul desire to die, and deth shal flee from hem. And eke Job saith, that in Helle is non ordre of rule. And al be it so, that God hath create all thing in right ordre, and nothing withouten ordre, but all thinges ben ordred and nombred, yet natheles they that ben dampned ben nothing in ordre, ne hold non ordre. For the erth shal bere hem no fruite; (for, as the prophet David sayeth, God shal destroy the fruite of the erth, as fro hem) ne water shal yeve hem no moisture, ne the aire no refreshing, ne the fire no light. For as sayth seint Basil: The brenning of the fire of this world shal God yeve in Helle to hem that ben dampned, but the light and the clerenesse shal be yeve in Heven to his children; right as the good man yeveth flesh to his children, and bones to his houndes. And for they shul have non hope to escape, saith Job at last, that ther shal horrour and grisly drede dwellen withouten ende. Horrour is alway drede of harme that is to come, and this drede shal alway dwell in the hertes of hem that ben dampned. And therfore han they lorne all hir hope for seven causes. First, for God that is hir juge shal be withouten mercie to hem: and they may not plese him; ne non of his halwes; ne they may yeve nothing for hir raunsom; ne they have no vois to speke to him; ne they may not flee fro peine; ne they have no goodnesse in hem that they may shew to deliver hem fro peine. And therfore sayth Salomon; The wicked man dieth, and whan he is ded, he shal have non hope to escape fro peine. Who so than wold wel understonde these peines, and bethinke him wel that he hath deserved these peines for his sinnes, certes he shulde have more talent to sighten and to wepe, than for to singe and playe. For as sayth Salomon: Who so that had the science to know the peines that ben established and ordeined for sinne, he wold forsake sinne. That science, saith seint Austin, maketh a man to waimenten in his herte.

The fourthe point, that oughte make a man have contrition, is the sorweful remembrance of the good dedes that he hath lefte to don here in erthe, and also the good that he hath lorne. Sothly the good werkes that he hath lefte, either they be the good werkes that he wrought er he fell into dedly sinne, or elles the good werkes that he wrought while he lay in sinne. Sothly the good werkes that he did before that he fell in dedly sinne, ben all mortified, astoned, and dulled by the eft sinning: the other werkes that he wrought while he lay in sinne, they ben utterly ded, as to the lif perdurable in Heven. Than thilke good werkes that ben mortified by eft sinning, which he did while he was in charitee, moun never quicken ayen without veray penitence. And therof sayth God by the mouth of Ezechiel: If the rightful man retorne again fro his rightwisnesse and do wickednesse, shal he liven? nay; for all the good werkes that he hath wrought, shul never be in remembrance, for he shall die in his

sinne. And upon thilke chapitre sayth Seint Gregorie thus; that we shal understonde this principally, that when we don dedly sinne, it is for nought than to remembre or drawe into memorie the good werkes that we have wrought beforn: for certes in the werking of dedly sinne, their is no trust in no good werk that we have don beforn; that is to say, as for to have therby the lif perdurable in Heven. But natheles, the good werkes quicken again and comen again, and helpe and availe to have the lif perdurable in Heven, whan we have contrition: but sothly the good werkes that men don while they ben in dedly sinne, for as moche as they were don in dedly sinne, they may never quicken: for certes, thing that never had lif, may never quicken: and natheles, all be it so that they availen not to have the lif perdurable, yet availen they to abreggen the peine of Helle, or elles to get temporal richesses, or elles that God wol the rather enlumine or light the herte of the sinful man to have repentance; and eke they availen for to usen a man to do good werkes, that the feude have the lesse power of his soule. And thus the curteis Lord Jesu Crist ne woll that no good werk that men don be loste, for in somwhat it shal availe. But for as moche as the good werkes that men don while they ben in good lif, ben all amortised by sinne folowing, and eke sith all the good werkes that men don while they ben in dedly sinne, ben utterly ded, as for to have the lif perdurable, wel may that man, that no good werk ne doth, sing thilke newe Frenshe song, *J'ay tout perdu mon temps, et mon labour*. For certes sinne bereveth a man both goodnesse of nature, and eke the goodnesse of grace. For sothly the grace of the holy gost fareth like fire that may not ben idle; for fire faileth anon as it forletteth his werking, and right so grace faileth anon as it forletteth his werking. Than leseth the sinful man the goodnesse of glorie, that only is hight to good men that labouren and werken wel. Wel may he be sory than, that oweth all his lif to God, as long as he hath lived, and also as long as he shal live, that no goodnesse ne hath to paie with his dette to God, to whom he oweth all his lif: for trust wel he shal yeve accomptes, as sayth Seint Bernard, of all the goodes that han ben yeven him in this present lif, and how he hath hem dispended, in so moche that ther shal not perishe an here of his hed, ne a moment of an houre ne shal not perishe of his time, that he ne shal yeve therof a rekening.

The fifthe thing, that ought to meve a man to contrition, is remembrance of the passion that our Lord Jesu Crist suffered for our sinnes. For as sayth Seint Bernard: While that I live, I shal have remembrance of the travailes that our Lord Jesu Crist suffered in preching, his werinesse in traveling, his temptations whan he fasted, his long wakinges whan he prayed, his teres whan he wept for pitee of good peple: the wo and the shame, and the filthe that men sayden to him: of the foule spitting that men spitten in his face, of the buffettes that men yave him: of the foule mouthes and of the foule repreves that men saiden to him: of the nayles with which he was nailed to the crosse; and of all the remenant of his passion, that he suffred for mannes sinne, and nothing for his gilte. And here ye shul understand that in mannes sinne is every maner order, or ordinance, tourned up so doun. For it is soth, that God and reson, and sensualitee, and the body of man, ben ordained, that everich of thise foure thinges shuld have lordship over that other: as thus; God shuld have lordship over reson, and reson over sensualitee, and sensualitee over the body of man. But sothly whan man sinneth, all this ordre, or ordinance, is turned up so doun; and therfore than, for as moche as reson of man ne wol not be subget ne obeisant to God, that is his lord by right, therfore leseth it the lordship that it shuld have over sensualitee, and eke over the body of man; and why? for sensualitee rebelleth than ayenst reson: and by that wayleseth reson the lordship over sensualitee, and over the body. For right as reson is rebel to God, right so is sensualitee rebel to reson, and the body also. And certes this disordinance, and this rebellion, our Lord Jesu Crist abought upon his precious body ful dere: and herkeneth in whiche wise. For as moche as reson is rebel to God, therfore is man worthy to have sorwe, and to be ded. This suffred our Lord Jesu Crist for man, after that he had be betraied of his disciple, and distreined and bounde, so that his blood brast out at every nail of his hondes, as saith Seint Augustin. And ferthermore, for as moche as reson of man wol not daunt sensualitee whan it may, therfore is man worthy to have shame: and this suffered our Lord Jesu Crist for man, whan they spitten in his visage. And ferthermore, for as moche as the caitif body of man is rebel both to reson and to sensualitee, therfore it is worthy the deth: and this suffered our Lord Jesu Crist upon the crosse, wheras ther was no part of his body free, without grete peine and bitter passion. And all this suffred our Lord Jesu Crist that never forfaited; and thus sayd he: To mochel am I peined, for thinges that I never deserved: and to moche defouled for shendship that man is worthy to have. And therfore may the sinful man wel say, as sayth Seint Bernard: Accursed be the bitternesse of my sinne, for whiche ther must be suffered so moche bitternesse. For certes, after the divers discordance of our wickednesse was the passion of Jesu Crist ordeined in divers thinges; as thus. Certes sinful mannes soule is betraied of the divel, by coveitise of temporel prosperitee; and scorned by disceite, whan he cheseth fleshly delites; and yet it is turmented by impatience of adversitee, and bespet by servage and subjection of sinne; and at the last it is slain finally. For this discordance of sinful man, was Jesu Crist first betraied; and after that was he bounde, that came for to unbinde us of sinne and of peine. Than was he descorned, that only shuld have ben honoured in alle thinges and of alle thinges. Than was his visage, that ought to desired to be seen of all mankind (in which visage angels desiren to loke) vilainsly bespet. Than was he scourged that nothing had trespassed; and finally, than was he crucified and slain. Than were accomplished the wordes of Esaie: He was wounded for our misdedes, and defouled for our felonies. Now sith that Jesu Crist toke on himself the peine of all our wickednesses, moche ought sinful man to wepe and to bewaile, that for his sinnes Goddes sone of Heven shuld all this peine endure.

The sixte thing, that shuld move a man to contrition, is the hope of three thinges, that is to say, foryevenesse of sinne, and the yeft of grace for to do wel, and the glorie of Heven, with whiche God shal guerdon man for his good dedes. And for as moche as Jesu Crist yeveth us thise yeftes of his

largenesse, and of his soveraine bountee, therfore is he cleped, *Jesus Nazarenus Rex Judæorum*. Jesus is for to say, saviour or salvation, on whom men shul hopen to have foryevenesse of sinnes, which that is proprely salvation of sinnes. And therfore sayd the angel to Joseph: Thou shalt clepe his name Jesus, that shal saven his peple of hir sinnes. And hereof saith Seint Peter: Ther is non other name under Heven, that is yeven to any man, by which a man may be saved, but only Jesus. Nazarenus is as moche for to say, as flourishing, in which a man shal hope, that he, that yeveth him remission of sinnes, shal yeve him also grace wel for to do: for in the flour is hope of fruit in time coming, and in foryevenesse of sinnes hope of grace wel to do. I was at the dore of thin herte, sayth Jesus, and cleped for to enter. He that openeth to me, shal have foryevenesse of his sinnes, and I wol enter into him by my grace, and soupe with him by the good werkes that he shal don, which werkes ben the food of God, and he shal soupe with me by the gret joye that I shal yeve him. Thus shal man hope, that for his werkes of penance God shal yeve him his regne, as he behight him in the gospel.

Now shal man understande, in which manor shal be his contrition. I say, that it shal be universal and total; this is to say, a man shal be veray repentant for all his sinnes, that he hath don in delite of his thought, for delite is perilous. For ther ben two maner of consentinges; that on of hem is cleped consenting of affection, whan a man is meved to do sinne, and than deliteth him longe for to thinke on that sinne, and his reson apperceiveth it wel, that it is sinne ayenst the lawe of God, and yet his reson refraineth not his foule delite or talent, though he see wel apertly, that it is ayenst the reverence of God; although his reson consent not to do that sinne indede, yet sayn som doctours, that swiche delite that dwelleth longe is ful perilous, al be it never so lite. And also a man shuld sorow, namely for all that ever he hath desired ayenst the lawe of God, with parfite consenting of his reson, for therof is no doute, that it is dedly sinne in consenting: for certes ther is no dedly sinne, but that it is first in mannes thought, and after that in his delite, and so forth into consenting, and into dede. Wherfore I say, that many men ne repent hem never of swiche thoughtes and delites, ne never shriven hem of it, but only of the dede of gret sinnes outward: wherfore I say, that swiche wicked delites ben subtil begilers of hem that shul be dampned. Moreover man ought to sorwen for his wicked wordes, as wel as for his wicked dedes: for certes repentance of a singuler sinne, and not repentant of all his other sinnes; or elles repenting him of all his other sinnes, and not of a singuler sinne, may not availe. For certes God Almighty is all good; and therfore, either he foryeveth all, or elles right nought. And therfore sayth Seint Augustin: I wote certainly, that God is enemy to every sinner: and how than? he that observeth on sinne, shal he have foryevenesse of the remenant of his other sinnes? Nay. And furtherover contrition shuld be wonder sorweful and anguishous: and therfore yeveth him God plainly his mercie: and therfore whan my soule was anguishous, and sorweful within me, than had I remembrance of God, that my praier might come to him. Furtherover contrition muste be continuel, and that man have stedfast purpose to shrive him, and to amend him of his lif. For sothly, while contrition lasteth, man may ever hope to have foryevenesse, And of this cometh hate of sinne, that destroyeth sinne bothe in himself, and eke in other folk at his power. For which sayth David: They that love God, hate wickednesse: for to love God, is for to love that he loveth, and hate that he hateth.

The last thing that men shull understand in contrition is this, wherof availeth contrition. I say, that contrition somtime delivereth man fro sinne: of which David saith: I say, (quod David) I purposed fermely to shrive me, and thou Lord relesedest my sinne. And right so as contrition availeth not without sad purpos of shrift and satisfaction, right so litel worth is shrift or satisfaction withouten contrition. And moreover contrition destroyeth the prison of Helle, and maketh weke and feble all the strengthes of the devils, and restoreth the yeftes of the holy gost, and of all good vertues, and it clenseth the soule of sinne, and delivereth it fro the peine of Helle, and fro the compagnie of the devil, and fro the servage of sinne, and restoreth it to all goodes spirituel, and to the compagnie and communion of holy chirche. And furtherover it maketh him, that whilom was sone of ire, to be the sone of grace: and all these thinges ben preved by holy writ. And therfore he that wold set his entent to thise thinges, he were ful wise: for sothly he ne shuld have than in all his lif corage to sinne, but yeve his herte and body to the service of Jesu Crist, and therof do him homage. For certes our Lord Jesu Crist hath spared us so benignely in our folies, that if he ne had pitee on mannes soule, a sory song might we alle singe.

Explicit prima pars penitentiæ; et incipit pars secunda.

The second part of penitence is confession, and that is signe of contrition. Now shul ye understonde what is confession; and whether it ought nedes to be don or non: and which thinges ben covenable to veray confession.

First shalt thou understande, that confession is veray shewing of sinnes to the preest; this is to saie veray, for he must confesse him of all the conditions that belongen to his sinne, as ferforth as he can: all must be sayd, and nothing excused, ne hid, ne forwrapped: and not avaunt him of his good werkes. Also it is necessarie to understande whennes that sinnes springen, and how they encresen, and which they ben.

Of springing of sinnes saith Seint Poule in this wise: that right as by on man sinne entred first into this world, and thurgh sinne deth, right so deth entreth into alle men that sinnen: and this man was Adam, by whom sinne entred into this world, whan he brake the commandement of God. And therfore he that first was so mighty, that he ne shuld have died, became swiche on that he must nedes die, whether he wold or no; and all his progenie in this world, that in thilke maner sinnen dien. Loke that in the estat of innocence, whan Adam and Eve weren naked in Paradise, and no thing ne hadden shame of hir nakednesse, how that the serpent, that was most wily of all other bestes that God had made, sayd to the woman: Why commanded God you, that ye shuld not ete of every tree in Paradise? The woman answered: Of the fruit, sayd she, of the trees of Paradise

we feden us, but of the fruit of the tree that is in the middel of Paradise God forbode us for to eten, ne to touche it, lest we shuld die. The serpent sayd to the woman: Nay, nay, ye shul not dien of deth; for soth God wote, that what day that ye ete therof your eyen shul open, and ye shul be as goddes, knowing good and harme. The woman saw that the tree was good to feding, and faire to the eyen, and delectable to the sight; she toke of the fruit of the tree and did ete, and yave to hire husbond, and he ete; and anon the eyen of hem both opened; and whan they knewe that they were naked, they sowed of a fig-tree leves in maner of breches, to hiden hir members. Here mow ye seen, that dedly sinne hath first suggestion of the fende, as sheweth here by the adder; and afterward the delit of the flesh, as sheweth here by Eve; and after that the consenting of reson, as sheweth by Adam. For trust wel, though so it were, that the fende tempted Eve, that is to say, the flesh, and the flesh had delit in the beautee of the fruit defended, yet certes til that reson, that is to say, Adam, consented to the eting of the fruit, yet stode he in the state of innocence. Of thilke Adam toke we thilke sinne original; from him fleshly discended be we all, and engendred of vile and corrupt mater: and whan the soule is put in our bodies, right anon is contract original sinne; and that, that was erst but only peine of concupiscence, is afterward both peine and sinne: and therfore we ben all yborne sones of wrath, and of dampnation perdurable, if ne were baptisme that we receive, which benimeth us the culpe: but forsoth the peine dwelleth with us as to temptation, which peine hight concupiscence. This concupiscence, whan it is wrongfully disposed or ordeined in man, it maketh him coveit, by coveitise of flesh, fleshly sinne by sight of his eyen, as to erthly thinges, and also coveitise of highnesse by pride of herte.

Now as to speke of the first coveitise, that is concupiscence, after the lawe of our membres, that were lawfully ymaked, and by rightful jugement of God, I say, for as moche as a man is not obeisant to God, that is his Lord, therfore is his herte to him disobeisant thurgh concupiscence, which is called nourishing of sinne, and occasion of sinne. Therfore, all the while that a man hath within him the peine of concupisence, it is impossible, but he be tempted somtime, and moved in his flesh to sinne. And this thing may not faile, as long as he liveth. It may wel waxe feble by vertue of baptisme, and by the grace of God thurgh penitence; but fully ne shal it never quenche, that he ne shal somtime be meved in himselfe, but if he were refreined by sikenesse, or malefice of sorcerie, or cold drinkes. For lo, what sayth Seint Poule: The flesh coveiteth ayenst the spirit, and the spirit ayenst the flesh: they ben so contrarie and so striven, that a man may not alway do as he wold. The same Seint Poule, after his gret penance, in water and in lond: in water by night and by day, in gret peril, and in gret peine; in lond, in grete famine and thurst, cold and clothles, and ones stoned almost to deth; yet sayd he, Alas! I caitif man, who shal deliver me fro the prison of my caitif body? And Seint Jerom, whan he long time had dwelled in desert, wheras he had no compagnie but of wilde bestes; wher as he had no mete but herbes, and water to his drinke, ne no bed but the naked erth, wherfore his flesh was blaek, as an Ethiopian, for hete, and nie destroyed for cold: yet sayd he, that the brenning of lecherie boiled in all his body. Wherfore I wot wel sikerly that they be deceived that say, they be not tempted in hir bodies. Witnesse Seint James that sain, that every wight is tempted in his owen conscience; that is to say, that eche of us hath mater and occasion to be tempted of the norishing of sinne, that is in his body. And therfore sayth Seint John the Evangelist: If we say that we ben without sinne, we deceive ourself, and truth is not in us.

Now shul ye understonde, in what maner sinne wexeth and encreseth in man. The first thing is that nourishing of sinne, of which I spake, that is concupiscence: and after that cometh suggestion of the divel, this is to say, the divels belous, with which he bloweth in man the fire of concupiscence: and after that a man bethinketh him, whether he wol do or no that thing to which he is tempted. And than if a man withstond and weive the first entising of his flesh, and of the fend, than it is no sinne: and if so be he do not, than feleth he anon a flame of delit, and than it is good to beware and kepe him wel, or elles he wol fall anon to consenting of sinne, and than wol he do it, if he may have time and place. And of this mater sayth Moyses by the devil, in this maner: The fend sayth, I wol chace and pursue man by wicked suggestion, and I wol hent him by meving and stirring of sinne, and I wol depart my pris, or my prey, by deliberation, and my iust shal be accomplised in delit; I wol draw my swerd in consenting: (for certes, right as a swerd departeth a thing in two peces, right so consenting departeth God fro man) and than wol I sle him with my hond in dede of sinne. Thus sayth the fend; for certes, than is a man al ded in soule; and thus is sinne accomplised, by temptation, by delit, and by consenting: and than is the sinne actuel.

Forsoth sinne is in two maners, either it is venial, or dedly sinne. Sothly, whan a man loveth any creature more than Jesu Crist our creatour, than it is dedly sinne: and venial sinne it is, if a man love Jesu Crist lesse than him ought. Forsoth the dede of this venial sinne is ful perilous, for it amenuseth the love that man shuld have to God, more and more. And therfore if a man charge himself with many swiche venial sinnes, certes, but if so be that he somtime discharge him of hem by shrift, they may wel lightly amenuse in him all the love that he hath to Jesu Crist: and in this wise skippeth venial sinne into dedly sinne. For certes, the more that a man chargeth his soule with venial sinnes, the more he is enclined to fall into dedly sinne. And therfore let us not be negligent to discharge us of venial sinnes. For the proverbe sayth, that many smal maken a gret. And herken this ensample: A gret wawe of the see cometh somtime with so gret a violence, that it drencheth the ship: and the same harme do somtime the smal dropes of water, that enteren thurgh a litel crevis in the thurrok, and in the botom of the ship, if men ben so negligent, that they discharge hem not by time. And therfore although ther be difference betwix thise two causes of drenching, algates the ship is dreint. Right so fareth it somtime of dedly sinne, and of anoious venial sinnes, whan they multiplie in man so gretly, that thilke worldly thinges that he loveth, thurgh which he sinneth venially, is as gret in his herte as the love of God, or more: and

therefore the love of every thing that is not beset in God, ne don principally for Goddes sake, although that a man love it lesse than God, yet is it venial sinne; and dedly sinne is, whan the love of any thing weigheth in the herte of man, as moche as the love of God, or more. Dedly sinne, as sayth Seint Augustine, is, whan a man tourneth his herte fro God, whiche that is veray soveraine bountee, that may not chaunge, and yeveth his herte to thing that may chaunge and flitte: and certes, that is every thing save God of Heven. For soth is, that if a man yeve his love, which that he oweth to God with all his herte, unto a creature, certes, as moche of his love as he yeveth to the same creature, so moche he bereveth fro God, and therfore doth he sinne; for he, that is dettour to God, ne yeldeth not to God all his dette, that is to sayn, all the love of his herte.

Now sith man understondeth generally, which is venial sinne, than is it covenable to tell specially of sinnes, whiche that many a man peraventure demeth hem no sinnes, and shriveth him not of the same; and yet natheles they be sinnes sothly, as thise clerkes writen; this is to say, at every tyme that man eteth and drinketh more than sufficeth to the sustenance of his body, in certain he doth sinne; eke whan he speketh more than it nedeth, he doth sinne; eke whan he herkeneth not benignely the complaint of the poure; eke whan he is in hele of body, and wol not fast whan other folk fast, without cause resonable; eke whan he slepeth more than nedeth, or whan he cometh by that encheson to late to chirche, or to other werkes of charitee; eke whan he useth his wif withouten soveraine desire of engendrure; to the honour of God, or for the entent to yeld his wif his dette of his body; eke whan he wol not visite the sike, or the prisoner, if he may; eke if he love wif or child, or other worldly thing, more than reson requireth; eke if he flatter or blandise more than him ought for any necessitee; eke if he amenuse or withdrawe the almesse of the poure; eke if he apparaile his mete more deliciously than nede is, or ete it to hastily by likerousnesse; eke if he talke vanitees in the chirche, or at Goddes service, or that he be a taler of idle wordes of foly or vilanie, for he shal yeld accomptes of it at the day of dome; eke whan he behighteth or assureth to don thinges that he may not performe; eke whan that he by lightnesse of foly missayeth or scorneth his neighbour; eke whan he hath ony wicked suspection of thing, ther he ne wote of it no sothfastnesse: thise thinges and mo withouten nombre be sinnes, as sayth Seint Augustine. Now shul ye understonde, that al be it so that non erthly man may eschewe al venial sinnes, yet may he refreine him, by the brenning love that he hath to our Lord Jesu Crist, and by prayer and confession, and other good werkes, so that it shal but litel greve. For as sayth Seint Augustine: If a man love God in swiche maner, that all that ever he doth is in the love of God, or for the love of God verally, for he brenneth in the love of God, loke how moche that o drope of water, which falleth into a fourneis ful of fire, anoieth or greveth the brenning of the fire, in like maner anoieth or greveth a venial sinne unto that man, whiche is stedfast and parfite in the love of our Saviour Jesu Crist. Furthermore, men may also refreine and put away venial sinne, by receiving worthily the precious body of Jesu Crist; by receiving eke of holy water; by almes dede; by general confession of *Confiteor* at masse, and at prime, and at complin, and by blessing of bishoppes and preestes, and by other good werkes.

De septem peccatis mortalibus.

Now it is behovely to tellen whiche ben dedly sinnes, that is to say, chiefetaines of sinnes; for as moche as all they ren in o lees, but in divers maners. Now ben they cleped chiefetaines, for as moche as they be chiefe, and of hem springen all other sinnes. The rote of thise sinnes than is pride, the general rote of all harmes. For of this rote springen certain braunches: as ire, envie, accidie or slouthe, avarice or coveitise, (to commun understonding) glotonie, and lecherie: and eche of thise chief sinnes hath his braunches and his twigges, as shal be declared in hir chapitres folowing.

De superbia.

And though so be, that no man knoweth utterly the nombre of the twigges, and of the harmes that comen of pride, yet wol I shew a partie of hem, as ye shal understond. Ther is inobedience, avaunting, ipocrisie, despit, arrogance, impudence, swelling of herte, insolence, elation, impatience, strif, contumacie, presumption, irreverence, pertinacie, vaine glorie, and many other twigges that I cannot declare. Inobedient is he that disobeyeth for despit to the commandements of God, and to his soverains, and to his gostly fader. Avauntour, is he that bosteth of the harme or of the bountee that he hath don. Ipocrite, is he that hideth to shew him swiche as he is, and sheweth him to seme swiche as he is not. Despitous, is he that hath disdain of his neighebour, that is to sayn, of his even Cristen, or hath despit to do that him ought to do. Arrogant, is he that thinketh that he hath those bountees in him, that he hath not, or weneth that he shulde have hem by his deserving, or elles that demeth that he be that he is not. Impudent, is he that for his pride hath no shame of his sinnes. Swelling of herte, is whan man rejoyceth him of harme that he hath don. Insolent, is he that despiseth in his jugement all other folk, as in regarde of his value, of his conning, of his speking, and of his bering. Elation, is whan he ne may neither suffre to have maister ne felawe. Impatient, is he that wol not be taught, ne undernome of his vice, and by strif werrieth truth wetingly, and defendeth his foly. *Contumax*, is he that thurgh his indignation is ayenst every auctoritee or power of hem that ben his soveraines. Presumption, is whan a man undertaketh an emprise that him ought not to do, or elles that he may not do, and this is called surquidrie. Irreverence, is whan man doth not honour ther as him ought to do; and waiteth to be reverenced. Pertinacie, is whan man defendeth his foly, and trusteth to moche in his owen wit. Vaine-glorie, is for to have pompe, and delit in his temporel highnesse, and glorye him in his worldly estate. Jangling, is whan man speketh to moche before folk, and clappeth as a mille, and taketh no kepe what he sayth.

And yet ther is a privee spice of pride, that waiteth first to be salewed, or he wol salew, all be he lesse worthy than that other is; and eke he waiteth to sit, or to go above him in the way, or kisse the pax, or ben encensed, or gon to offring before his neighbour, and swiche semblable thinges, ayenst his duetee peraventure, but that he hath his

herte and his entente, in swiche a proude desire, to be magnified and honoured beforn the peple.

Now ben ther two maner of prides; that on of hem is within the herte of a man, and that other is without. Of swiche sothly thise foresayd thinges, and mo than I have sayd, apperteinen to pride, that is within the herte of man; and ther be other spices of pride that ben withouten: but natheles, that on of thise spices of pride is signe of that other, right as the gay levesell at the taverne is signe of the win that is in the celler. And this is in many thinges: as in speche and contenance, and outragious array of clothing: for certes, if ther had ben no sinne in clothing, Crist wol not so sone have noted and spoken of the clothing of thilke rich man in the gospel. And, as Seint Gregory sayth, that precious clothing is culpable for the derthe of it, and for his softnesse, and for his strangenesse and disguising, and for the superfluitee, or for the inordinate scantnesse of it, alas! may not a man see as in our daies, the sinneful costlewe array of clothing, and namely into moche superfluitee, or elles into disordinate scantnesse?

As to the firste sinne in superfluitee of clothing, whiche that maketh it so dere, to the harme of the peple, not only the coste of the enbrouding, the disguising, endenting or barring, ounding, paling, winding, or bending, and semblable wast of cloth in vanitee; but ther is also the costlewe furring in hir gounes, so moche pounsoning of chesel to maken holes, so moche dagging of sheres, with the superfluitee in length of the foresaide gounes, trailing in the dong and in the myre, on hors and eke on foot, as wel of man as of woman, that all thilke trailing is verraily (as in effect) wasted, consumed, thredbare, and rotten with dong, rather than it is yeven to the poure, to gret damage of the foresayd poure folk, and that in sondry wise: this is to sayn, the more that cloth is wasted, the more must it cost to the poure peple for the scarcenesse; and furtherover, if so be that they wolden yeve swiche pounsoned and dagged clothing to the poure peple, it is not convenient to were for hir estate, ne suffisant to bote hir necessitee, to kepe hem fro the distemperance of the firmament. Upon that other side, to speke of the horrible disordinat scantnesse of clothing, as ben thise cutted sloppes or hanselines, that thurgh hir shortnesse cover not the shameful membres of man, to wicked entente; alas! som of hem shewen the bosse and the shape of the horrible swollen membres, that semen like to the maladie of hernia, in the wrapping of hir hosen, and eke the buttokkes of hem behinde, that faren as it were the hinder part of a she ape in the ful of the mone. And moreover the wretched swollen membres that they shew thurgh disguising, in departing of hir hosen in white, and rede, semeth that half hir shameful privee membres were flaine. And if so be that they departe hir hosen in other colours, as is white and blewe, or white and blake, or blake and rede, and so forth; than semeth it, as by variance of colour, that the half part of hir privee membres ben corrupt by the fire of Seint Anthonie, or by cancre, or other swiche mischance. Of the hinder part of hir buttokkes it is ful horrible for to see, for certes in that partie of hir body ther as they purgen hir stinking ordure, that foule partie shewe they to the peple proudely in despite of honestee, whiche honestee that Jesu Crist and his frendes observed to shewe in hir lif. Now as to the outrageous array of women, God wote, that though the visages of som of hem semen ful chaste and debonaire, yet notifien they, in hir array of attire, likerousnesse and pride. I say not that honestee in clothing of man or woman is uncovenable, but certes the superfluitee or disordinat scarcitee of clothing is reprevable. Also the sinne of ornament, or of apparaile, is in thinges that apperteine to riding, as into many delicat hors, that ben holden for delit, that ben so faire, fatte, and costlewe; and also in many a vicious knave, that is susteined because of hem; in curious harneis, as in sadles, cropers, peitrels, and bridles, covered with precious cloth and rich, barred and plated of gold and silver. For which God sayth by Zacharie the prophet, I wol confounde the riders of swiche hors. These folke taken litel regard of the riding of Goddes sone of Heven, and of his harneis, whan he rode upon the asse, and had non other harneis but the poure clothes of his disciples, ne we rede not that ever he rode on ony other beste. I speke this for the sinne of superfluitee, and not for honestee whan reson it requireth. And moreover, certes pride is gretly notified in holding of gret meinie, whan they ben of litel profite or of right no profite, and namely whan that meine is felonous and damageous to the peple by hardinesse of high lordeship, or by way of office; for certes, swiche lordes sell than hir lordeship to the devil of Helle, whan they susteine the wickednesse of hir meinie. Or elles, whan thise folk of low degree, as they that holden hostelries, susteinen thefte of hir hostellers, and that is in many maner of deceites: thilke maner of folk ben the flies that folowen the hony, or elles the houndes that folowen the caraine. Swiche foresayde folk stranglen spirituelly hir lordeshipes; for which thus saith David the prophet: Wicked deth mot come unto thilke lordeshipes, and God yeve that they mote descend into Helle, all doun; for in hir houses is iniquitee and shrewednesse, and not God of Heven. And certes, but if they den amendement, right as God yave his benison to Laban by the service of Jacob, and to Pharao by the service of Joseph, right so God wol yeve his malison to swiche lordeshipes as susteine the wickednesse of hir servants, but they come to amendement. Pride of the table appereth eke ful oft; for certes riche men be cleped to festes, and poure folk be put away and rebuked; and also in excesse of divers metes and drinkes, and namely swiche maner bake metes and dishe metes brenning of wilde fire, and peinted and castelled with paper, and semblable wast, so that it is abusion to thinke. And eke in to gret preciousnesse of vessell, and curiositee of minstralcie, by which a man is stirred more to the delites of luxurie, if so be that he sette his herte the lesse upon oure Lord Jesu Crist, it is a sinne; and certainely the delites might ben so gret in this cas, that a man might lightly falt by hem into dedly sinne. The spices that sourden of pride, sothly whan they sourden of malice imagined, avised, and forecaste, or elles of usage, ben dedly sinnes, it is no doute. And whan they sourden by freeltee unavised sodenly, and sodenly withdraw again, al be they grevous sinnes, I gesse that they be not dedly. Now might men aske, wherof that pride sourdeth and springeth. I say that somtime it springeth of the goodes of nature, somtime of the goodes of fortune, and

somtime of the goodes of grace. Certes the goodes of nature stonden only in the goodes of the body, or of the soule. Certes, the goodes of the body ben hele of body, strength, delivernesse, beautee, gentrie, franchise; the goodes of nature of the soule ben good wit, sharpe understonding, subtil engine, vertue naturel, good memorie: goodes of fortune ben riches, high degrees of lordshipes, and preisinges of the peple: goodes of grace ben science, power to suffre spiritual travaile, benignitee, vertuous contemplation, withstonding of temptation, and semblable thinges: of which foresayd goodes, certes it is a gret folie, a man to priden him in ony of hem all. Now as for to speke of goodes of nature, God wote that somtime we have hem in nature as moche to our damage as to our profite. As for to speke of hele of body, trewely it passeth ful lightly, and also it is ful ofte encheson of sikenesse of the soule: for God wote, the flesh is a gret enemy to the soule: and therfore the more that the body is hole, the more be we in peril to falle. Eke for to priden him in his strength of body, it is a grete folie: for certes the flesh coveiteth ayenst the spirite: and ever the more strong that the flesh is, the sorier may the soule be: and over all, this strength of body, and worldly hardinesse, causeth ful oft to many man peril and meschance, Also to have pride of gentrie is right gret folie: for oft time the gentrie of the body benimeth the gentrie of the soule: and also we ben all of o fader and of o moder: and all we ben of o nature rotten and corrupt, both riche and poure. Forsoth o maner gentrie is for to preise, that appareilleth mannes corage with vertues and moralitees, and maketh him Cristes child; for trusteth wel, that over what man that sinne hath maistrie, he is a veray cherl to sinne.

Now ben ther general signes of gentilnesse; as eschewing of vice and ribaudrie, and servage of sinne, in word, and in werk and countenance, and using vertue, as courtesie, and elenenesse, and to be liberal; that is to say, large by mesure; for thilke that passeth mesure, is folie and sinne. Another is to remember him of bountee, that he of other folk hath received. Another is to be benigne to his subgettes; wherfore saith Seneke: Ther is nothing more covenable to a man of high estate, than debonairtee and pitee: and therfore thise flies that men clepen bees, whan they make hir king, they chesen on that that hath no pricke, wherwith he may sting. Another is, man to have a noble herte and a diligent, to atteine to high vertuous thinges. Now certes, a man to priden him in the goodes of grace, is eke an outrageous folie: for thilke yeftes of grace that shuld have tourned him to goodnesse, and to medicine, tourneth him to venime and confusion, as sayth Seint Gregorie. Certes also, who so prideth him in the goodnesse of fortune, he is a gret fool: for somtime is a man a gret lord by the morwe, that is a caitife and a wretch or it be night: and somtime the richesse of a man is cause of his deth: and somtime the delites of a man ben cause of grevous maladie, thurgh which he dieth. Certes, the commendation of the peple is ful false and brotel for to trust; this day they preise, to-morwe they blame. God wote, desire to have commendation of the peple hath caused deth to many a besy man.

Remedium superbiæ.

Now sith that so is, that ye have understond what is pride, and which be the spices of it, and how mennes pride sourdeth and springeth; now ye shul understond which is the remedie ayenst it. Humilitee or mekenesse is the remedy ayenst pride; that is a vertue, thurgh which a man hath veray knowlege of himself, and holdeth of himself no deintee, ne no pris, as in regard of his desertes, considering ever his freeltee. Now ben ther three maner of humilitees; as humilitee in herte, and another in the mouth, and the thridde in werkes. The humilitee in herte is in foure maners: that on is, whan a man holdeth himself as nought worth before God of Heven: the second is whan he despiseth non other man: the thridde is, whan he ne recketh nat though men holde him nought worth; and the fourth is, whan he is not sory of his humiliation. Also the humilitee of mouth is in foure thinges; in attemperat speche; in humilitee of speche; and whan he confesseth with his owen mouth, that he is swiche as he thinketh that he is in his herte: another is, whan he preiseth the bountee of another man and nothing therof amenuseth. Humilitee eke in werkes is in foure maners. The first is, whan he putteth other men before him; the second is, to chese the lowest place of all; the thridde is, gladly to assent to good conseil; the fourth is, to stond gladly to the award of his soveraine, or of him that his higher in degree; certain this is a gret werk of humilitee.

De invidia.

After pride wol I speke of the foule sinne of envie, which that is, after the word of the philosopher, sorwe of other mennes prosperitee; and after the word of Seint Augustine, it is sorwe of other mennes wele, and joye of other mennes harme. This foule sinne is platly ayenst the Holy Gost. Al be it so, that every sinne is ayenst the Holy Gost, yet natheles, for as moche as bountee appertaineth proprely to the Holy Gost, and envie cometh proprely of malice, therfore it is proprely ayenst the bountee of the Holy Gost. Now hath malice two spices, that is to say, hardinesse of herte in wickednesse, or elles the flesh of man is so blind, that he considereth not that he is in sinne, or recketh not that he is in sinne; which is the hardinesse of the divel. That other spice of envie is, whan that a man werrieth thurgh, whan he wot that it is trouth, and also whan he werrieth the grace of God that God hath yeve to his neighbour; and all this is by envie. Certes than is envie the werst sinne that is; for sothly all other sinnes be somtime only ayenst on special vertue: but certes envie is ayenst al maner vertues and alle goodnesse; for it is sory of all bountee of his neighbour: and in this maner it is divers from all other sinnes; for wel unnethe is ther any sinne that it ne hath som delit in himself, save only envie, that ever hath in himself anguish and sorwe. The spices of envie ben these. Ther is first sorwe of other mennes goodnesse and of hir prosperitee; and prosperitee ought to be kindly mater of joye; than is envie a sinne ayenst kinde. The seconde spice of envie is joye of other mennes harme; and that is proprely like to the divel, that ever rejoyseth him of mannes harme. Of thise two spices cometh backbiting; and this sinne of back-

biting or detracting hath certain spices, as thus: som man preiseth his neighbour by a wicked entente, for he maketh alway a wicked knotte at the laste ende: alway he maketh a *but* at the last ende, that is digne of more blame, than is worth all the preising. The second spice is, that if a man be good, or doth or sayth a thing to good entente, the backbiter wol turne all that goodnesse up so doun to his shrewde entente. The thridde is to amenuse the bountee of his neighbour. The fourthe spice of backbiting is this, that if men speke goodnesse of a man, than wol the backbiter say; parfay swiche a man is yet better than he; in dispreising of him that men preise. The fifth spice is this, for to consent gladly to herken the harme that men speke of other folk. This sinne is ful gret, and ay encreseth after the wicked entent of the backbiter. After backbiting cometh grutching or murmurance, and somtime it springeth of impatience ayenst God, and somtime ayenst man. Ayenst God it is whan a man grutcheth ayenst the peine of Helle, or ayenst poverte, or losse of catel, or ayenst rain or tempest, or elles grutcheth that shrewes have prosperitee, or elles that good men have adversitee: and all thise thinges shuld men suffre patiently, for they comen by the rightful jugement and ordinance of God. Somtime cometh grutching of avarice, as Judas grutched ayenst the Magdeleine, whan she anointed the bed of our Lord Jesu Crist with hire precious oynement. This maner murmuring is swiche as whan man grutcheth of goodnesse that himself doth, or that other folk don of hir owen catel. Somtime cometh murmur of pride, as whan Simon the Pharisee grutched ayenst the Magdeleine, whan she approched to Jesu Crist and wept at his feet for hire sinnes: and somtime it sourdeth of envie, whan men discover a mannes harme that was privee, or bereth him on hond thing that is false. Murmur also is oft among servants, that grutchen whan hir soveraines bidden hem do leful thinges; and for as moche as they dare not openly withsay the commaundement of hir soveraines, yet wol they say harme and grutche and murmure prively for veray despit; which wordes they call the divels *Pater noster*, though so be that the divel had never *Pater noster* but that lewed folke yeven it swiche a name. Somtime it cometh of ire or privee hate, that nourisheth rancour in the herte, as afterward I shal declare. Than cometh eke bitternesse of herte, thurgh which bitternesse every good dede of his neighbour semeth to him bitter and unsavory. Than cometh discord that unbindeth all maner of frendship. Than cometh scorning of his neighbour, al do he never so wel. Than cometh accusing, as whan a man seketh occasion to annoyen his neighbour, which is like the craft of the divel, that waiteth both day and night to accusen us all. Than cometh malignitee, thurgh which a man annoieth his neighbour prively if he may, and if he may not, algate his wicked will shal not let, as for to brenne his bous prively, or enpoison him, or sle his bestes, and semblable thinges.

Remedium invidiæ.

Now wol I speke of the remedie ayenst this foule sinne of envie. Firste is the love of God principally, and loving of his neighbour as himself: for sothly that on ne may not be without that other. And trust wel, that in the name of thy neighbour thou shalt understande the name of thy brother; for certes all we have on fader fleshly, and on moder; that is to say, Adam and Eve; and also on fader spirituel, that is to say, God of Heven. Thy neighbour art thou bounde for to love, and will him all goodnesse, and therfore sayth God: Love thy neighbour as thyself; that is to say, to salvation both of lif and soule. And moreover thou shalt love him in word, and in benigne amonesting and chastising, and comfort him in his anoyes, and praye for him with all thy herte. And in dede thou shal love him in swiche wise that thou shalt do to him in charitee, as thou woldest that it were don to thin owen person: and therfore thou ne shalt do him no damage in wicked word, ne harme in his body, ne in his catel, ne in his soule by entising of wicked ensample. Thou shalt not desire his wif, ne non of his thinges. Understonde eke that in the name of neighbour is comprehended his enemy: certes man shal love his enemy for the commandment of God, and sothly thy frend thou shalt love in God. I say thin enemy shalt thou love for Goddes sake, by his commandement: for if it were reson that man shulde hate his enemy, forsoth God wolde not receive us to his love that ben his enemies. Ayenst three maner of wronges, that his enemy doth to him, he shal do three things, as thus: ayenst hate and rancour of herte, he shal love him in herte: ayenst chiding and wicked wordes, he shal pray for his enemy: ayenst the wicked dede of his enemy he shal do him bountee. For Crist sayth: Love your enemies, and prayeth for hem that speke you harme, and for hem that chasen and pursuen you: and do bountee to hem that haten you. Lo, thus comandeth us our Lord Jesu Crist to do to our enemies: forsoth nature driveth us to love our frendes, and parfay our enemies have more nede of love than our frendes, and they that more nede have, certes to hem shal men do goodnesse. And certes in thilke dede have we remembrance of the love of Jesu Crist that died for his enemies: and in as moche as thilke love is more grevous to performe, so moche is more gret the merite, and therfore the loving of our enemy hath confounded the venime of the divel. For right as the divel is confounded by humilitee, right so is he wounded to the deth by the love of our enemy: certes than is love the medicine that casteth out the venime of envie fro mannes herte.

De ira.

After envy wol I declare of the sinne of ire: for sothly who so hath envy upon his neighbour, anon communly wol finde him mater of wrath in word or in dede ayenst him to whom he hath envie. And as wel cometh ire of pride as of envie, for sothly he that is proude or envious is lightly wroth.

This sinne of ire, after the discriving of Seint Augustin, is wicked will to be avenged by word or by dede. Ire, after the philosophre, is the fervent blode of man yquicked in his herte, thurgh which he wold harme to him that he hateth: for certes the herte of man by enchaufing and meving of his blood waxeth so troubled, that it is out of all maner jugement of reson. But ye shul understonde that ire is in two maners, that on of hem is good, and that other is wicked. The good ire is by jalousie of goodnesse, thurgh the which man is wroth with wickednesse, and again wickednesse.

And therfore sayth the wise man, that ire is better than play. This ire is with debonairtee, and it is wrothe without bitternesse: not wrothe ayenst the man, but wrothe with the misdede of the man: as saith the prophet David: *Irascimini, et nolite peccare.* Now understond that wicked ire is in two maners, that is to say, soden ire or hasty ire without avisement and consenting of reson; the mening and the sense of this is, that the reson of a man ne consenteth not to that soden ire, and than it is venial. Another ire is that is ful wicked, that cometh of felonie of herte, avised and cast before, with wicked will to do vengeance, and therto his reson consenteth: and sothly this is dedly sinne. This ire is so displesant to God, that it troubleth his hous, and chaseth the Holy Gost out of mannes soule, and wasteth and destroyeth that likenesse of God, that is to say, the vertue that is in mannes soule, and putteth in him the likenesse of the devil, and benimeth the man fro God that is his rightful lord. This ire is ful gret plesance to the devil, for it is the devils forneis that he enchaufeth with the fire of Helle. For certes right so as fire is more mighty to destroie erthly thinges, than any other element, right so ire is mighty to destroie all spirituel thinges. Loke how that fire of smal gledes, that ben almost ded under ashen, wol quicken ayen whan they ben touched with brimstone, right so ire wol evermore quicken ayen, whan it is touched with pride that is covered in mannes herte. For certes fire ne may not come out of no thing, but if it were first in the same thing naturelly: as fire is drawne out of flintes with stele. And right so as pride is many times mater of ire, right so is rancour norice and keper of ire. Ther is a maner tree, as sayth Seint Isidore, that whan men make a fire of the saide tree, and cover the coles of it with ashen, sothly the fire therof wol last all a yere or more: and right so fareth it of rancour, whan it is ones conceived in the herte of som men, certes it wol lasten peraventure from on Easterne day until another Easterne day, or more. But certes the same man is ful fer from the mercie of God all thilke while.

In this foresaid devils forneis ther forgen three shrewes; pride, that ay bloweth and encreseth the fire by chiding and wicked wordes: than stondeth envie, and holdeth the hot yren upon the herte of man, with a pair of longe tonges of longe rancour: and than stondeth the sinne of contumelie or strif and cheste, and battereth and forgeth by vilains reprevings. Certes this cursed sinne annoyeth both to the man himself, and eke his neighbour. For sothly almost all the harme or damage that ony man doth to his neighbour cometh of wrath: for certes, outrageous wrathe doth all that ever the foule fende willeth or commandeth him; for he ne spareth neyther for our Lord Jesu Crist, ne his swete moder; and in his outrageous anger and ire, alas! alas! ful many on at that time, feleth in his herte ful wickedly, both of Crist, and also of all his halwes. Is not this a cursed vice? Yes certes. Alas! it benimmeth fro man his witte and his reson, and all his debonaire lif spirituel, that shuld kepe his soule. Certes it benimmeth also Goddes due lordship (and that is mannes soule) and the love of his neighbours: it striveth also all day ayenst trouth; it reveth him the quiet of his herte, and subverteth his soule.

Of ire comen thise stinking engendrures; first, hate, that is olde wrath: discord, thurgh which a man forsaketh his olde frend that he hath loved ful long; and than cometh werre, and every maner of wrong that a man doth to his neighbour in body or in catel. Of this cursed sinne of ire cometh eke manslaughter. And understondeth wel that homicide (that is manslaughter) is in divers wise. Som maner of homicide is spirituel, and som is bodily. Spirituel manslaughter is in six thinges. First, by hate, as sayth St. John: He that hateth his brother, is an homicide. Homicide is also by backbiting; of which backbitours sayth Salomon, that they have two swerdes, with which they slay hir neighbours: for sothly as wicked it is to benime of him his good name as his lif. Homicide is also in yeving of wicked conseil by fraude, as for to yeve conseil to areise wrongful customes and talages; of which sayth Salomon: A lion roring, and a bere hungrie, ben like to cruel lordes, in withholding or abregging of the hire or of the wages of servantes, or elles in usurie, or in withdrawing of the almesse of poure folk. For which the wise man sayth: Fedeth him that almost dieth for honger; for sothly but if thou fede him thou sleest him. And all thise ben dedly sinnes. Bodily manslaughter is whan thou sleest him with thy tonge in other maner, as whan thou commandest to sle a man, or elles yevest conseil to sle a man. Manslaughter in dede is in foure manors. That on is by lawe, right as a justice dampneth him that is culpable to the deth: but let the justice beware that he do it rightfully, and that he do it not for delit to spill blood, but for keping of rightwisenesse. Another homicide is don for necessitee, as whan a man sleeth another in his defence, and that he ne may non other wise escapen fro his owen deth: but certain, and he may escape without slaughter of his adversarie, he doth sinne, and he shal bere penance as for dedly sinne. Also if a man by cas or aventure shete an arowe or cast a stone, with which he sleeth a man, he is an homicide. And if a woman by neligence overlyeth hire child in hire slepe, it is homicide and dedly sinne. Also whan a man disturbleth conception of a childe, and maketh a woman barein by drinkes of venimous herbes, thurgh which she may not conceive, or sleeth hire child by drinkes, or elles putteth certain material thing in hire secret place to sle hire child, or elles doth unkinde sinne, by which man, or woman, shedeth his nature in place ther as a childe may not be conceived; or elles if a woman hath conceived, and hurteth hireself, and by that mishappe the childe is slaine, yet is it homicide. What say we eke of women that murderen hir children for drede of worldly shame? Certes, it is an horrible homicide. Eke if a man approche to a woman by desir of lecherie, thurgh which the childe is perished; or elles smiteth a woman wetingly, thurgh which she leseth hire child; all thise ben homicides, and horrible dedly sinnes. Yet comen ther of ire many mo sinnes, as wel in worde, as in thought and in dede; as he that arretteth upon God, or blameth God of the thing of which he is himself gilty; or despiseth God and all his halwes, as don thise cursed hasardours in divers contrees. This cursed sinne don they, whan they felen in hire herte ful wickedly of God and of his halwes: also whan they treten unreverently the sacrament of the auter, thilke sinne it so gret, that unneth it may be relesed, but that

the mercy of God passeth all his werkes, it is so gret, and he so benigne. Than cometh also of ire attry anger, whan a man is sharpely amonested in his shrift to leve his sinne, than wol he be angry, and answere hokerly and angerly, to defend or excusen his sinne by unstedfastnesse of his fleshe; or elles he did it for to hold compagnie with his felawes; or elles he sayth the fend enticed him; or elles he did it for his youthe; or elles his complexion is so corageous that he may not forbere; or elles it is his destinee, he sayth, unto a certain age; or elles he sayth it cometh him of gentilnesse of his auncestres, and semblable things. All thise maner of folke so wrappen hem in hir sinnes, that they ne wol not deliver hemself; for sothly, no wight that excuseth himself wilfully of his sinne, may not be delivered of his sinne, til that he mekely beknoweth his sinne. After this than cometh swering, that is expresse ayenst the commandement of God: and that befalleth often of anger and of ire. God sayth: Thou shalt not take the name of thy Lord God in idel. Also our Lord Jesu Crist sayth by the word of Seint Mathew: Ne shal ye not swere in all manere, neyther by Heven, for it is Goddes trone: ne by erthe, for it is the benche of his feet: ne by Jerusalem, for it is the citee of a gret king: ne by thin hed, for thou ne mayst not make an here white ne black: but he sayth, be your word, ye, ye, nay, nay; and what that is more, it is of evil. Thus sayth Crist. For Cristes sake swere not so sinnefully, in dismembring of Crist, by soule, herte, bones, and body: for certes it semeth, that ye thinken that the cursed Jewes dismembred him not ynough, but ye dismembre him more. And if so be that the lawe compell you to swere, than reuleth you after the lawe of God in your swering, as sayth Jeremie: Thou shalt kepe three conditions; thou shalt swere in trouth, in dome, and in rightwisenesse. This is to say, thou shalt swere soth; for every lesing is ayenst Crist; for Crist is veray trouth: and thinke wel this, that every gret swerer, not compelled lawfully to swere, the plage shal not depart fro his hous, while he useth unleful swering. Thou shalt swere also in dome, whan thou art constreined by the domesman to witnesse a trouth. Also thou shalt not swere for envie, neyther for favour, ne for mede, but only for rightwisenesse, and for declaring of trouthe to the honour and worship of God, and to the aiding and helping of thin even Cristen. And therfore every man that taketh Goddes name in idel, or falsely swereth with his mouth, or elles taketh on him the name of Crist to be called a Cristen man, and liveth agenst Cristes living and his teching: all they take Goddes name in idel. Loke also what sayth Seint Peter; *Actuum* iv. *Non est aliud nomen sub cælo*, &c. Ther is non other name (sayth Seint Peter) under Heven yeven to men, in which they may be saved; that is to say, but the name of Jesu Crist. Take kepe eke how precious is the name of Jesu Crist, as sayth Seint Poule, *ad Philipenses* ii. *In nomine Jesu*, &c. that in the name of Jesu every knee of hevenly creature, or erthly, or of Helle, shuld bowen; for it is so high and so worshipful, that the cursed fend in Helle shuld tremble for to here it named. Than semeth it, that men that swere so horribly by his blessed name, that they despise it more boldely than did the cursed Jewes, or elles the divel, that tremble whan he hereth his name.

Now certes sith that swering (but if it be lawfully don) is so highly defended, moche worse is for to swere falsely, and eke nedeles.

What say we eke of hem that deliten hem in swering, and hold it a genterie or manly dede to swere gret othes? And what of hem that of veray usage ne cese not to swere gret othes, al be the cause not worth a straw? Certes this is horrible sinne. Swering sodenly without avisement is also a gret sinne. But let us go now to that horrible swering of adjuration and conjuration, as don thise false enchauntours and nigromancers in basins ful of water, or in a bright sword, in a cercle, or in a fire, or in a sholder bone of a shepe: I cannot sayn, but that they do cursedly and damnably ayenst Crist, and all the feith of holy chirche.

What say we of hem that beleven on divinales, as by flight or by noise of briddes or of bestes, or by sorte of geomancie, by dremes, by chirking of dores, or craking of houses, by gnawing of rattes, and swiche maner wretchednesse? Certes, all thise thinges ben defended by God and holy chirche, for which they ben accursed, till they come to amendement, that on swiche filth set hir beleve. Charmes for woundes, or for maladies of men or of bestes, if they take any effect, it may be paraventure that God suffreth it, for folk shuld yeve the more feith and reverence to his name.

Now wol I speke of lesinges, which generally is false signifiance of word, in entent to deceive his even Cristen. Som lesing is, of which ther cometh non avantage to no wight; and som lesing turneth to the profite and ese of a man, and to the dammage of another man. Another lesing is, for to saven his lif or his catel. Another lesing cometh of delit for to lie, in which delit, they wol forge a long tale, and peint it with all circumstances, wher all the ground of the tale is false. Some lesing cometh, for he wol sustein his word: and som lesing cometh of recchelesnesse withouten avisement, and semblable thinges.

Let us now touche the vice of flaterie, which ne cometh not gladly, but for drede, or for covetise. Flaterie is generally wrongful preising. Flaterers ben the devils nourices, that nourish his children with milke of losengerie. Forsoth Salomon sayth, that flaterie is werse than detraction: for somtime detraction maketh an hautein man be the more humble, for he dredeth detraction, but certes flaterie maketh a man to enhaunce his herte and his contenance. Flaterers ben the devils enchauntours, for they maken a man to wenen himself be like that he is not like. They be like to Judas, that betrayed God; and thise flaterers betrayen man to selle him to his enemy, that is the devil. Flaterers ben the devils chappeleines, that ever singen *Placebo*. I reken flaterie in the vices of ire: for oft time if a man be wroth with another, than wol he flater som wight, to susteine him in his quarrel.

Speke we now of swiche cursing as cometh of irous herte. Malison generally may be said every maner power of harme: swiche cursing bereveth man the regne of God, as sayth Seint Poule. And oft time swiche cursing wrongfully retorneth again to him that curseth, as a bird retorneth again to his owen nest. And over all thing men ought

eschew to curse hir children, and to yeve to the devil hir engendrure, as fer forth as in hem is: certes it is a gret peril and a grete sinne.

Let us than speke of chiding and repreving, which ben ful grete woundes in mannes herte, for they unsow the seames of frendship in mannes herte: for certes, unnethe may a man be plainly accorded with him, that he hath openly reviled, repreved, and disclaundred: this is a full grisly sinne, as Crist sayth in the Gospel. And take ye kepe now, that he that repreveth his neighbour, either he repreveth him by som harme of peine, that he hath upon his bodie, as, mesel, croked harlot; or by som sinne that he doth. Now if he repreve him by harme of peine, than turneth the repreve to Jesu Crist: for peine is sent by the rightwise sonde of God, and by his suffrance, be it meselrie, or maime, or maladie: and if he repreve him uncharitably of sinne, as thou holour, thou dronkelewe harlot, and so forth; than appertemeth that to the rejoicing of the devil, which ever hath joye that men don sinne. And certes, chiding may not come but out of a vilains herte, for after the haboundance of the herte speketh the mouth ful oft. And ye shul understond, that loke by any way, whan ony man chastiseth another, that he beware fro chiding or repreving: for trewely, but he beware, he may ful lightly quicken the fire of anger and of wrath, which he shuld quench: and peraventure sleth him, that he might chastise with benignitee. For, as sayth Salomon, the amiable tonge is the tree of lif; that is to say, of lif spirituel. And sothly, a dissolute tonge sleth the spirit of him that repreveth, and also of him which is repreved. Lo, what sayth Seint Augustine: Ther is nothing so like the devils child, as he which oft chideth. A servant of God behoveth not to chide. And though that chiding be a vilains thing betwix all maner folk, yet it is certes most uncovenable betwene a man and his wif, for ther is never rest. And therfore sayth Salomon; An hous that is uncovered in rayn and dropping, and a chiding wif, ben like. A man, which is in a dropping hous in many places, though he eschew the dropping in o place, it droppeth on him in another place: so fareth it by a chiding wif; if she chide him not in o place, she wol chide him in another: and therfore, better is a morsel of bred with joye, than an hous filled ful of delices with chiding, sayth Salomon. And Seint Poule sayth: O ye women, beth ye subgettes to your husbonds, as you behoveth in God; and, ye men, loveth your wyves.

Afterward speke we of scorning, which is a wicked, sinne and namely, whan he scorneth a man for his good werkes: for certes, swiche scorners faren like the foule tode, may not endure to smell the swete savour of the vine, whan it flourisheth. Thise scorners ben parting felawes with the devil, for they have joye whan the devil winneth, and sorwe if he leseth. They ben adversaries to Jesu Crist, for they hate that he loveth; that is to say, salvation of soule.

Speke we now of wicked conseil, for he that wicked conseil yeveth is a traitour, for he deceiveth him that trusteth in him. But natheles, yet is wicked conseil first ayenst himself: for, as sayth the wise man, every false living hath this propertee in himself, that he that wol annoy another man, he annoyeth first himself. And men shul understond, that man shal not take his conseil of false folk, ne of angry folk, or grevous folk, ne of folk that loven specially hir owen profit, ne of to moche worldly folk, namely, in conseiling of mannes soule.

Now cometh the sinne of hem that maken discord among folk, which is a sinne that Crist hateth utterly; and no wonder is; for he died for to make concord. And more shame don they to Crist, than did they that him crucified: for God loveth better, that frendship be amonges folk, than he did his owen body, which that he yave for unitee. Therfore ben they likened to the devil, that ever is about to make discord.

Now cometh the sinne of double tonge, swiche as speke faire before folk, and wickedly behind; or elles they make semblaunt as though they spake of good entention, or elles in game and play, and yet they speken of wicked entente.

Now cometh bewreying of conseil, thurgh which a man is defamed: certes unnethe may he restore the damage. Now cometh manace, that is an open folie; for he that oft manaceth, he threteth more than he may performe ful oft time. Now comen idel wordes, that be without profite of him that speketh the wordes and eke of him that herkeneth the wordes: or elles idel wordes ben tho that ben nedeles, or without entente of natural profit. And al be it that idel wordes be somtime venial sinne, yet shuld men doute hem, for we shul yeve rekening of hem before God. Now cometh jangling, that may not come withouten sinne: and as sayth Salomon, it is a signe of apert folie. And therfore a philosophre sayd, whan a man axed him how that he shuld plese the peple, he answered; "Do many good werkes, and speke few jangelinges." After this cometh the sinne of japeres, that ben the devils apes, for they make folk to laugh at hir japerie, as folk don at the gaudes of an ape: swiche japes defendeth Seint Poule. Loke how that vertuous wordes and holy comforten hem that travaillen in the service of Crist, right so comforten the vilains words, and the knakkes of japeres, hem that travaillen in the service of the devil. Thise ben the sinnes of the tonge, that comen of ire, and other sinnes many mo.

Remedium iræ.

The remedie ayenst ire, is a vertue that cleped is mansuetude, that is debonairtee; and eke another vertue, that men clepen patience or sufferaunce.

Debonairtee withdraweth and refreineth the stirrings and mevings of mannes corage in his herte, in swich maner, that they ne skip not out by anger ne ire. Sufferance suffereth swetely all the annoyance and the wrong that is don to man outward. Seint Jerome sayth this of debonairtee, that it doth no harme to no wight, ne sayth: ne for no harme that men do ne say, he ne chafeth not ayenst reson. This vertue somtime cometh of nature; for, as sayth the philosophere, A man is a quick thing, by nature debonaire, and tretable to goodnesse: but whan debonairtee is enformed of grace, than it is the more worth.

Patience is another remedy ayenst ire, and is a vertue that suffereth swetely every mannes goodnesse, and is not wroth for non harme that is don to him. The philosophre sayth, that patience is the vertue that suffreth debonairly al the outrage of adversitee, and every wicked word. This vertue

maketh a man like to God, and maketh him Goddes owen childe: as sayth Crist. This vertue discomfiteth thin enemies. And therfore sayth the wise man: If thou wolt vanquish thin enemie, see thou be patient. And thou shalt understond, that a man suffereth foure maner of grevances in outward thinges, ayenst the which foure he must have foure maner of patiences.

The first grevance is of wicked wordes. Thilke grevance suffred Jesu Crist, without grutching, ful patiently, whan the Jewes despised him and repreved him ful oft. Suffre thou therfore patiently, for the wise man saith: If thou strive with a foole, though the foole be wroth, or though he laugh, algate thou shalt have no reste. That other grevance outward is to have domage of thy catel. Ther ayenst suffred Crist ful patiently, whan he was despoiled of al that he had in this lif, and that n'as but his clothes. The thridde grevance is a man to have harme in his body. That suffred Crist ful patiently in all his passion. The fourthe grevance is in outrageous labour in werkes: wherfore I say, that folk that make hir servants to travaile to grevously, or out of time, as in holy dayes, sothly they do gret sinne. Here ayenst suffred Crist ful patiently, and taught us patience, whan he bare upon his blessed sholders the crosse, upon which he shuld suffer despitous deth. Here may men lerne to be patient; for certes, not only cristen men be patient for love of Jesu Crist, and for guerdon of the blisful lif that is perdurable, but certes the old Payenes, that never were cristened, commendeden and useden the vertue of patience.

A philosophre upon a time, that wold have beten his disciple for his gret trespas, for which he was gretly meved, and brought a yerde to bete the childe, and whan this child sawe the yerde, he sayd to his maister: "What thinke ye to do?" "I wol bete thee," said the maister, "for thy correction." "Forsoth," sayd the childe, "ye ought first correct yourself, that have lost all your patience for the offence of a child." "Forsooth," sayd the maister all weping, "thou sayest soth: have thou the yerde, my dere sone, and correct me for min impatience." Of patience cometh obedience, thurgh which a man is obedient to Crist, and to all hem to which he ought to be obedient in Crist. And understand wel, that obedience is parfite, whan that a man doth gladly and hastily, with good herte entirely, all that he shuld do. Obedience generally, is to performe hastily the doctrine of God, and of his soveraines, to which him ought to be obeisant in all rightwisenesse.

De accidia.

After the sinne of wrath, now wol I speke of the sinne of accidie, or slouth: for envie blindeth the herte of a man, and ire troubleth a man, and accidie maketh him hevy, thoughtful, and wrawe. Envie and ire maken bitternesse in herte, which bitternesse is mother of accidia, and benimeth him the love of alle goodnesse; than is accidie the anguish of a trouble herte. And Seint Augustine sayth: It is annoye of goodnesse and annoye of harme. Certes this is a damnable sinne, for it doth wrong to Jesu Crist, in as moche as it benimeth the service that men shulde do to Crist with alle diligence, as sayth Salomon: but accidie doth non swiche diligence. He doth all thing with annoye, and with wrawnesse, slaknesse, and excusation, with idelnesse and unlust. For which the book sayth: Accursed be he that doth the service of God negligently. Than is accide enemie to every estate of man. For certes the estate of man is in three maners: either it is the estate of innocence, as was the estate of Adam, before that he fell into sinne, in which estate he was holden to werk, as in herying and adoring of God. Another estate is the estate of sinful men: in which estate men ben holden to labour in praying to God, for amendement of hir sinnes, and that he wold graunt hem to rise out of hir sinnes. Another estate is the estate of grace, in which estate he is holden to werkes of penitence: and certes, to all thise thinges is accidie enemie and contrary, for he loveth no besinesse at all. Now certes, this foule sinne of accidie is eke a ful gret enemie to the livelode of the body; for it ne hath no purveaunce ayenst temporel necessitee; for it forsleutheth, forsluggeth, and destroieth all goodes temporel by recchelesnesse.

The fourth thing is that accidie is like hem that ben in the peine of Helle, because of hir slouthe and of hir hevinesse: for they that be damned, ben so bound, that they may neyther do wel ne think wel. Of accidie cometh first, that a man is annoied and accombred to do any goodnesse, and that maketh that God hath abhominacion of swiche accidie, as sayth Seint John.

Now cometh slouthe, that wol not suffre no hardnesse ne no penance; for sothly, slouthe is so tendre and so delicat, as sayth Salomon, that he wol suffre non hardnesse ne penance, and therfore he shendeth all that he doth. Ayenst this roten sinne of accidie and slouthe shuld men exercise hemself, and use hemself to do good werkes, and manly and vertuously cachen corage wel to do, thinking that our Lord Jesu Crist quiteth every good deed, be it never so lite. Usage of labour is a gret thing: for it maketh, as sayth Seint Bernard, the labourer to have strong armes and hard sinewes: and slouthe maketh hem feble and tendre. Than cometh drede for to beginne to werke any good werkes: for certes, he that enclineth to sinne, him thinketh it is to gret an emprise for to undertake the werkes of goodnesse, and casteth in his herte, that the circumstances of goodnesse ben so grevous and so chargeant for to suffre, that he dare not undertake to do werkes of goodnesse, as sayth Seint Gregorie.

Now cometh wanhope, that is, despeir of the mercy of God, that cometh somtime of to moche outrageous sorwe, and somtime of to moche drede, imagining that he hath do so moche sinne, that it wolde not availe him, though he wolde repent him, and forsake sinne: thurgh which despeire or drede, he abandoneth all his herte so every maner sinne, as sayth Seint Augustine. Which dampnable sinne, if it continue unto his end, it is cleped the sinne of the Holy Gost. This horrible sin is so perilous, that he that is despeired, ther n'is no felonie, ne no sinne, that he douteth for to do, as shewed wel by Judas. Certes, aboven all sinnes than is this sinne most displesant and most adversarie to Crist. Sothly, he that despeireth him, is like to the coward champion recreant, that flieth withouten nede. Alas! alas! nedeles is he recreant, and nedeles despeired. Certes, the mercy of God is ever redy to the penitent person, and is

above all his werkes. Alas! cannot a man bethinke him on the Gospel of Seint Luke, chap. xv. wheras Crist sayeth, that as wel shal ther be joye in Heven upon a sinful man that doth penitence, as upon ninety and nine rightful men that neden no penitence? Loke further, in the same Gospel, the joye and the feste of the good man that had lost his sone, whan his sone was retourned with repentance to his fader. Can they not remembre hem also, (as sayth Seint Luke, chap. xxiii.) how that the thefe that was honged beside Jesu Crist, sayd, Lord remembre on me, whan thou comest in thy regne? Forsoth, said Crist, I say to thee, to-day shalt thou be with me in paradis. Certes, ther is non so horrible sinne of man, that ne may in his life be destroyed by penitence, thurgh vertue of the passion and of the deth of Crist. Alas! what nedeth man than to be despeired, sith that his mercy is so redy and large? Axe and have. Than cometh sompnolence, that is, sluggy slumbring, which maketh a man hevy, and dull in body and in soule, and this sinne cometh of slouthe: and certes, the time that by way of reson man shuld not slepe, is by the morwe, but if ther were cause resonable. For sothly in the morwe tide is most covenable to a man to say his prayers, and for to think on God, and to honour God, and to yeve almesse to the poure that comen first in the name of Jesu Crist. Lo, what sayth Salomon? Who so wol by the morwe awake to seke me, he shal find me. Than cometh negligence or recchelesnesse that recketh of nothing. And though that ignorance be mother of all harmes, certes, negligence is the norice. Negligence ne doth no force, whan he shal do a thing, whether he do it wel or badly.

The remedie of thise two sinnes is, as sayth the wise man, that he that dredeth God, spareth not to do that him ought to do; and he that loveth God, he wol do diligence to plese God by his werkes, and abandon himself, with all his might, wel for to do. Than cometh idelnesse, that *is* the yate of all harmes. An idel man is like to a place that hath no walles; theras deviles may enter on every side, or shoot at him at discoverte by temptation on every side. This idelnesse is the thurrok of all wicked and vilains thoughtes, and of all jangeles, trifles, and all ordoure. Certes Heven is yeven to hem that will labour, and not to idel folk. Also David sayth, they ne be not in the labour of men, ne they shul not ben whipped with men, that is to say, in purgatorie. Certes than semeth it they shul ben tormented with the Devil in Helle, but if they do penance.

Than cometh the sinne that men clepen *tarditas*, as whan a man is latered, or taryed or he wol tourne to God: and certes, that is a gret folie. He is like him that falleth in the diche, and wol not arise. And this vice cometh of false hope, that thinketh that he shal live long, but that hope failleth ful oft.

Than cometh lachesse, that is, he that whan he beginneth any good werk, anon he wol forlete it and stint, as don they that have any wight to governe, and ne take of him no more kepe, anon as they find any contrary or any annoy. Thise ben the newe shepherdes, that let hir shepe wetingly go renne to the wolf, that is in the breres, and do no force of hir owen governance. Of this cometh poverte and destruction, both of spirituel and temporel thinges. Than cometh a maner coldnesse, that freseth all the herte of man. Than cometh undevotion, thurgh which a man is so blont, as sayth Seint Bernard, and hath swiche langour in his soule, that he may neyther rede ne sing in holy chirche, ne here ne think of no devotion, ne travaile with his hondes in no good werk, that it n'is to him unsavory and all apalled. Than wexeth he sluggish and slombry, and sone wol he be wroth, and sone is enclined to hate and to envie. Than cometh the sinne of worldly sorwe swiche as is cleped *tristitia*, that sleth a man, as sayth Seint Poule. For certes swiche sorwe werketh to the deth of the soule and of the body also, for therof cometh, that a man is annoied of his owen lif. Wherfore swiche sorwe shorteth the life of many a man, or that his time is come by way of kinde.

Remedium accidiæ.

Ayenst this horrible sinne of accidie, and the braunches of the same, ther is a vertue that is called *fortitudo* or strength, that is, an affection, thurgh which a man despiseth noyous thinges. This vertue is so mighty and so vigorous, that it dare withstond mightily, and wrastle ayenst the assautes of the Devil, and wisely kepe himself fro periles that ben wicked; for it enhaunseth and enforceth the soule, right as accidie abateth and maketh it feble: for this *fortitudo* may endure with long sufferance the travailles that ben covenable.

This vertue hath many spices; the first is cleped magnanimitee, that is to say, gret corage. For certes ther behoveth gret corage ayenst accidie, lest that it swalowe the soule by the sinne of sorwe, or destroy it with wanhope. Certes, this vertue maketh folk to undertake hard and grevous thinges by hir owen will, wisely and resonably. And for as moche as the Devil fighteth ayenst man more by queintise and sleight than by strength, therfore shal a man withstond him by wit, by reson, and by discretion. Than ben ther the vertues of feith, and hope in God and in his seintes, to acheven and accomplice the good werkes, in the which he purposeth fermely to continue. Than cometh seuretee or sikernesse, and that is whan a man ne douteth no travaile in time coming of the good werkes that he hath begonne. Than cometh magnificence, that is to say, whan a man doth and performeth gret werkes of goodnesse, that he hath begonne, and that is the end why that men shuld do good werkes. For in the accomplishing of good werkes lieth the gret guerdon. Than is ther constance, that is stablenesse of corage, and this shuld be in herte by stedfast feith, and in mouth, and in bering, in chere, and in dede. Eke ther ben mo special remedies ayenst accidie, in divers werkes, and in consideration of the peines of Helle and of the joyes of Heven, and in trust of the grace of the Holy Gost, that will yeve him might to performe his good entent.

De avāritia.

After accidie wol I speke of avarice, and of coveitise. Of which sinne Seint Poule sayth: The rote of all harmes is coveitise. For sothly, whan the herte of man is confounded in itself and troubled, and that the soule hath lost the comfort of God, than seketh he an idel solas of worldly thinges.

Avaricе, after the description of Seint Augustine

is a likerousnesse in herte to have erthly thinges. Som other folk sayn, that avarice is for to purchase many erthly thinges, and nothing to yeve to hem that han nede. And understond wel, that avarice standeth not only in land ne catel, but som time in science and in glorie, and in every maner outrageous thing is avarice. And the difference betwene avarice and coveitise is this: coveitise is for to coveit swiche thinges as thou hast not; and avarice is to withholde and kepe swiche thinges as thou hast, without rightful nede. Sothly, this avarice is a sinne that is ful dampnable, for all holy writ curseth it, and speketh ayenst it, for it doth wrong to Jesu Crist; for it bereveth him the love that men to him owen, and tourneth it backward ayenst all reson, and maketh that the avaricious man hath more hope in his catel than in Jesu Crist, and doth more observance in keping of his tresour, than he doth in the service of Jesu Crist. And therfore sayth Seint Poul, that an avaricous man is the thraldome of idolatrie.

What difference is ther betwix an idolastre, and an avaricious man? But that an idolastre peraventure ne hath not but o maumet or two, and the avaricious man hath many: for certes, every florein in his coffre is his maumet. And certes, the sinne of maumetrie is the first that God defended in the ten commandments, as bereth witnesse, Exod. Chap. xx. Thou shalt have no false goddes before me, ne thou shalt make to thee no graven thing. Thus is an avaricious man, that loveth his tresour before God, an idolastre. And thurgh this cursed sinne of avarice and coveitise cometh thise hard lordships, thurgh which men ben distreined by tallages, customes, and cariages, more than hir dutee or reson is: and eke take they of hir bondmen amercementes, which might more resonably be called extortions than amercementes. Of which amercementes, or raunsoming of bondmen, som lordes stewardes say, that it is rightful, for as moche as a cherl hath no temporel thing, that it ne is his lordes, as they say. But certes, thise lordshippes don wrong, that bereven hir bondmen thinges that they never yave hem. *Augustinus de Civitate Dei, Libro* ix. Soth is, that the condition of thraldom and the first cause of thraldom was for sinne. Genesis v.

Thus may ye see, that the gilt deserved thraldom, but not nature. Wherfore thise lordes ne should not to moche glorifie hem in hir lordshipes, sith that they by naturel condition ben not lordes of hir thralles, but that thraldom came first by the deserte of sinne. And furtherover, ther as the lawe sayth, that temporel goodes of bondfolk ben the goodes of hir lord: ye, that is for to understond, the goodes of the emperour, to defend hem in hir right, but not to robbe hem ne to reve hem. Therfore sayth Seneca: The prudent shuld live benignely with the thral. Tho that thou clepest thy thralles, ben Goddes peple: for humble folk ben Cristes frendes; they ben contubernial with the Lord thy king.

Thinke also, that of swiche seed as cherles springen of swiche seed springen lordes: as wel may the cherl be saved as the lord. The same deth that taketh the cherl, swiche deth taketh the lord. Wherfore I rede, do right so with thy cherl as thou woldest that thy lord did with thee, if thou were in his plight. Every sinful man is a cherl to sinne: I rede thee, thou lord, that thou reule thee in swiche wise, that thy cherles rather love thee than drede thee. I wote wel, that ther is degree above degree, as reson is, and skil is, that men do hir devoir, ther as it is due: but certes, extortion, and despit of your underlinges, is dampnable.

And furthermore understond wel, that thise conqueroures or tyrantes maken ful oft thralles of hem, that ben borne of as royal blood as ben they that hem conqueren. This name of thraldom was never erst couthe, til that Noe sayd, that his sone Cham shuld be thrall to his brethen for his sinne. What say we than of hem that pille and don extortions to holy chirche? Certes, the swerd that men yeven first to a knight whan he is newe dubbed, signifieth, that he shuld defend holy chirche, and not robbe it ne pille it: and who so doth is traitour to Crist. As saith Seint Augustine: Tho ben the Devils wolves, that strangelen the shepe of Jesu Crist, and don worse than wolves: for sothly, whan the wolf hath full his wombe, he stinteth to strangle shepe: but sothly, the pillours and destroiers of holy chirches goodes ne do not so, for they ne stint never to pille. Now as I have sayd, sith so is, that sinne was first cause of thraldom, than is it thus, that at the time that all this world was in sinne, than was all this world in thraldom, and in subjection: but certes, sith the time of grace came, God ordeined, that som folk shuld be more high in estate and in degree, and som folk more lowe, and that everich shuld be served in his estate and his degree. And therfore in som contrees ther as they ben thralles, whan they have tourned hem to the feith, they make hir thralles free out of thraldom: and therfore certes the lord oweth to his man, that the man oweth to the lord. The pope clepeth himself servant of the servants of God. But for as moche as the estate of holy chirche ne might not have ben, ne the commun profite might not have be kept, ne pees ne rest in erthe, but if God had ordeined, that som men have higher degree, and som men lower; therfore was soverainte ordeined to kepe, and mainteine, and defend hire underlinges or hire subjectes in reson, as ferforth as it lieth in hire power, and not to destroy hem ne confound. Wherfore I say, that thilke lordes that ben like wolves, that devoure the possessions or the catel of poure folk wrongfully, withouten mercy or mesure, they shul receive by the same mesure that they have mesured to poure folk the mercy of Jesu Crist, but they it amende. Now cometh deceit betwix marchant and marchant. And thou shalt understond, that marchandise is in two maners, that on is bodily, and that other is gostly: that on is honest and leful, and that other is dishonest and unleful. The bodily marchandise, that is leful and honest, is this: that ther as God hath ordeined, that a regne or a contree is suffisant to himself, than it is honest and leful, that of the haboundaunce of this contree men helpe another contree that is nedy: and therfore ther must be marchants to bring fro on contree to another hir marchandise. That other marchandise, that men haunten with fraude, and trecherie, and deceit, with lesinges and false othes, is right cursed and dampnable. Spirituel marchandise is proprely simonie, that is, ententif desire to buy thing spirituel, that is, thing which apperteineth to the seintuarie of God, and to the cure of the soule. This desire, if so be that a man do his diligence to performe it, al be it that his desire ne take non

effect, yet it is to him a dedly sinne: and if he be ordered, he is irreguler. Certes simonie is cleped of Simon Magus, that wold have bought for temporel catel the yefte that God had yeven by the holy gost to Seint Peter, and to the apostles: and therfore understond ye, that both he that selleth and he that byeth thinges spirituel ben called Simoniackes, be it by catel, be it by procuring, or by fleshly praier of his frendes fleshly frendes, or spirituel frendes, fleshly in two maners, as by kinrede or other frendes: sothly, if they pray for him that is not worthy and able, it is simonie, if he take the benefice; and if he be worthy and able, ther is non. That other maner is, whan man, or woman, prayeth for folk to avancen hem only for wicked fleshly affection which they have unto the persons, and that is foule simonie. But certes, in service, for which men yeven thinges spirituel unto hir servants, it must be understonde, that the service must be honest, or elles not, and also, that it be without bargaining, and that the person be able. For (as sayth Seint Damascen) all the sinnes of the world, at regard of this sinne, ben as thing of nought, for it is the gretest sinne that may be after the sinne of Lucifer and of Anticrist: for by this sinne God forleseth the chirche and the soule, which he bought with his precious blood, by hem that yeven chirches to hem that ben not digne, for they put in theves, that stelen the soules of Jesu Crist, and destroyen his patrimonie. By swiche undigne preestes and curates, han lewed men lesse reverence of the sacramentes of holy chirche: and swiche yevers of chirches put the children of Crist out, and put into chirches the Divels owen sones: they sellen the soules that lambes shuld kepe to the wolf, which strangleth hem: and therfore shall they never have part of the pasture of lambes, that is, in the blisse of Heven. Now cometh hasardrie with his apertenaunbes, as tables and rafles, of which cometh deceit, false othes, chidings, and alle raving, blaspheming, and reneying of God, hate of his neyghbours, wast of goodes, mispending of time, and somtime manslaughter. Certes, hasardours ne mow not be without grete sinne. Of avarice comen eke lesinges, theft, false witnesse, and false othes: and ye shul understonde, that these be gret sinnes, and expresse ayenst the commandements of God, as I have sayd. False witnesse is eke in word, and in dede: in word, as for to bereve thy neighbours good name by thy false witnesse, or bereve him his catel or his heritage by thy false witnessing, whan thou for ire, or for mede, or for envie, berest false witnesse, or accusest him, or excusest thyself falsely. Ware ye questmongers and notaries: certes, for false witnessing, was Susanna in ful gret sorwe and peine, and many another mo. The sinne of theft is also expresse ayenst Goddes hest, and that in two maners, temporel, and spirituel: the temporel theft is, as for to take thy neighbours catel ayenst his will, be it by force or by sleight; be it in meting or mesure; by steling; by false enditements upon him; and in borowing of thy neighbours catel, in entent never to pay it ayen, and semblable thinges. Spirituel theft is sacrilege, that is to say, hurting of holy thinges, or of thinges sacred to Crist, in two maners; by reson of the holy place, as chirches or chirches hawes; (for every vilains sinne, that men don in swiche places, may be called sacrilege, or every violence in semblable places) also they that withdrawe falsely the rentes and rightes that longen to holy chirche; and plainly and generally, sacrilege is to reve holy thing fro holy place, of unholy thing out of holy place, or holy thing out of unholy place.

Remedium avaritiæ.

Now shul ye understond, that releving of avarice is misericorde and pitee largely taken. And men might axe, why that misericorde and pitee are releving of avarice; certes, the avaricious man sheweth no pitee ne misericorde to the nedeful man. For he deliteth him in the keping of his tresour, and not in the rescouing ne releving of his even Cristen. And therfore speke I first of misericorde. Than is misericorde (as sayth the philosophre) a vertue, by which the corage of man is stirred by the misese of him that is misesed. Upon which misericorde foloweth pitee, in performing and fulfilling of charitable werkes of mercie, helping and comforting him that is misesed. And certes, this meveth a man to misericorde of Jesu Crist, that he yave himself for our offence, and suffred deth for misericorde, and foryaf us our original sinnes, and therby relesed us fro the peine of Hell, and amenused the peines of purgatory by penitence, and yeveth us grace wel to do, and at last the bliss of Heven. The spices of misericorde ben for to lene, and eke for to yeve, and for to foryeve and relese, and for to have pitee in herte, and compassion of the mischefe of his even Cristen, and also to chastise ther as nede is. Another maner of remedy ayenst avarice, is resonable largesse: but sothly, here behoveth the consideration of the grace of Jesu Crist, and of the temporel goodes, and also of the goodes perdurable that Jesu Crist yave to us, and to have remembrance of the deth which he shal receive, he wote not whan: and eke that he shal forgon all that he hath, save only that which he hath dispended in good werkes.

But for as moche as som folk ben unmesurable, men oughten for to avoid and eschue foolelargesse, the whiche men clepen waste. Certes, he that is foolelarge, he yeveth not his catel, but he leseth his catel. Sothly, what thing that he yeveth for vaine-glory, as to minstrals, and to folk that bere his renome in the world, he hath do sinne therof, and non almesse: certes, he leseth foule his good, that ne seketh with the yefte of his good nothing but sinne. He is like to an hors that seketh rather to drink drovy or troubled water, than for to drink water of the clere well. And for as moche as they yeven ther as they shuld nat yeven, to hem apperteineth thilke malison, that Crist shal yeve at the day of dome to hem that shul be dampned.

De gulâ.

After avarice cometh glotonie, which is expresse ayenst the commandement of God. Glotonie is unmesurable appetit to ete or to drinke: or elles to do in ought to the unmesurable appetit and disordeined coveitise to ete or drinke. This sinne corrupted all this world, as is wel shewed in the sinne of Adam and of Eve. Loke also what sayth Seint Poule of glotonie. Many (sayth he) gon, of which I have ofte said to you, and now I say it weping, that they ben the enemies of the crosse of Crist, of which the end is deth, and of which hir wombe is hir God and hir glorie; in confusion of

hem that so serven erthly thinges. He that is usant to this sinne of glotonie, he ne may no sinne withstond, he must be in servage of all vices, for it is the Devils horde, ther he hideth him and resteth. This sinne hath many spices. The first is dronkennesse, that is the horrible sepulture of mannes reson: and therfore whan a man is dronke, he hath lost his reson: and this is dedly sinne. But sothly, whan that a man is not wont to strong drinkes, and peraventure ne knoweth not the strength of the drinke, or hath feblenesse in his hed, or hath travailled, thurgh which he drinketh the more, al be he sodenly caught with drinke, it is no dedly sinne, but venial. The second spice of glotonie is, that the spirit of a man wexeth all trouble for dronkennesse, and bereveth a man the discretion of his wit. The thridde spice of glotonie is, whan a man devoureth his mete, and hath not rightful maner of eting. The fourthe is, whan thurgh the gret abundance of his mete, the humours in his body ben distempered. The fifthe is, foryetfulnesse by to moche drinking, for which somtime a man forgeteth by the morwe, what he did over eve.

In other maner ben distinct the spices of glotonie, after Seint Gregorie. The first is, for to ete before time. The second is, whan a man geteth him to delicat mete or drinke. The thridde is, whan men taken to moche over mesure. The The fourthe is curiositee, with gret entent to maken and appareille his mete. The fifth is, for to ete gredily. Thise ben the five fingers of the Devils hond, by which he draweth folk to the sinne.

Remedium gulæ.

Ayenst glotonie the remedie is abstinence, as sayth Galien: but that I holde not meritorie, if he do it only for the hele of his body. Seint Augustine wol that abstinence be don for vertue, and with patience. Abstinence (sayth he) is litel worth, but if a man have good will therto, and but it be enforced by patience and charitee, and that men don it for Goddes sake, and in hope to have the blisse in Heven.

The felawes of abstinence ben attemperance, that holdeth the mene in alle thinges; also shame, that escheweth all dishonestee; suffisance, that seketh no riche metes ne drinkes, ne doth no force of non outrageous appareilling of mete; mesure also, that restreneth by reson the unmesurable appetit of eting: sobernesse also, that restreineth the outrage of drinke; sparing also, that restreineth the delicat ese, to sit long at mete, wherfore som folk standen of hir owen will whan they ete, because they wol ete at lesse leiser.

De luxuriâ.

After glotonie cometh lecherie, for thise two sinnes ben so nigh cosins, that oft time they wol not depart. God wote this sinne is ful displesant to God, for he said himself: Do no lecherie. And therfore he putteth gret peine ayenst this sinne. For in the old lawe, if a woman thrall were taken in this sinne, she shuld be beten with staves to the deth: and if she were a gentilwoman, she shuld be slain with stones: and if she were a bishoppes doughter, she shuld be brent by Goddes commandement. Moreover, for the sinne of lecherie God dreint all the world, and after that he brent five citees with thonder and lightning, and sanke hem doun into Hell.

Now let us speke than of the said stinking sinne of lecherie, that men clepen avoutrie, that is of wedded folk, that is to say, if that on of hem be wedded, or elles both. Seint John sayth, that avouterers shul ben in Helle in a stacke brenning of fire and of brimstone, in fire for hir lecherie, in brimstone for the stenche of hir ordure. Certes the breking of this sacrament is an horrible thing; it was made of God himself in Paradis, and conformed by Jesu Crist, as witnessed Seint Mathew in the Gospel: a man shal let fader and moder, and take him to his wif, and they shal be two in on flesh. This sacrament betokeneth the knitting together of Crist and holy chirche. And not only that God forbade avoutrie in dede, but also he commanded, that thou shuldest not coveit thy neighboures wif. In this heste (sayth Seint Augustine) is forboden all maner covetise to do lecherie. Lo, what sayth Seint Mathew in the Gospel, that who so seeth a woman, to coveitise of his lust, he hath don lecherie with hire in his herte. Here may ye see, that not only the dede of this sinne is forboden, but eke the desire to don that sinne. This cursed sinne annoyeth grevously hem that it haunt: and first to the soule, for he obligeth it to sinne and to peine of deth, which is perdurable; and to the body annoyeth it grevously also, for it drieth him and wasteth, and shent him, and of his blood he maketh sacrifice to the fend of Helle: it wasteth eke his catel and his substance. And certes, if it be a foule thing a man to waste his catel on women, yet is it a fouler thing, whan that for swiche ordure women dispenden upon men hir catel and hir substance. This sinne, as sayth the prophet, bereveth man and woman his good fame and all hir honour, and it is ful plesant to the Devil: for therby winneth he the moste partie of this wretched world. And right as a marchant deliteth him most in that chaffare which he hath most avantage and profite of, right so deliteth the fend in this ordure.

This is that other hond of the Devil, with five fingers, to eacche the peple to his vilanie. The first fingre is the foole loking of the foole woman and of the foole man, that sleth right as the basilicok sleth folk by venime of his sight: for the coveitise of the eyen foloweth the coveitise of the herte. The second fingre is the vilains touching in wicked maner. And therfore sayth Salomon, that who so toucheth and handleth a woman, he fareth as the man that handleth the scorpion, which stingeth and sodenly sleth thurgh his enveniming; or as who so that toucheth warme pitch it shendeth his fingers. The thridde is foule wordes, whiche fareth like fire, which right anon brenneth the herte. The fourth finger is kissing: and trewely he were a gret foole that wold kisse the mouthe of a brenning oven or of a fourneis; and more fooles ben they that kissen in vilainie, for that mouth is the mouth of Helle; and namely thise olde dotardes holours, which wol kisse, and flicker, and besie hemself, though they may nought do. Certes they ben like to houndes: for an hound whan he cometh by the roser, or by other bushes, though so be that he may not pisse, yet wol he heve up his leg and make a contenance to pisse. And for that many man weneth that he may not

sinne for no likerousnesse that he doth with his wif, trewely that opinion is false: God wote a man may slee himself with his owen knif, and make himself dronken of his owen tonne. Certes, be it wif, be it childe, or any worldly thing, that he loveth before God, it is his maumet, and he is an idolastre. A man shuld love his wif by discretion, patiently and attemprely, and than is she as though it were his suster. The fifth fingre of the Divels hond, is the stinking dede of lecherie. Trewely the five fingers of glotonie the fend putteth in the wombe of a man: and with his five fingers of lecherie he gripeth him by the reines, for to throwe him into the fourneis of Helle, ther as they shul have the fire and the wormes that ever shul lasten, and weping and wayling, and sharpe hunger and thurst, and grislinesse of divels, whiche shul all-to-trede hem withouten respite and withouten ende. Of lecherie, as I sayd, sourden and springen divers spices: as fornication, that is betwene man and woman which ben not maried, and is dedly sinne, and ayenst nature. All that is enemy and destruction to nature, is ayenst nature. Parfay the reson of a man eke telleth him wel that it is dedly sinne; for as moche as God forbad lecherie. And Seint Poule yeveth hem the regne, that n'is dewe to no wight but to hem that don dedely sinne. Another sinne of lecherie is, to bereven a maid of hire maidenhed, for he that so doth, certes he casteth a mayden out of the highest degree that is in this present lif, and bereveth hire thilke precious fruit that the book clepeth the hundreth fruit. I ne can say it non otherwise in English, but in Latine it hight *centesimus fructus*. Certes he that so doth, is the cause of many damages and vilanies, mo than any man can reken: right as he somtime is cause of all dammages that bestes do in the feld, that breketh the hedge of the closure, thurgh which he destroyeth that may not be restored: for certes no more may maidenhed be restored, than an arme, that is smitten fro the body, may returne ayen and wexe: she may have mercy, this wote I wel, if that she have will to do penitence, but never shal it be but that she is corrupte. And all be it so that I have spoke somwhat of avoutrie, it is good to shewe the periles that longen to avoutrie, for to eschewe that foule sinne. Avoutrie, in Latine, is for to saye, approching of another mannes bedde, thurgh whiche tho, that somtime were on fleshe, abandone hir bodies to other persons. Of this sinne, as sayth the wise man, folow many harmes: firste breking of feith; and certes feith is the key of Cristendom, and whan that key is broken and lorne, sothly Cristendom is lorne, and stont vaine and without fruit. This sinne also is theft, for theft generally is to reve a wight his thinges ayenst his will. Certes, this is the foulest theft that may be, whan that a woman steleth hire body from hire husband, and yeveth it to hire holour to defoule it: and steleth hire soule fro Crist, and yeveth it to the Devil: this is a fouler thefte than for to breke a chirche and stele away the chalice, for thise avouterers breken the temple of God spirituelly, and stelen the vessell of grace; that is the body and the soule: for which Criste shal destroy hem, as sayth Seint Poule. Sothly of this theft douted gretly Joseph, whan that his lordes wif prayed him of vilainie, whan he sayde: Lo, my lady, how my lord hath take to me under my warde all that he hath in this world, ne nothing is out of my power, but only ye that ben his wif: and how shuld I than do this wickednesse, and sinne so horribly ayenst God, and ayenst my lord? God it forbede. Alas! all to litel is swiche trouth now yfounde. The thridde harme is the filth, thurgh which they breke the commandement of God, and defoule the auter of matrimonies, that is Crist. For certes, in so moche as the sacrament of mariage is so noble and so digne, so moche is it the greter sinne for to breke it: for God made mariage in Paradis in the estate of innocencie, to multiplie mankinde to the service of God, and therfore is the breking therof the more grevous, of which breking come false heires oft time, that wrongfully occupien folkes heritages: and therfore wel Crist put hem out of the regne of Heven, that is heritage to good folk. Of this breking cometh eke oft time, that folk unware wedde or sinne with hir owen kinrede: and namely thise harlottes, that haunten bordelles of thise foule women, that may be likened to a commune gong, wheras men purge hir ordure. What say we also of putours, that live by the horrible sinne of puterie, and constreine women to yelde hem a certain rent of hir bodily puterie, ye somtime his owen wif or his childe, as don thise baudes? certes, thise ben cursed sinnes. Understond also, that avoutrie is set in the ten commandements betwene theft and manslaughter, for it is the gretest theft that may be, for it is theft of body and of soule, and it is like to homicide, for it kerveth atwo and breketh atwo hem that first were made on flesh. And therfore by the old lawe of God they shuld be slaine, but nathelesse, by the lawe of Jesu Crist, that is the lawe of pitee, whan he sayd to the woman that was found in avoutrie, and shuld have be slain with stones, after the will of the Jewes, as was hir lawe; Go, sayd Jesu Crist, and have no more will to do sinne; sothly, the vengeance of avoutrie is awarded to the peine of Helle, but if so be that it be discombered by penitence. Yet ben ther mo spices of this cursed sinne, as whan that on of hem is religious, or elles both, or of folk that ben entred into ordre, as sub-deken, deken, or preest, or hospitalers: and ever the higher that he is in ordre, the greter is the sinne. The thinges that gretly agrege hir sinne, is the breking of hir avow of chastitee, whan they received the ordre: and moreover soth is, that holy ordre is chefe of all the tresorie of God, and is a special signe and marke of chastitee, to shew that they ben joined to chastitee, which is the moste precious lif that is: and thise ordered folk ben specially titled to God, and of the special meinie of God: for which, whan they don dedly sinne, they ben the special traitours of God and of his peple, for they live by the peple to praye for the peple, and whiles they ben swiche traitours hir prayeres availe not to the peple. Preestes ben as angels, as by the mysterie of hir dignitee: but forsoth Seint Poule saith, that Sathanas transfourmeth him in an angel of light. Sothly, the preest that haunteth dedly sinne, he may be likened to an angel of derkenesse, transfourmed into an angel of light; he seemeth an angel of light, but for soth he is an angel of derkenesse. Swiche preestes be the sones of Hely, as is shewed in the book of Kinges, that they were the sones of Belial, that is, the Divel. Belial is to say, withouten juge, and so faren they; hem thinketh that they be free, and have no juge, no more than

hath a free boll, that taketh which cow that him liketh in the toun. So faren they by women; for right as on free boll is ynough for all a toun, right so is a wicked preest corruption ynough for all a parish, or for all a countree: thise preestes, as sayth the book, ne cannot minister the mysterie of preesthood to the peple, ne they knowe not God, ne they hold hem not apaied, as saith the book, of sodden flesh that was to hem offred, but they take by force the flesh that is raw. Certes, right so thise shrewes ne hold hem not apaied of rested flesh and sodden, with which the peple feden hem in gret reverence, but they wol have raw flesh as folkes wives and hir doughters: and certes, thise women that consenten to hir harlotrie, don gret wrong to Crist and to holy chirche, and to all halowes, and to all soules, for they bereven all thise hem that shuld worship Crist and holy chirche, and pray for Cristen soules: and therfore han swiche preestes, and hir lemmans also that consenten to hir lecherie, the malison of the court Cristen, til they come to amendement. The thridde spice of avoutrie is somtime betwix a man and his wif, and that is, whan they take no regard in hir assembling but only to hir fleshly delit, as saith Seint Jerome, and ne recken of nothing but that they ben assembled because they ben maried; all is good ynough, as thinketh to hem. But in swiche folk hath the Divel power, as said the angel Raphael to Tobie, for in hir assembling, they putten Jesu Crist out of hir herte, and yeven hemself to all ordure. The fourth spice is of hem that assemble with hir kinrede, or with hem that ben of on affinitee, or elles with hem with which hir fathers or hir kinred have deled in the sinne of lecherie: this sinne maketh hem like to houndes, that taken no kepe of kinrede. And certes, parentele is in two maners: eyther gostly or fleshly: gostly, is for to delen with hir godsibbes: for right so as he that engendreth a child, is his fleshly father, right so is his godfather his father spirituel: for which a woman may in no lesse sinne assemble with hire godsib, than with hir owen fleshly broder. The fifthe spice is that abhominable sinne, of which abhominable sinne no man unneth ought to speke ne write, natheles it is openly rehersed in holy writ. This cursednesse don men and women in diverse entent and in diverse maner: but though that holy writ speke of horrible sinne, certes holy writ may not be defouled, no more than the Sonne that shineth on the myxene. Another sinne apperteineth to lecherie, that cometh in sleping, and this sinne cometh often to hem that ben maidens, and eke to hem that ben corrupt; and this sinne men call pollution, that cometh of foure maners; somtime it cometh of languishing of the body, for the humours ben to ranke and haboundant in the body of man; somtime of infirmitee, for feblenesse of the vertue retentif, as phisike maketh mention; somtime of surfet of mete and drinke; and somtime of vilains thoughtes that ben enclosed in mannes minde whan he goth to slepe, which may not be withouten sinne; for whiche men must kepe hem wisely, or elles may they sinne ful grevously.

Remedium luxuriæ.

Now cometh the remedy ayenst lecherie, and that is generally chastitee and continence, that restreineth all disordinate mevings that comen o fleshly talents: and ever the greter merite shal he have that most restreineth the wicked enchausing or ordure of this sinne; and this is in two maners: that is to say, chastitee in mariage, and chastitee in widewhood. Now shalt thou understonde, that matrimony is leful assembling of man and woman, that receiven by vertue of this sacrement the bonde, thurgh whiche they may not be departed in all hir lif, that is to say, while that they live bothe. This, as saith the book, is a ful gret sacrement; God made it (as I have said) in Paradis, and wold himself be borne in mariage: and for to halowe mariage he was at a wedding, wheras he tourned water into wine, whiche was the first miracle that he wrought in erthe before his disciples. The trewe effect of mariage clenseth fornication, and replenisheth holy chirche of good lignage, for that is the ende of mariage, and chaungeth dedly sinne into venial sinne betwene hem that ben wedded, and maketh the hertes all on of hem that bon ywedded, as wel as the bodies. This is veray mariage that was established by God, er that sinne began, whan naturel lawe was in his right point in Paradis; and it was ordeined, that o man shuld have but o woman, and o woman but o man, as sayth Seint Augustine, by many resons.

First for mariage is figured betwix Crist and holy chirche; and another is, for a man is hed of the woman; (algate by ordinance it shuld be so;) for if a woman had mo men than on, than shuld she have mo hedes than on, and that were an horrible thing before God; and also a woman might not plese many folk at ones: and also ther shuld never be pees ne rest among hem, for everich of hem would axe his owen right. And furthermore, no man shuld knowe his owen engendrure, ne who shuld have his heritage, and the woman shuld be the lesse beloved for the time that she were conjunct to many men.

Now cometh how that a man shuld bere him with his wif, and namely in two thinges, that is to say, in suffrance and in reverence, and this shewed Crist whan he firste made woman. For he ne made hire of the hed of Adam, for she shuld not claime to gret lordshippe; for ther as the woman hath the maistrie, she maketh to moche disarray: ther nede non ensamples of this, the experience that we have day by day ought ynough suffice. Also certes, God *ne* made not woman of the foot of Adam, for she shuld not be holden to lowe, for she cannot patiently suffer: but God made woman of the rib of Adam, for woman shuld be felaw unto man. Man shuld bere him to his wif in feith, in trouth, and in love; as sayth Seint Poule, that a man shuld love his wife, as Crist loved holy chirche, that loved it so wel that he died for it: so shuld a man for his wif, if it were nede.

Now how that a woman shuld be subget to hire husbond, that telleth Seint Peter; first in obedience. And, eke as sayth the decree, a woman that is a wif, as long as she is a wif, she hath non auctorite to swere ne bere witnesse, without leve of hir husbonde, that is hire lord; algate he shuld be so by reson. She shuld also serve him in all honestee, and ben attempre of hire array. I wete wel that they shuld set hir entent to plese hir husbonds, but not by queintise of hir array. Seint Jerom sayth: wives that ben appareilled in silke and precious purple, ne mow not cloth hem in Jesu Crist. Seint Gregorie sayth also: that no wight seketh pre-

tions array, but only for vain glorie to be honoured the more of the peple. It is a gret folie, a woman to have a faire array outward, and hireself to be foule inward. A wif shuld also be mesurable in loking, in bering, and in laughing, and discrete in all hire wordes and hire dedes, and above all worldly thinges, she shulde love hire husbonde with all hire herte, and to him be trewe of hire body: so shuld every husbond eke be trewe to his wif: for sith that all the body is the husbondes, so shuld hire herte be also, or elles ther is betwix hem two; as in that, no parfit mariage. Than shul men understond, that for three thinges a man and his wif fleshly may assemble. The first is, for the entent of engendrure of children, to the service of God, for certes that is the cause final of matrimonie. Another cause is, to yelde eche of hem to other the dettes of hir bodies: for neyther of hem hath power of his owen bodie. The thridde is, for to eschew lecherie and vilanie. The fourth is for soth dedly sinne. As to the first, it is meritorie: the second also, for, as sayth the decree, she hath merite of chastitee, that yeldeth to hire husbond the dette of hire body, ye though it be ayenst hire liking, and the lust of hire herte. The thridde maner is venial sinne; trewely, scarsely may any of thise be without venial sinne, for the corruption and for the delit therof. The fourth maner is for to understond, if they assemble only for amourous love, and for non of the foresaid causes, but for to accomplish hir brenning delit, they recke not how oft, sothly it is dedly sinne: and yet, with sorwe, som folk wol peine hem more to do, than to hir appetit sufficeth.

The second maner of chastitee is for to be a clene widew, and eschue the embracing of a man, and desire the embracing of Jesu Crist. Thise ben tho that have ben wives, and have forgon hir husbondes, and eke women that have don lecherie, and ben releved by penance. And certes, if that a wif coud kepe hire all chast, by licence of hire husbond, so that she yave no cause ne non occasion that he agilted, it were to hire a gret merite. This maner of woman, that observen chastitee, must be clene in herte as wel as in body, and in thought, and mesurable in clothing and in contenance, abstinent in eting and drinking, in speking, and in dede, and than is she the vessel or the boiste of the blessed Magdeleine, that fulfilleth holy chirche of good odour. The thridde maner of chastitee is virginitee, and it behoveth that she be holy in herte, and clene of body, than is she the spouse of Jesu Crist, and she is the lif of angels: she is the preising of this world, and she is as thise martirs in egalitee: she hath in hire, that tonge may not telle, ne herte thinke. Virginitee bare our Lord Jesu Crist, and virgin was himself.

Another remedie against lecherie is specially to withdraw swiche thinges, as yeven occasion to that vilanie: as ese, eting, and drinking: for certes, whan the pot boileth strongly, the best remedie is to withdraw the fire. Sleping long in gret quiet is also a gret nourice to lecherie.

Another remedie ayenst lecherie is, that a man or a woman eschewe the compagnie of hem, by which he douteth to be tempted: for all be it so that the dede be withstonden, yet is ther gret temptation. Sothly a white wall, although it ne breune not fully with sticking of a candle, yet is the wall black of the leyte. Ful oft time I rede, that no man trust in his owen perfection, but he be stronger than Sampson, or holier than David, or wiser than Salomon.

Now after that I have declared you as I can of the seven dedly sinnes, and som of hir braunches, and the remedies, sothly, if I coude, I wold tell you the ten commandements, but so high doctrine I lete to divines. Natheles, I hope to God they ben touched in this tretise everich of hem alle.

Now for as moche as the second part of penitence stont in confession of mouth, as I began in the first chapitre, I say Seint Augustine sayth: Sinne is every word and every dede, and all that men coveiten ayenst the law of Jesu Crist; and this is for to sinne, in herte, in mouth, and in dede, by the five wittes, which ben sight, hering, smelling, tasting or savouring, and feling. Now is it good to understond the circumstances, that agregen moche every sinne. Thou shalt consider what thou art that dost the sinne, whether thou be male or female, yonge or olde, gentil or thrall, free or servant, hole or sike, wedded or single, ordered or unordered, wise or foole, clerke or seculer; if she be of thy kinred, bodily or gostly, or non; if any of thy kinred have sinned with hire or no, and many mo thinges.

Another circumstaunce is this, whether it be don in fornication, or in advoutrie, or no, in maner of homicide or non, a horrible gret sinne or smal, and how long thou hast continued in sinne. The thridde circumstance is the place, ther thou hast don sinne, whether in other mennes houses, or in thin owen, in feld, in chirche, or in chirchhawe, in chirche dedicate, or non. For if the chirche be halowed, and man or woman spille his kinde within that place, by way of sinne or by wicked temptation, the chirche were enterdited til it were reconciled by the bishop; and if it were a preest that did swiche vilanie, the terme of all his lif he shuld no more sing masse: and if he did, he shuld do dedly sinne, at every time that he so song masse. The fourth circumstance is, by whiche mediatours, as by messagers, or for enticement, or for consentment, to bere compagnie with felawship; for many a wretche, for to bere felawship, wol go to the Divel of Helle. Wherfore, they that eggen or consenten to the sinne, ben partners of the sinne, and of the dampnation of the sinner. The fifth circumstance is, how many times that he hath sinned, if it be in his minde, and how oft he hath fallen. For he that oft falleth in sinne, he despiseth the mercy of God, and encreseth his sinne, and is unkind to Crist, and he waxeth the more feble to withstand sinne, and sinneth the more lightly, and the later ariseth, and is more slow to shrive him, and namely to him that hath ben his confessour. For which that folk, whan they fall ayen to hir old folies, either they forleten hir old confessour al utterly, or elles they departen hir shrift in divers places; but sothly swiche departed shrift deserveth no mercie of God for hir sinnes. The sixte circumstance is, why that a man sinneth, as by what temptation; and if himself procure thilke temptation, or by exciting of other folk; or if he sinne with a woman by force or by hire owen assent; or if the woman maugre hire hed have ben enforced or non, this shal she tell, and wheder it were for covetise or poverte, and if it were by hire procuring or non, and swiche other thinges. The seventh circumstance is, in what maner he hath don his

sinne, or how that she hath suffered that folk have don to hire. And the same shal the man tell plainly, with all the circumstances, and wheder he hath sinned with commun bordel woman or non, or don his sinne in holy times or non, in fasting times or non, or before his shrift, or after his later shrift, and hath paraventure broken therby his penance enjoined, by whos helpe or whos conseil, by sorcerie or crafte, all must be told. All thise thinges, after that they ben gret or smale, engregen the conscience of man or woman. And eke the preest that is thy juge, may the better be avised of his jugement in yeving of penance, and that shal be after thy contrition. For understond wel, that after the time that a man hath defouled his baptisme by sinne, if he wol come to salvation, ther is non other way but by penance, and shrifte, and satisfaction; and namely by the two, if ther be a confessour to whom he may shrive him, and that he first be veray contrite and repentant, and the thridde if he have lif to performe it.

Than shal a man loke and consider, that if he wol make a trewe and a profitable confession, ther must be foure conditions. First it must be in sorowful bitternesse of herte, as sayth the king Ezechiel to God; I wol remember all the yeres of my lif in the bitternesse of my herte. This condition of bitternesse hath five signes; the first is, that confession must be shamefast, not for to coveren ne hide his sinne, but for he hath agilted his God and defouled his soule. And therof sayth Seint Augustin: The herte travaileth for shame of his sinne, and for he hath gret shamfastnesse he is digne to have gret mercie of God. Swiche was the confession of the publican, that wold not heve up his eyen to Heven for he had offended God of Heven: for which shamefastnesse he had anon the mercy of God. And therfore saith Seint Augustine, that swiche shamefast folk ben next foryevenesse and mercy. Another signe, is humilitee in confession: of whiche sayth Seint Peter; Humbleth you under the might of God: the bond of God is mighty in confession, for therby God foryeveth thee thy sinnes, for he alone hath the power. And this humilitee shall be in herte, and in signe outwarde: for right as he hath humilitee to God in his herte, right so shuld he humble his body outward to the preest, that sitteth in Goddes place. For which in no maner, sith that Crist is soveraine, and the preest mene and mediatour betwix Crist and the sinner, and the sinner is last by way of reson, than shuld not the sinner sitte as high as his confessour, but knele before him or at his feet, but if maladie distrouble it: for he shal not take kepe who sitteth ther, but in whos place he sitteth. A man that hath trespassed to a lord, and cometh for to axe mercie and maken his accorde, and setteth him doun anon by the lord, men wolde holde him outrageous, and not worthy so sone for to have remission ne mercy. The thridde signe is, that the shrift shuld be ful of teres, if men mowen wepe, and if they mowe not wepe with hir bodily eyen, then let hem wepe in hir herte. Swiche was the confession of Seint Peter; for after that he had forsake Jesu Crist, he went out and wept ful bitterly. The fourth signe is, that he ne lete not for shame to shrive him and shewe his confession. Swiche was the confession of Magdeleine, that ne spared, for no shame of hem that weren at the feste, to go to our Lord Jesu Crist and beknowe to him hire sinnes. The fifthe signe is, that a man or a woman be obeisant to receive the penance that hem is enjoined. For certes Jesu Crist for the gilt of man was obedient to the deth.

The second condition of veray confession is, that it be hastily don: for certes, if a man had a dedly wound, ever the lenger that he taried to warishe himself, the more wold it corrupt and haste him to his deth, and also the wound wold be the werse for to hele. And right so fareth sinne, that longe time is in a man unshewed. Certes a man ought hastily to shewe his sinnes for many causes; as for drede of deth, that cometh oft sodenly, and is in no certain what time it shal be, ne in what place; and eke the drenching of o sinne draweth in another: and also the lenger that he tarieth, the ferther is he fro Crist. And if he abide to his last day, scarcely may he shrive him or remembre him of his sinnes, or repent him for the grevous maladie of his deth. And for as moche as he ne hath in his lif herkened Jesu Crist, whan he hath spoken unto him, he shal erie unto our Lord at his last day, and scarcely wol he herken him. And understonde that this condition muste have foure thinges. First that the shrift be purveyed afore, and avised, for wicked hast doth not profite; and that a man con shrive him of his sinnes, be it of pride, or envie, and so forth, with the spices and circumstances; and that he have comprehended in his minde the nombre and the gretnesse of his sinnes, and how longe he hath lien in sinne; and eke that he be contrite for his sinnes, and be in stedfast purpose (by the grace of God) never efte to fall into sinne; and also that he drede and countrewaite himself, that he flee the occasions of sinne, to whiche he is inclined. Also thou shalt shrive thee of all thy sinnes to o man, and not parcelmele to o man, and parcelmele to another; that is to understonde, in entent to depart thy confession for shame or drede, for it is but strangling of thy soule. For certes, Jesu Crist is entierly all good, in him is not imperfection, and therfore either he foryeveth all parfitly, or elles never a dele. I say not that if thou be assigned to thy penitencer for certain sinne, that thou art bounde to shewe him all the remenant of thy sinnes, of whiche thou hast ben shriven of thy curat, but if it like thee of thyn humilitee; this is no departing of shrift. Ne I say not, ther as I speke of division of confession, that if thou have licence to shrive thee to a discrete and an honest preest, and wher thee liketh, and by the licence of thy curat, that thou ne mayest wel shrive thee to him of all thy sinnes: but lete no blot be behind: lete no sinne be untolde as fer as thou hast remembrance. And whan thou shalt be shriven of thy curat, tell him eke all the sinnes that thou hast don sith thou were laste shriven. This is no wicked entente of division of shrift.

Also the veray shrift axeth certain conditions. First that thou shrive thee by thy free will, not constreined, ne for shame of folk, ne for maladie, or swiche other thinges: for it is reson, that he that trespasseth by his free wil, that by his free will he confesse his trespas; and that non other man telle his sinne but himself: ne he shal not nay, ne deny his sinne, ne wrath him ayenst the preest for amonesting him to lete his sinne. The second condition is, that thy shrift be lawful, that

is to say, that thou that shrivest thee, and eke the preest that hereth thy confession, be verayly in the feith of holy chirche, and that a man ne be not despeired of the mercie of Jesu Crist, as Cain and Judas were. And eke a man muste accuse himself of his owen trespas and not another: but he shal blame and wite himselfe of his owen malice and of his sinne, and non other: but natheles, if that another man be encheson or enticer of his sinne, or the estate of the person be swiche by which his sinne is agregged, or elles that he may not plainly shrive him but he tell the person with whiche he hath sinned, than may he tell, so that his entent ne be not to backbite the person, but only to declare his confession.

Thou ne shalt not also make no lesinges in thy confession for humilitee, peraventure, to say that thou hast committed and don swiche sinnes, of which that thou ne were never gilty. For Seint Augustine sayth: If that thou, because of thin humilitee, makest a lesing on thyself, though thou were not in sinne before, yet arte thou than in sinne thurgh thy lesing. Thou must also shew thy sinne by thy propre mouth, but thou be dombe, and not by no letter: for thou that hast don the sinne, thou shalt have the shame of the confession. Thou shalt not eke peint thy confession, with faire and subtil wordes, to coyer the more thy sinne: for than begilest thou thyself, and not the preest; thou must tell it plainly, be it never so foule ne so horrible. Thou shalt eke shrive thee to a preest that is discrete to conseille thee; and eke thou shalt not shrive thee for vaine glorie, ne for ypocrisie, ne for no cause, but only for the doute of Jesu Crist, and the hele of thy soule. Thou shalt not eke renne to the preest al sodenly, to tell him lightly thy sinne, as who telleth a jape or a tale, but avisedly and with good devotion; and generally shrive thee ofte: if thou ofte fall, ofte arise by confession. And though thou shrive thee ofter than ones of sinne which thou hast be shriven of, it is more merite: and, as sayth Seint Augustine, thou shalt have the more lightly relese and grace of God, both of sinne and of peine. And certes ones a yere at the lest way it is lawful to be housel-ed, for sothely ones a yere all thinges in the erthe renovelen.

Explicit secunda pars penitentiæ: et sequitur tertia pars.

Now have I told you of veray confession, that is the seconde part of penitence: the thridde part is satisfaction, and that stont most generally in almesse dede and in bodily peine. Now ben ther three maner of almesse: contrition of herte, wher a man offreth himself to God: another is, to have pitee of the defaute of his neighbour: and the thridde is, in yeving of good conseil, gostly and bodily, wher as men have nede, and namely in sustenance of mannes food. And take kepe that a man hath nede of thise thinges generally, he hath nede of food, of clothing, and of herberow, he hath nede of charitable conseilling and visiting in prison and in maladie, and sepulture of his ded body. And if thou maiest not visite the nedeful in prison in thy person, visite hem with thy message and thy yeftes. Thise ben generally the almesses and werkes of charitee, of hem that have temporel richesses, or discretion in conseilling. Of thise werkes shalt thou heren at the day of dome.

This almesse shuldest thou do of thy propre thinges, and hastily, and prively if thou mayest: but natheles, if thou mayest not do it prively, thou shalt not forbere to do almesse, though men see it, so that it be not don for thanke of the world, but only to have thanke of Jesu Crist. For, as witnesseth Seint Mathewe, cap. v. a citee may not be hid that is sette on a mountaine, ne men light not a lanterne, to put it under a bushell, but setten it upon a candlesticke, to lighten the men in the hous: right so shal your light lighten before men, that they mowe see your good werkes, and glorifie your Fader that is in Heven.

Now as for to speke of bodily peine, it stont in praiers, in waking, in fasting, and in vertuous teching. Of orisons ye shul understond, that orisons or prayers, is to say, a pitous will of herte, that setteth it in *God*, and expresseth it by word outward, to remeve harmes, and to have thinges spirituel and perdurable, and somtime temporel thinges. Of which orisons, certes in the orison of the *Paternoster* hath Jesu Crist enclosed most thinges. Certes it is privileged of three thinges in his dignitee, for whiche it is more digne than any other prayer: for that Jesu Crist himself made it: and it is short, for it shuld be coude the more lightly, and to hold it the more esie in herte, and helpe himself the ofter with this orison, and for a man shuld be the lesse wery to say it, and for a man may not excuse him to lerne it, it is so shorte and so esie: and for it comprehendeth in himself all good prayers. The exposition of this holy prayer, that is so excellent and so digne, I betake to the maisters of theologie, save thus moche wol I say, that whan thou prayest, that God shuld forgeve thee thy giltes as thou forgevest hem that have agilted thee, be wel ware that thou be not out of charitee. This holy orison amenuseth eke venial sinne, and therfore it apperteineth specially to penitence.

This prayer must be trewely sayd, and in perfect feith, and that men prayen to God ordinately, discretly, and devoutly: and alway a man shal put his will to be subgette to the will of God. This orison must eke be sayd with gret humblenesse and ful pure, and honestly, and not to the annoyance of any man or woman. It must eke be continued with werkes of charitee. It availeth eke ayenst the vices of the soule: for, as sayth Seint Jerome, by fasting ben saved the vices of the flesh, and by prayer the vices of the soule.

After this thou shalt understonde, that bodily peine stont in waking. For Jesu Crist sayth: Wake ye and pray ye, that ye ne enter into wicked temptation. Ye shul understond also, that fasting stont in three thinges: in forbering of bodily mete and drinke, in forbering of worldly jolitee, and in forbering of dedly sinne: this is to say, that a man shall kepe him fro dedly sinne with all his might.

And thou shal understonde also, that God ordeined fasting, and to fasting apperteineth foure thinges. Largenesse to poure folk: gladnesse of herte spirituel: not to be angry ne annoied, ne grutch for he fasteth: and also resonable houre for to ete by mesure, that is to say, a man shal not ete in untime, ne sit the longer at the table, for he fasteth.

Than shalt thou understonde, that bodily peine stont in discipline, or teching, by word, or by writing, or by ensample. Also in wering of here or of

stamin, or of habergeons on hir naked flesh for Cristes sake; but ware thee wel that swiche maner penances ne make not thin herte bitter or angry, ne annoied of thyself; for better is it to cast away thin here than to cast away the swetenesse of our Lord Jesu Crist. And therfore sayth Seint Poule: clothe you, as they that ben chosen of God in herte, of misericorde, debonairtee, suffrance, and swiche maner of clothing, of whiche Jesu Crist is more plesed than with the heres or habergeons.

Than is discipline eke, in knocking of thy brest, in scourging with yerdes, in kneling, in tribulation, in suffring patiently wronges that ben don to thee, and eke in patient suffring of maladies, or lesing of worldly catel, or wif, or child, or other frendes.

Than shalt thou understond, which thinges distourben penance, and this is in foure maners; that is drede, shame, hope, and wanhope, that is, desperation. And for to speke first of drede, for which he weneth that he may suffre no penance, ther ayenst is remedie for to thinke, that bodily penance is but short and litel at regard of the peine of Helle, that is so cruel and so longe, that it lasteth withouten ende.

Now ayenst the shame that a man hath to shrive him, and namely thise ipocrites, that wold be holden so parfit, that they have no nede to shrive hem, ayenst that shame shuld a man thinke, that by way of reson, he that hath not ben ashamed to do foule thinges, certes him ought not be ashamed to do faire thinges, and that is confessions. A man shuld also thinke, that God seeth and knoweth al his thoughtes, and al his werkes, and to him may nothing be hid ne covered. Men shuld eke remembre hem of the shame that is to come at the day of dome, to hem that ben not penitent in this present lif: for all the creatures in Heven, and in Erthe, and in Helle, shuld see apertly all that they hiden in this world.

Now for to speke of the hope of hem, that ben so negligent and slowe to shrive hem: that stondeth in two maners. That on is, that he hopeth for to live long, and for to purchase moche richesse for his delit, and than he wol shrive him: and, as he sayth, he may, as him semeth, than timely ynough come to shrift: another is, the surquedrie that he hath in Cristes mercie. Ayenst the first vice, he shal thinke that our lif is in no sikernesse, and eke that all the richesse in this world ben in aventure, and passen as a shadowe on a wall; and, as sayth Seint Gregorie, that it apperteineth to the gret rightwisnesse of God, that never shul the peine stinte of hem, that never wold withdrawe hem from sinne, hir thankes, but ever continue in sinne: for thilke perpetuel will to don sinne shall they have perpetuel peine.

Wanhope is in two maners. The first wanhope is, in the mercie of God: that other is, that they think that they ne might not long persever in goodnesse. The first wanhope cometh of that, he demeth that he hath sinned so gretly and so oft, and so long lyen in sinne, that he shal not be saved. Certes ayenst that cursed wanhope shulde he thinke, that the passion of Jesu Crist is more stronge for to unbinde, than sinne is strong for to binde. Ayenst the second wanhope he shal thinke, that as often as he falleth, he may arisen again by penitence: and though he never so longe hath lyen in sinne, the mercie of Crist is alway redy to receive him to mercie. Ayenst that wanhope that he demeth he shuld not longe persever in goodnesse, he shal think, that the feblenesse of the Devil may nothing do, but if men wol suffre him: and eke he shal have strength of the helpe of Jesu Crist, and of all his chirche, and of the protection of angels, if him list.

Than shul men understonde, what is the fruit of penance; and after the wordes of Jesu Crist, it is an endeles blisse of Heven, ther joye hath no contrariositee of wo ne grevance; ther all harmes ben passed of this present lif; ther as is sikernesse from the peines of Helle; ther as is the blisful compagnie, that rejoycen hem ever mo of others joye; ther as the body of man, that whilom was foule and derke, is more clere than the Sonne; ther as the body that whilom was sike and freele, feble and mortal, is immortal, and so strong and so hole, that ther ne may nothing appeire it; ther as is neither hunger ne thurste, ne colde, but every soule replenished with the sight of the parfit knowing of God. This blisful regne mowe men purchase by poverte spirituel, and the glorie by lowlinesse, the plentee of joye by hunger and thurst, and the reste by travaile, and the lif by deth and mortification of sinne: to which life he us bring, that bought us with his precious blood. Amen.

Now preye I to hem alle that herken this litel tretise or reden it, that if ther be any thing in it that liketh hem, that therof they thanken our Lord Jesu Crist, of whom procedeth all witte and all godenesse; and if ther be any thing that displeseth hem, I preye hem also that they arrette it to the defaute of myn unkonning, and not to my wille, that wold fayn have seyde better if I hadde had konning; for oure boke seyth, all that is writen is writen for oure doctrine, and that is myn entente. Wherfore I beseke you mekely for the mercie of God that ye preye for me, that Crist have mercie of me and foryeve me my giltes, [and namely of myn translations and enditinges of worldly vanitees, the which I revoke in my Retractions, as the boke of Troilus, the boke also of Fame, the boke of the five and twenty Ladies, the boke of the Duchesse, the boke of Seint Valentines Day of the Parlement of Briddes, the Tales of Canterbury, thilke that sounen unto sinne, the boke of the Leon, and many an other boke, if they were in my remembrance, and many a song and many a lecherous lay, Crist of his grete mercie foryeve me the sinne. But of the translation of Boes of consolation, and other bokes of legendes of Seints, and of omelies, and moralite, and devotion, that thanke I oure Lord Jesu Crist, and his blisful mother, and alle the seintes in Heven, beseking hem that they fro hensforth unto my lyves ende sende me grace to bewaile my giltes, and to stodien to the savation of my soule,] and graunte me grace of verray penance, confession and satisfection to don in this present lif, thorgh the benigne grace of him, that is king of kinges and preste of all prestes, that bought us with the precious blode of his herte, so that I mote ben on of hem atte the laste day of dome that shullen be saved; *qui cum Deo patre et Spiritu sancto vivis et regnas Deus per omnia secula.* Amen.

THE

ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE.

This book was begun in French verse by William de Lorris, and finished forty years after by John Clopinell, alias John Moone, born at Mewen upon the river of Loyer, not far from Paris, as appeareth by Molinet, the French author, upon the morality of the Romaunt; and afterward translated for the most part into English metre by Geffrey Chaucer, but not finished. It is entituled, The Romaunt of the Rose; or, The Art of Love: wherein is shewed the helpes and furtherances, as also the lets and impediments that lovers have in their suits. In this book the authour hath many glaunces at the hypocrisie of the clergy: whereby he got himself such hatred amongst them, that Gerson, chancellour of Paris, writeth thus of him: saith he, "There was one called Johannes Meldinensis, who wrote a book called, The Romaunt of the Rose; which book if I only had, and that there were no more in the world, if I might have five hundred pound for the same, I wold rather burne it than take the money." He sayth more, that if he thought the authour thereof did not repent him for that book before he dyed, he would vouchsafe to pray for him no more than he would for Judas that betrayed Christ.

MANY menne sain that in sweueninges,
Where nis but fables and lesinges:
But menne may some sweuen seene,
Which hardely that false ne been,
But afterward ben apparaunt:
This may I drawe to warraunt
An authour that hight Macrobes,
That halte not dreames false ne lees,
But undoth us the auisioun,
That whilom mette king Cipioun.
And who so sayth, or weneth it be
A yape, or else nicete
To wene that dreames after fall,
Let who so liste a foole me call.
For this trow I, and say for me,
That dreames signifiaunce be
Of good and harme to many wightes,
That dreamen in hir sleep a nightes
Full many thinges couertly,
That fallen after all openly.
Within my twentie yeere of age,
When that loue taketh his courage
Of younge folke, I wente soone
To bed, as I was wont to doone:
And fast I slept, and in sleeping,
Me mette such a sweuening,
That liked me wondreus wele,
But in that sweuen is neuer a dele
That it nis afterward befall,
Right as this dreame woll tell us all.
Now this dreame wolf I riune a right,
To make your heartes gay and light:
For loue it prayeth, and also
Commaundeth me that it be so.
And if there any aske me,
Whether that it be he or she,
Now this booke which is here
Shall highte, that I rede you here:
It is the Romaunt of the Rose,
In which all the art of loue I close.
The matter faire is of to make,
God graunt me in gree that she it take
For whom that it begonnen is,
And that is she, that hath I wis
So mokel prise, and thereto she
So worthie is beloued to be,
That she well ought of prise and right,
Be cleped Rose of euerie wight.
That it was Mey me thoughte tho,
It is fiue yere or more ago,
That it was Mey, thus dreamed me,
In time of loue and iolitie,
That all thing ginneth waxen gay:
For there is neither huske nor hay
In Mey, that it nill shrouded bene,
And it with newe leues wrene:
These woodes eke recoueren grene,
That drie in winter ben to sene,
And the erth waxeth proud withall,
For swote dewes that on it fall,
And the poore estate forget,
In which that winter had it set:
And than become the ground so proude,
That it wol have a newe shroude,
And maketh so queint his robe and faire,
That it had hewes an hundred paire,
Of grasse and floures, Inde and Pers,
And many hewes full diuers:
That is the robe I mean iwis,
Through which the ground to praisen is.
The birdes, that han left hir song,
While they han suffred cold full strong,
In wethers grille, and derke to sight,
Ben in Mey for the Sunne bright,
So glad, that they shew in singing,
That in hir heart is such liking,

That they mote singen and ben light:
Than doth the nightingale her might,
To maken noyse, and singen blith:
Than is blisfull many a sith,
The chelaundre, and the popingaye,
Than younge folke entenden aye,
For to ben gay and amorous,
The time is then so sauorous.
Harde is his heart that loueth nought
In Mey, whan all this mirth is wrought,
Whan he may on these braunches here
The smalle birdes singen clere
Her blisfull swete song piteous,
And in this season delitous:
When loue affirmeth all thing,
Me thought one night, in my sleeping,
Right in my bed full readyly,
That it was by the morrow early,
And up I rose, and gan me cloth,
Anone I wish mine hondes both,
A siluer needle forth I drow,
Out of an aguiler queint inow,
And gan this needle thread anone,
For out of toune me list to gone,
The sound of birdes for to heare
That on the buskes singen cleare,
In the swete season that lefe is,
With a thred basting my sleuis,
Alone I went in my playing,
The smale foules song hearkening,
That payned hem full many a paire,
To sing on bowes blossomed faire:
Iolife and gay, full of gladnesse,
Toward a riuer gan I me dresse,
That I heard renne faste by,
For fairer playen none saw I
Than playen me by that riuere:
For from an hill that stood there nere,
Come doune the stream full stiffe and bold,
Clere was the water, and as cold
As any well is, sooth to saine,
And somedele lasse it was than Saine,
But it was straiter, weleaway,
And neuer saw I er that day,
The water that so wele liked me,
And wonder glad was I to se
That lusty place, and that riuere:
And with that water that ran so clere,
My face I wish, tho saw I wele,
The bottome ypaued eueridele
With grauel, full of stones shene,
The meadowes softe, sote, and grene,
Beet right upon the water side,
Full clere was than the morowe tide,
And full attempre out of drede,
Tho gan I walken thorow the mede,
Downward aye in my playing,
The riuers side coasting.
And when I had a while igone,
I saw a garden right anone,
Full long and broad, and eueridele
Enclosed was, and walled wele,
With hie walles enbatailed,
Portrayed without, and well entayled
With many riche portraitures,
And both yet images and peintures,
Can I beholde besely,
And I woll tell you readyly,
Of thilke images the semblaunce,
As farre as I haue remembraunce.

Amidde saw I Hate stonde,
That for her wrath and yre and onde,
Seemed to be a mynoresse,
An angry wight, a chideresse,
And ful of gile, and fell courage,
By semblaunt was that ilke image,
And she was nothing wele araide,
But like a wode woman afraide,
Ifrounced foule was her visage,
And grimming for dispitous rage,
Her nose snorted up for tene,
Full hidous was she for to sene,
Full foule and rustie was she this,
Her head iwrithen was iwis
Full grimly with a great towaile.
An image of another entaile,
A lifte halfe was her fast by,
Her name aboue her head saw I,
And she was called Felony.
Another image, that Uillany
Icleped was, saw I and fonde
Upon the wall on her right honde.
Uillany was like somedele
That other image, and trusteth wele
She seemed a wicked creature,
By countenaunce in portreiture,
She seemed be full despitous,
And eke full proude and outragious.
Well coud he paint I undertake,
That such an image coude make:
Full foule and churlish seemed she,
And eke villainous for to be,
And little coulde of nurture,
To worship any creature.
And next was painted Couetise,
That eggeth folke in many a gise,
To take and yeve right nought againe,
And great treasoures up to laine.
And that is she, that for usure
Leneth to many a creature
The lasse for the more winning,
So couetous is her brenning,
And that is she for pennies fele,
That teacheth for to robbe and stele
These theeues, and these smale harlotes,
And that is routhe, for by hir throtes,
Full many one hongeth at the last:
She maketh folke compasse and cast
To taken other folkes thing,
Through robberie, or miscoueting.
And that is she that maketh treachours,
And she maketh false pleadours,
That with hir termes and hir domes,
Done maidens, children, and eke gromes,
Her heritage to forgo:
Full crooked were her hondes two,
For couetise is euer wood,
To gripen other folkes good.
Couetise, for her winning,
Full lefe hath other mennes thing.
Another image set saw I,
Nexte Couetise fast by,
And she was cleped Auarice,
Full foule in painting was that vice,
Full sad and caitife was she eke,
And also grene as any teke,
So euil hewed was her colour,
Her seemed to haue lived in langour,
She was like thing for hunger dead,
That lad her life onely by bread

Kneden with eisell strong and egre,
And thereto she was lene and megre,
And she was clad full poorely,
All in an olde torne courtpy,
As she were all with dogges torne,
And both behind and eke beforne
Clouted was she beggerly.
A mantle honge her faste by,
Upon a benche weake and small,
A burnette cote hong there withall,
Furred with no mineuere,
But with a furre rough of heere,
Of lambe skinnes heauy and blake,
It was so old I undertake.
For Auarice to cloath her wele,
Ne hasteth her neuer a dele,
For certainly it were her loth
To wearen of that ilke cloth,
And if it were forweared, she
Woulde haue full great nicete
Of clothing, er she bought her newe,
All were it bad of woll and hewe.
This Auarice held in her hand,
A purse that honge by a band,
And that she hid and bond so strong,
Men must abide wonder long,
Out of the purse er ther come ought,
For that ne commeth in her thought,
It was not certaine her entent,
That fro that purse a peny went.
And by that image nigh inough,
Was peinted Enuie, that neuer lough,
Nor neuer well in her heart ferde
But if she either saw or herde
Some great mischaunce, or great disease,
Nothing ne may so much her please
As mischeife and misauenture,
Or when she seeth discomfiture
Upon any worthy man fall,
Than liketh her right well withall.
She is full glad in hir courage,
If she see any great linage
Be brought to naught in shamefull wise:
And if a man in honour rise,
Or by his wit, or by his prowesse,
Of that hath she great heauinesse,
For trusteth well she goeth nie wood,
When any chaunce happeth good.
Enuy is of such cruelte,
That fayth ne trouth holdeth she,
To friend ne fellow, bad or good.
Ne she hath kinne none of her blood
That she nis full hir enemie,
She nolde, I dare saine hardely
Her owne father fared wele,
And sore abieth she euerie dele
Her maliee, and her male talent:
For she is in so great turment
And hate such, when folke doth good,
That nye she melteth for pure wood,
Her hert kerueth and so breaketh
That God the people well awreaketh,
Enuy iwis shall neuer let,
Some blame upon the folke to set.
I trowe that if Enuie iwis,
Knew the beste man that is,
On this side or beyond the see,
Yet somewhat lacken him would she:
And if he were so hende and wise,
That she ne might all abate his prise,
Yet would she blame his worthinesse,
Or by her wordes make it lesse.
I sawe Envy in that painting,
Had a wonderfull looking,
For she ne looked but awrie,
Or overwhart, all baggingly.
And she had a foule usage,
She might looke in no visage
Of man ne woman, forth right plaine,
But shette her one eye for disdaine,
So for envie brenned shee
When she might any man see
That faire, or worthy were, or wise,
Or else stood in folkes priso.
Sorow was painted next Envie
Upon that wall of masonrie:
But well was seene in her colour
That she had lived in languour:
Her seemed to have the jaundice,
Not halfe so pale was Avarice,
Ne nothing like of leannesse,
For sorowe, thought, and great distresse,
That she had suffred daie and night,
Made her yellow, and nothing bright:
Full sad, pale, and megre also,
Was never wight yet half so wo
As that her seemed for to be,
Nor so fulfilled with yre as she,
I trow that no wight might her please
Nor doe that thing that might her ease,
Nor she ne would her sorow slake,
Nor comfort none unto her take,
So depe was her wo begonne,
And eke her heart in anger ronne,
A sorowfull thing wel seemed she:
Nor she had nothing slowe be
For to scratchen all her face
And for to rent in many place
Her clothes, and for to teare her swire,
As she that was fulfilled of yre,
And all to torne lay eke her heere
About her shoulders, here and there,
As she that had it all to rent
For anger and for male talent.
And eke I tell you certainly
How that she wept full tenderly:
In worlde nis wight so hard of heart
That had seene her sorowes smart
That nolde have had of her pite,
So wo begon a thing was she.
She all to dasht her selfe for wo
And smote togider her hands two,
To sorrow was she full ententife,
That wofull retchelesse caitife
Her wroughte little of playing,
Or of clipping or kissing;
For who so sorrowfull is in heart
Him luste not to play ne start,
Nor for to dauncen, ne to sing,
Ne may his heart in temper bring
To make joy on even or morrow,
For joy is contrarie unto sorrow.
Elde was painted after this,
That shorter was a foot iwis
Than she was wont in her yong hede,
Unneth her selfe she might fede,
So feeble and eke so old was she
That faded was all her beaute.
Full salow was waxen her colour,
Her head for hore was white as flour,

Iwis great qualme ne were it none,
Ne sinne, although her life were gone.
All woxen was her body unwelde
And drie and dwined all for elde,
A foule forwelked thing was she
That whilom round and soft had be,
Her heeres shoken fast withall
As from her hedde they would fall:
Her face frounced and forpined,
And both her hondes lorne fordwined:
So old she was that she ne went
A foot, but it were by potent.
The time that passeth night and daye,
And restlesse trauayleth aye,
And stealeth from vs so priuyly,
That to vs seemeth sikerly
That it in one point dwelleth euer,
And certes it ne resteth neuer,
But goeth so fast, and passeth aye
That there nis man that thinke maye
What time that now present is
Asketh at these clerkes this,
For menne thinke it readily
Three times been passed by
The time that may not soiourne
But goth, and may neuer retourne,
As water that doun runneth aye
But neuer droppe returne may:
There may nothing as time endure,
Metall, nor yearthly creature,
For all thing is frette and shall,
The time eke that chaungeth all,
And all doth waxe, and fostred be,
And all thing destroyeth he.
The time that eldeth our auncestours
And eldeth kinges and emperours,
And that vs all shall ouercommen
Er that death vs shall haue nommen,
The time that hath all in welde
To elden folke, had made her elde
So inly, that to my weting
She might helpe her selfe nothing,
But tourned ayen vnto childhede;
She had nothing her selfe to lede
Ne wit ne pithe in her hold
More than a childe of two yere old.
But nathelesse I trow that she
Was faire sometime, and fresh to se,
When she was in her rightfull age:
But she was past all that passage
And was a doted thing becommen:
A furred cappe on had she nommen;
Well had she clad her selfe and warme,
For cold might els doen her harme,
These olde folke haue alway cold,
Hir kind is such, when they been old.
Another thing was doen there write,
That seemed like an ipocrite,
And it was cleped Pope holy,
That ilke is she, that priuily
Ne spared never a wicked deed,
When men of her taken none heed,
And maketh her outward precious,
With pale visage and piteous,
And seemeth a simple creature,
But ther nis no misaduenture;
That she ne thinketh in courage:
Full like to her was thilke image,
That maked was like her semblaunce,
She was ful simple of countenaunce.
And she was clothed and eke shod,
As she were for the loue of God
Yolden to religion,
Soch seemed her deuotion.
A psalter held she fast in hond,
And busily she gan to fond
To make many a faint prayere,
To God, and to his saintes dere:
Ne she was gay, fresh, ne iolife,
But seemed to be full ententife
To goode workes, and to faire,
And thereto she had on an haire.
Ne certes she was fatte nothing
But seemed werie for fasting,
Of colour pale and dead was she,
From her the gates aie warned be
Of Paradise, that blisfull place,
For such folke maken leane hir grace:
As Christ sayth in his Euangile,
To get hem prise in toune a while,
And for a little glorie vaine,
They lesen God and eke his raigne.
And alderlast of euerichone,
Was painted Pouert all alone,
That not a peny had in hold,
Although she her clothes sold,
And though she shuld an honged be,
For naked as a worme was she,
And if the weather stormie were,
For cold she shuld haue died there.
She ne had on but a straite old sacke,
And many a cloute on it there stacke,
This was her cote, and her mantele,
No more was there neuer a dele
To cloath her with; I vndertake,
Great leser hadde she to quake:
And she was put, that I of talke,
Ferre fro these other, vp in an halke,
There lurked and there coured she,
For poore thing, where so it be,
Is shamefast, and despised aie:
Accursed may well be that daie,
That poore man conceiued is,
For God wote all to seld iwis
Is any poore man well ifed,
Or well arrayed or iceled,
Or well beloued, in such wise,
In honour that he may arise.
All these thinges well auised,
As I haue you er this deuised,
With gold and azure ouer all,
Depainted were vpon the wall.
Square was the wall, and high somdele
Enclosed, and ibarred wele,
In stead of hedge, was that gardin,
Come neuer shepherde therein:
Into that gardin, well iwrought,
Who so that me coud haue brought,
By ladders or else by degree,
It would well haue liked mee,
For such solace, such joy, and pleie,
I trow that neuer man ne scie,
As was in that place delicious:
The gardin was not daungerous,
To herborow birdes many one,
So rich a yere was never none
Of birdes song, and braunches grene,
Therein were birdes mo I wene,
Than been in all the realme of Fraunce:
Full blisfull was the accordaunce,

Of swete pitous song they made,
For all this worlde it ought glade.
And I my selfe so merry ferde,
Whan I her blisfull songes herde,
That for an hundred pound would I,
If that the passage openly
Had be vnto me free
That I nolde entren for to see
Thassemble (God keepe it fro care)
Of birdes, whiche therein ware,
That songen through hir merry throtes,
Daunces of loue, and merry notes.
When I thus heard the foules sing,
I fell fast in a waymenting,
By which art, or by what engin,
I might come into that gardin,
But way I couthe finde none,
Into that gardin for to gone,
Ne nought wist I if that there were
Either hole or place where,
By which I might haue entre,
Ne there was none to teache me,
For I was all alone iwis,
For woe and anguishe of this,
Till at last bethought I mee,
That by no way ne might it bee,
That there nas ladder ne way to pace,
Or hole, into so faire a place.
Tho gan I go a full great paas,
Enuiron, euen in compas,
The closing of the square wall,
Till that I found a wicket small
So shette, that I ne might in gone,
And other entre was there none.
Upon this doore I gan to smite
That was so fetis, and so lite,
For other waye coud I not seke.
Full longe I shote, and knocked eke,
And stode full long all herkening
If that I heard any wight comming:
Till that the doore of thilke entre
A maiden curteis opened me:
Her haire was as yellowe of hewe
As any basen scoured newe,
Her fleshe tender as is a chicke
With bente browes, smooth and slicke,
And by measure large we re
The opening of her eyen clere:
Her nose of good proportion,
Her eyen graie, as is a faucon,
With sweete breath and well fauoured,
Her face white and well coloured,
With little mouth, and round to see;
A clone chinne eke had she;
Her necke was of good fashion
In length and greatnesse by reason,
Without bleine, scabbe, or roine;
Fro Jerusalem vnto Bargoine
Ther nis a fairer necke iwis
To fele how smooth and soft it is.
Her throte also white of hewe,
As snowe on braunce snowed newe.
Of bodie full well wrought was she,
Men neden not in no countre
A fairer bodie for to seke:
And of fine orfrais had she eke
A chapelet, so semely on,
Ne never wered maide upon;
And faire aboue that chapelet
A rose garlond had she set;
She had a gaie mirrour
And with a riche gold treasour,
Her head was tressed queintly
Her sleeues sewed fetously.
And for to keepe her hondes faire
Of gloues white she had a paire:
And she had on a coate of grene
Of cloth of gaunt, withouten wene:
Well seemed by her apparaile
She was not wont to great trauaile.
For whan shee kempt was feteously
And well araied and richly,
Than had she doen all her iournee,
For merrye and well begon was she.
She led a lustie life in May,
She had no thought, by night ne day
Of nothing, but if it were onely
To grayeth her well and vncouthly.
Whan that this dore had opened me
This maiden, seemely for to see,
I thonked her as I best might,
And asked her how that she hight:
And what she was, I asked eke,
And she to me was nought vnmeke
Ne of her answeare daungerous,
But faire answerde, and sayed thus:
"Lo sir, my name is Idlenesse
So clepe men me, more and lesse:
Full mightie and full rich am I,
And that of one thinge namely,
For I entende to nothing
But to my joye, and my pleying,
And for to kembe and tresse me:
Acquainted am I and priue
With Mirthe, lord of this gardin,
That fro the londe of Alexandrin
Made the trees hither be fet,
That in this gardin been iset:
And when the trees woxen an hight,
This wall that stant here in thy sight,
Did Mirthe enclosen all about,
And these images all without
He did hem both entaile and paint,
That neither been jolife ne quaint,
But they been full of sorowe and wo,
As thou hast seene a while ago.

And oft times him to solace
Sir Mirthe commeth into this place,
And eke with him commoth his meine,
That liuen in lust and iolite:
And now is Mirthe therein, to here
The birdes how they singen clere,
The mauis and the nightingale,
And other jolly birdes smale:
And thus he walketh to solace
Him and his folke, for sweeter place
To playen in, he may not finde,
Although he sought one in till Inde.
The alther fairest folke to see
That in this worlde may found bee
Hath Mirthe with him in his rout,
That followen him alwaies about."
When Idlenesse had told all this,
And I had herkened well ywis,
Then saied I to dame Idlenesse,
"Now also wisely God me blesse,
Sith Mirthe, that is so faire and fre,
Is in this yerd with his meine,

Fro thilke assemble, if I may,
Shall no man werne me to day,
That I this night ne mote it see,
For well wene I there with him bee
A faire and jolie companie
Fulfilled of all courtesie:"
And forth with out wordes mo
In at the wicked went I tho,
That Idlenesse had opened mee,
Into that garden faire to see.
And whan I was in ywis,
Mine herte was full glad of this.
For well wend I full sikerly
Haue been in Paradice earthly,
So faire it was, that trusteth well,
It seemed a place espirituell.
For certes at my deuise,
There is no place in Paradice,
So good in for to dwell or be,
As in that garden thoughte me.
For there was many a bird singing,
Throughout the yerde all thringing,
In many places were nightingales,
Alpes, finches, and wodwales,
That in hir swete song delighten
In thilke places as they habiten.
There mighte men see many flockes
Of turteles and lauerockes,
Chalaundres fele saw I there,
That very nigh forsongen were.
And thrustles, terins, and mauise,
That songen for to win hem prise,
And eke to sermount in hir song
That other birdes hem emong
By note made faire seruise:
These birdes, that I you deuise,
They song her song as faire and well,
As angels done espirituell,
And trusteth me, when I hem herde,
Full lustie and well I ferde:
For never yet such melodie
Was heard of man that mighte die.
Such swete song was hem emong,
That me thought it no birdes song,
But it was wonder like to bee
Song of meremaidens of the see,
That for hir singen is so clere:
Though we meremaidens clepe hem here
In English, as is our vsaunce,
Men clepe hem sereins in Fraunce.

Ententiue weren for to sing
These birdes, that not vnkonning
Were of hir craft, and à prentise,
But of song subtill and eke wise:
And certes, whan I heard hir song,
And saw the grene place emong,
In heart I wext so wonder gay,
That I was neuer, ere that day,
So iolife, nor so well bigo,
Ne merry in heart, as I was tho:
And than wist I, and saw full well,
That Idlenesse me serued well,
That me put in such iolite,
Her frend well ought I for to be,
Sith she the dore of that gardin
Had opened, and me let in.
From henceforth, how that I wrought
I shall you tell, as me thought:

First whereof Mirthe serued there,
And eke what folke there with him were,
Without fable I woll discriue,
And that garden eke as bliue;
I woll you tellen after this
The faire fashion all ywis,
That well wrought was for the nones;
I may not tell you all atones,
But as I may and can, I shall
By order tellen you it all.
Full faire seruice, and eke full swete
These birdes maden as they sete:
Laies of loue, ful well souning
They songen in hir iargoning,
Some high, and some eke lowe song
Upon the braunches greene isprong:
The sweetnesse of hir melodie
Made all mine heart in reuelrie.
And whan that I heard I trowe
These birdes singing on a rowe,
Then might I not withholde mee
That I ne went in for to see
Sir Mirthe, for my desiring
Was him to seene ouer all thing,
His countenaunce and his manere:
That sighte was to me full dere.

Tho went I forth on my right hond
Downe by a litel path I fond
Of mintes full, and fennell greene,
As faste by withouten wene
Sir Mirthe I found, and right anone
Unto sir Mirthe gan I gone,
There as he was him to solace,
And with him in that lustie place,
So faire folke and so fresh had he,
That when I saw, I wondred me
Fro whenes suche folke might come,
So faire they weren all and some:
For they weren like, as to my sight,
To angels, that ben fethered bright.
These folke, of which I tell you so,
Upon a karole wenten tho:
A ladie karoled hem, that hight
Gladnesse, blisfull, and light,
Well could she sing and lustely
None halfe so well and seemely:
And cothe make in song such refraining,
It sate her wonder well to sing.
Her voice full clere was and full swete:
She was not rude ne unmete,
But couthe ynough for such doing
As longeth unto karolling:
For she was wont in every place
To singen first, folke to sollace,
For singing most she gaue her to,
No craft had she so lefe to do.

Tho mightest thou karoles seene,
And folke daunce and merry beene,
And made many a faire tourning
Upon the greene grasse springing.
There mightest thou see these flutours,
Minstrales, and eke jogelours,
That well to singe did hir paine:
Some song songes of Loraine,

For in Loraine hir notes be
Full sweeter than in this countre.
There was many a timbestere,
And sailours, that I dare well swere
Couthe hir craft full perfitly:
The timbres up full subtelly
They cast, and hent full oft
Upon a finger faire and soft,
That they failed never mo.
Full fetis damoseles two,
Right yong, and full of semelyhede
In kirtles, and none other wede,
And faire tressed every tresse
Had Mirthe doen for his noblesse
Amid the carole for to daunce,
But hereof lieth no remembraunce,
How that they daunced queintly:
That one would come all prively
Ayen that other, and when they were
Togither almost, they threw ifere
Hir mouthes so, that through hir play
It seemed as they kist alway:
To dauncen well couth they the guise.
What should I more to you devise?
Ne bode I never thenes go,
Whiles that I saw hem daunce so.
Upon the caroll wonder fast,
I gan beholde, till at last
A ladie gan me for to espie,
And she was cleped Courtesie,
The worshipfull, the debonaire,
I pray to God ever fall her faire:
Full courtesly she called me,
"What doe ye there, beau sire?" (quod she)
"Come, and if it like you
To dauncen, daunceth with us now:"
And I without tarrying
Went into the carolling,
I was abashed never adele,
But it to me liked right wele,
That Courtesie me cleped so,
And bade me on the daunce go.
For if I had durst, certaine
I would have carolled right faine
As man that was to daunce right blithe:
Than gan I looken oft sithe
The shape, the bodies, and the cheres,
The countenaunce and the maneres
Of all the folke that daunced there,
And I shall tellen what they were.
Full faire was Mirthe, full long and high,
A fairer man I never sigh:
As round as apple was his face,
Full roddie and white in every place:
Fetis he was and well besey,
With meetly mouth and eyen gray,
His nose by measure wrought full right,
Crispe was his haire, and eke full bright:
His shoulderes of large brede,
And smallish in the girdlestede:
He seemed like a purtreiture,
So noble he was of his stature,
So faire, so jolly, and so fetise,
With limmes wrought at point devise
Deliver, smert, and of great might:
Ne saw thou never man so light.
Of berd unneth had he nothing,
For it was in the firste spring,
Full yong he was, and merry of thought
And in samette, with birdes wrought,
And with gold beaten full fetously,
His bodie was clad full richely:
Wrought was his robe in straunge gise,
And all to slittered for queintise
In many a place, low and hie,
And shode he was with great maistrie,
With shoone decoped, and with lace,
By drurie, and by solace,
His leefe a rosen chapelet
Had made, and on his head it set.
And wete ye who was his lefe,
Dame Gladnesse there was him so lefe,
That singeth so well with glad courage,
That from she was twelve yeare of age,
She of her love graunt him made:
Sir Mirthe her by the finger hade
Dauncing, and she him also,
Great love was atwixt hem two:
Both were they faire and bright of hew,
She semed like a rose new
Of colours, and her flesh so tender,
That with a brere small and tender,
Men might it cleve, I dare well say:
Her forhead frounceles all play,
Bent were her browes two,
Her eyen gray, and glad also,
That laughden aye in her semblaunt,
First or the mouth by covenaunt.
I wot not what of her nose I shall discrive,
So faire hath no woman alive:
Her haire was yellow, and clere shining,
I wote no lady so liking.
Of orfraies fresh was her garland,
I whiche seene have a thousand
Saw never ywis no garland yet,
So well wrought of silke as it.
And in an over gilt samite
Clad she was, by great delite,
Of whiche her leefe a robe werde,
The merrier she in her heart ferde.
And next her went, on her other side,
The god of love, that can divide
Love, and as him liketh it be,
But he can cherles daunten, he,
And many folkes pride fallen,
And he can well these lordes thrallen,
And ladies put at low degree
When he may hem too proude see.
This god of love of his fashion
Was like no knave, ne quistron:
His beautie greatly was to prise,
But of his robe to devise
I dreade encombred for to be,
For not yclad in silke was he,
But all in floures and flourettes,
I painted all with amorettes,
And with losenges and scochons,
With birdes, liberdes, and lions,
And other beastes wrought full wele;
His garment was every dele
Ipurtraied and ywrought with flours,
By divers medling of colours:
Floures ther were of many gise
Iset by compasse in a sise,
There lacked no floure to my dome,
Ne not so much as floure of brome,
Ne violet, ne eke perpinke,
Ne floure none, that men can on thinke:
And many a rose lefe full long
Was entermedled there emong;

And also on his head was set
Of roses redde a chapelet.
But nightingales a full great rout
That flien over his head about,
The leaves felden as they flien,
And he was all with birdes wrien,
With popinjay, with nightingale,
With chalaundre, and with wodewale,
With finch, with larke, and with archangell,
He seemed as he were an angell,
That down were comen fro Heaven clere.
Love had with him a bachelere,
That he made alwayes with him be,
Swete Looking cleped was he:
This batcheler stode beholding
The daunce, and in his honde holding
Turke bowes two, full well devised had hee,
That one of hem was of a tree
That beareth a fruict of savour wicke,
Full crooked was that foule sticke,
And knottie here and there also,
And blacke as berrie, or any slo.
That other bow was of a plant
Without wemme, I dare warrant,
Full even and by proportion,
Trectes and long, of full good fashion,
And it was painted well and thwitten,
And over all diapred and written
With ladies and with bacheleres,
Full lightsome and glad of cheres:
These bowes two held Sweet Looking,
That seemed like no gadling:
And ten brode arrowes held he there,
Of which five in his honde were,
But they were shaven well and dight,
Nocked and feathered aright:
And all they were with golde begon,
And stronge pointed everichon,
And sharpe for to kerven wele,
But yron was there none ne stele:
For all was golde, men might see,
Out take the feathers and the tree.

The swiftest of these arrowes five
Out of a bowe for to drive,
And beste feathered for to flie,
And fairest eke, was cleped Beautie:
That other arrow that hurteth lesse,
Was cleped (as I trow) Simplesse:
The thirde cleped was Fraunchise,
That feathered was in noble wise
With valour and with courtesie?
The fourth was clepen Companie,
That heavie for to shooten is,
But who so shooteth right ywis,
May therewith doen great harme and wo:
The fift of these, and last also,
Faire Semblaunt men that arrow call,
The leste greevous of hem all,
Yet can it make a full great wound,
But he may hope his sores sound
[illegible] hurt is with that arrowe ywis,
[illegible] bestowed is:
His wo the bette[illegible]ave gladnesse,
For he may sooner [illegible] the lesse.
His langour ought to b[illegible]

Five arrowes were of other gise,
That been full foule to devise:
For shaft and end, sooth for to tell,
Were al so blacke as fiend in Hell.
The first of hem is called Pride,
That other arrow next him beside,
It was cleped Villanie,
That arrow was with fellonie
Envenimed, and with spitous blame:
The third of hem was cleped Shame.
The fourth, Wanhope cleped is,
The fift, the Newe Thought ywis.
These arrowes that I speake of here,
Were all five on one mannere,
And all were they resemblable;
To hem was well fitting and able,
The foule crooked bowe hideous,
That knottie was, and all roineus;
That bowe seemed well to shete
The arrowes five, that been unmete
And contrary to that other five:
But though I tell not as blive
Of hir power, ne of hir might,
Hereafter shall I tellen right
The sooth, and eke signifiaunce,
As ferre as I have remembraunce:
All shall be saied I undertake,
Ere of this booke an end I make.
Now come I to my tale againe:
But alderfirst, I will you saine
The fashion and the countenaunces
Of all the folke that on the daunce is.
The god of love jolife and light,
Led on his honde a ladie bright,
Of high prise, and of great degre,
This ladie called was Beaute,
And an arrow, of which I told,
Full well thewed was she hold:
Ne she was derke ne browne, but bright,
And cleare as the moone light:
Againe whom all the starres semen
But small candles, as we demen:
Her flesh was tender as dewe of floure,
Her cheare was simple as bird in boure,
As white as lilly or rose in rise:
Her face gentill and treatise:
Fetis she was, and small to see,
No wintred browes had shee,
Ne popped here, for it needed nought
To winder her, or to paint her ought:
Her tresses yellow, and long straughten,
Unto her heeles downe they raughten:
Her nose, her mouth, and eye and cheke
Well wrought, and all the remnaunt eke.
A full gret sauour and a smote,
Me thoughte in mine herte rote:
As helpe me God, when I remember,
Of the fashion of euery member,
In world is none so faire a wight:
For yong she was, and hewed bright
Sore pleasant, and fetis with all,
Gent, and in her middle small.
Beside Beauty yede Richesse,
An high ladie of great noblesse,
And great of price in euery place:
But who so durst to her trespace
Or till her folke, in werke or dede,
He were full hardie out of drede:
For both she helpe and hinder may,
And that is not of yesterday
That riche folke haue full great might
To helpe, and eke to greue a wight.

The best and greatest of valour
Didden Richesse full great honour,
And busie weren her to serue,
For that they would her loue deserue;
They cleped her ladie, gret and small,
This wide world her dredeth all:
This world is all in her daungere,
Her court hath many a losengere,
And many a traitour enuious,
That ben full busie and curious
For to dispraise, and to blame
That best deseruen loue and name,
To forne the folke *hem to* begilen,
These losengeours hem preise and smilen.
And thus the world with word annointen,
But afterward they prill and pointen
The folke, right to the bare bone,
Behinde hir backe when they ben gone,
And foule abaten folkes prise.
Full many a worthy man and wise
Han hindred, and idoen to die
These losengeours with hir flatterie,
And maketh folke full straunge be,
There as hem ought ben priue:
Well euill mote they thriue and thee,
And euill ariued mote they bee
These losengeours full of enuie.
No good man loueth hir companie.
Richesse a robe of purple on had,
Ne trow not that I lie or mad:
For in this world is none it liche,
Ne by a thousand deale so riche,
Ne none so faire, for it full wele,
With orfreis laied was euery dele,
And purtraid in the ribanings
Of dukes stories, and of kings,
And with a bend of gold tassiled,
And knopes fine of gold amiled:
About her necke of gentle entaile
Was shet the riche cheuesaile,
In which there was full great plente
Of stones clere, and faire to se.
Richesse a girdle had vpon,
The bokell of it was of ston,
Of vertue great, and mokell of might:
For who so bare the stone so bright,
Of venim durst him nothing doubt
While he the stone had him about:
That stone was greatly for to loue,
And till a riche mannes behoue
Worth all the gold in Rome and Frise:
The mourdant wrought in noble gise
Was of a stone full precious,
That was so fine and vertuous,
That whole a man it couth make
Of palsie, and of tothe ake,
And yet the stone had such a graee,
That he was seker in euery place
All thilke day not blind to beene,
That fasting might that stone seene:
The barres were of gold full fine,
Upon a tissue of sattine
Full heauie, great, and nothing light,
In euericke was a besaunt wight.
Upon the tresses of richesse
Was set a circle of noblesse
Of brende golde, that full light shone,
So faire trow I was neuer none:
But he were cunning for the nones,
That could deuise all the stones
That in that circle shewen clere,
It is a wonder thing to here:
For no man could preise or gesse
Of hem the value or richesse:
Rubies there were, saphirs, ragounces,
And emeraudes, more than two vnces.
But all before full subtilly
A fine carbuncle set saw I,
The stone so cleare was and so bright,
That all so soone as it was night,
Menne might seene to go for nede
A mile or two, in length and brede.
Such light isprang out of the stone,
That Richesse wonder bright ishone
Bothe her hedde, and all her face,
And eke about her all the place.
Dame Richesse on her hond gan lede
A yong man full of semelyhede,
That she best loued of any thing,
His lust was much in housholding:
In clothing was he full fetise,
And loued well to haue hors of prise,
He wend to haue reproued be
Of theft or murder, if that he
Had in his stable an hacknay,
And therefore he desired aye
To been acquainted with Richesse,
For all his purpose, as I gesse,
Was for to maken great dispence,
Withouten warning or defence:
And Richesse might it well sustaine,
And her dispences wele maintaine,
And him alway such plentie send
Of gold and siluer for to spend
Withouten lacking or daungere,
As it were pourde in a garnere.
And after on the daunce went
Largesse, that set all her entent
For to ben honorable and free,
Of Alexanders kinne was shee:
Her moste joie was ywis,
When that she yafe, and saied, haue this.
Not Auarice the foule caitife
Was halfe to gripe so ententife
As Largesse is, to yeue and spend,
And God alway ynowe her send,
So that the more she yaue away,
The more iwis she had alway.
Great loos hath Largesse, and great prise,
For both wise folke and unwise
Were wholly to her bandon brought,
So well with yefts hath she wrought.
And if she had an enemy,
I trowe that she couth craftely
Make him full soone her friend to be,
So large of yefts, and wise was she,
Therefore she stood in loue and grace
Of rich and poore in euery place.
A full great foole he is ywis,
That both rich and poore, and niggard is.
A lord may haue no manner vice,
That greeveth more than avarice.
For niggard neuer with strength of hand
May win him great lordship or land:
For friendes all too few hath he
To doen his will performed be:
And who so woll have friendes here,
He may not hold his treasure dere,
For by ensample tell I this,
Right as an adamant ywis

Can drawen to him subtelly
The yron that is laied thereby,
So draweth folkes hearts ywis
Siluer and gold that yeuen is.
Largesse had on a robe fresh
Of riche purpure sarlinish:
Well formed was her face and clere,
And opened had she her colere,
For she right there had in present
Unto a lady made present
Of a gold broche, full well wrought,
And certes it missate her nought:
For through her smocke wrought with silke,
The flesh was seene as white as milke:
Largesse, that worthy was and wise,
Held by the hond a knight of prise,
Was sibbe to Arthour of Breteignie,
And that was he that bare the enseigne
Of worship, and the gousfaucoun:
And yet he is of such renoun,
That menne of him say faire things
Before barons, earles, and kings.
This knight was commen all newly
Fro tourneying faste by,
There had he done great chiualrie
Through his vertue and his maistrie,
And for the loue of his lemman
He cast doune many a doughty man.
And next him daunced dame Fraunchise,
Arrayed in full noble gise:
She nas not broune ne dunne of hew,
But white as snow ifallen new:
Her nose was wrought at point deuise,
For it was gentill and tretise,
With eyen glad, and browes bent,
Her haire downe to her heles went,
And she was simple as doue on tree,
Full debonaire of hert was shee.
She durste neither say ne do,
But that, that her longeth to:
And if a man were in distresse,
And for her loue in heauinesse,
Her herte would have full great pitee
She was so amiable and free:
For were a manne for her bestad,
She woulde ben right sore adrad,
That she did ouergreat outrage,
But she him hope his harme taswage,
Her thought it all a villany,
And she had on a suckeny,
That not of hempe herdes was,
So faire was none in all Arras,
Lord, it was riddled fetisly,
There nas not a point truely
That it nas in his right assise,
Full well yclothed was Fraunchise,
For there nis no cloth sitteth bette
On damosell, than doth rokette:
A woman well more fetise is
In rokette, than in cote ywis,
The white rokette riddeled faire,
Betokeneth, that full debonaire
And swete was she that it bere.
By her daunced a bachelere,
I cannot tellen what he hight,
But faire he was, and of good height,
All had he ben, I say no more,
The lordes sonne of Windesore.
And next that daunced Courtesie,
That preised was of low and hie,
For neither proud ne foole was she:
She for to daunce called me,
I praie God give her good grace,
For when I came first into the place,
She nas not nice, ne outrageous,
But wise and ware, and vertuous,
Of faire speech, and faire answer,
Was neuer wight missaid of her:
She bare no rancour to no wight,
Clere broune she was, and thereto bright
Of face and body auenaunt
I wote no lady so pleasaunt,
She weren worthy for to bene
An emperesse or crowned quene.
And by her went a knight dauncing
That worthy was and well speaking,
And full well coud he done honour:
The knight was faire and stiffe in stour,
And in armure a seemely man,
And well beloued of his lemman,
Faire Idlenesse then saw I,
That alway was me faste by,
Of her haue I withouten faile
Told you the shape and apparaile:
For (as I said) Lo, that was she
That did to me so great bounte.
She the gate of that gardin
Undid, and let me passen in,
And after daunced as I gesse.
And she fulfilled of lustinesse,
That nas not yet twelve yeare of age,
With herte wild, and thought volage.
Nice she was, but she ne ment
None harme ne sleight in her entent,
But onely lust and iolite.
For yonge folke, well weten ye,
Have little thought but on hir play.
Her lemman was beside alway,
In such a gise, that he her kist
At all times that him list,
That all the daunce might it see,
They make no force of priuetee:
For who so spake of hem euill or wele,
They were ashamed neuer adele,
But men might seene hem kisse there,
As it two yonge doues were,
For yonge was thilke bachelere,
Of beauty wot I non his pere,
And he was right of such an age,
As youth his lefe, and such courage.
The lusty folke that daunced there,
And also other that with hem were
That weren all of hir meinee
Full hende folke, wise, and free,
And folke of faire port truly,
There were all comenly.
Whan I had seene the countenaunces
Of hem that ladden thus these daunces,
Than had I will to go and see
The garden that so liked mee,
And loken on these faire laureres,
Or pine trees, cedres, and ormeres,
The daunces than al ended were,
For many of hem that daunced there,
Were with her loues went away
Under the trees to haue her play.

A LORD, they liued lustely,
A great foole were he sikerly,

That nold his thankes such life lede:
For this dare I saine out of drede,
That who so mighte so well fare,
For better life durst him not care,
For there nis so good paradise,
As to haue a loue at his deuise:
Out of that place went I tho,
And in that garden gan I go,
Playing along full merely.
The god of loue full hastely
Unto him Sweet Looking clept,
No lenger would he that she kept
His bowe of gold, that shone so bright.
He had him bent anon right,
And he full soone set an end,
And at a braide he gan it bend,
And tooke him of his arrowes fiue,
Full sharpe and ready for to driue.
Now God that sitteth in maieste
Fro deadly woundes he keepe me,
If so be that he had me shete,
For if I with his arrow mete,
It had me greeued sore ywis,
But I, that nothing wist of this,
Went vp and downe full many a way,
And he me followed fast alway,
But no where would I reste me,
Till I had in all the garden be.

The garden was by measuring
Right euen and square in compassing,
It as long was as it was large,
Of fruit had euery tree his charge,
But it were any hidous tree
Of whiche there were two or three.
There were, and that wote I full wele,
Of pomgranettes a full great dele,
That is a fruit full well to like,
Namely to folke when they ben sike:
And trees there were great foison,
That baren nuts in hir season,
Such as menne nutmegs call,
That swote of savour been withall,
And almandres great plentee,
Figges, and many a date tree
There weren, if menne had nede,
Through the gardin in length and brede.
There was eke wexing many a spice,
As clowe, gilofre, and licorice,
Gingere, and grein de Paris,
Canell, and setewale of pris,
And many a spice delitable,
To eaten when men rise fro table.
And many homely trees there were,
That peaches, coines, and apples here,
Medlers, plummes, peeres, chesteinis,
Cherise, of whiche many one faine is,
Notes, aleis, and bolas,
That for to seene it was solas;
With many high laurer and pine,
Was renged clene all that gardine,
With cipres, and with oliueris,
Of which that nigh no plenty here is.
There were elmes great and strong,
Maples, ashe, oke, aspes, planes long,
Fine ewe, popler, and lindes faire,
And other trees full many a paire.
What should I tell you more of it?
There were so many trees yet,
That I should all encombred bee,
Ere I had reckoned euery tree:
These trees were set that I deuise,
One from another in assise
Fiue fadome or sixe, I trowe so,
But they were high and great also:
And for to keepe out well the Sunne,
The croppes were so thicke irunne,
And euery braunch in other knitte,
And full of greene leaues sitte,
That Sunne might there none descend,
Least the tender grasses shend.
There might menne does and roes isee,
And of squirrels full great plentee,
From bough to bough alway leping;
Connis there were also playing,
That comen out of hir clapers
Of sundry colours and maners,
And maden many a tourneying
Upon the freshe grassie springing.
In places saw I welles there,
In whiche there no frogges were,
And faire in shaddow was euery well;
But I ne can the number tell
Of stremis small, that by deuise
Mirthe had done come through condise,
Of which the water in renning
Gan make a noise full liking.
About the brinkes of these wels,
And by the streames ouer all els
Sprang vp the grasse, as thicke iset
And soft as any velues.
On which men might his lemman ley,
As on a featherbed to pley,
For the earth was full soft and swete:
Through moisture of the well wete
Sprong vp the sote grene gras,
As faire, as thicke, as mister was.
But much amended it the place,
That therth was of such a grace
That it of floures hath plente,
That both in summer and winter be.
There sprang the violet all new,
And freshe perwinke rich of hew,
And floures yellow, white, and rede,
Such plenty grew there neuer in mede:
Full gay was all the ground and queint,
And poudred, as men had it peint,
With many a fresh and sundry flour,
That casten vp full good sauour.
I woll not long hold you in fable
Of all this garden delectable,
I mote my tongue stinten nede,
For I ne may withouten drede
Naught tellen you the beautie all,
Ne halfe the bountie therewithall.
I went on right honde and on left
About the place, it was not left
Till I had all the garden beene
In the efters that men might seene.
And thus while I went in my playe,
The god of loue me followed aye.
Right as an hunter can abide
The beast, till he seeth his tide
To shooten at goodnesse to the deere,
Whan that him needeth go no neere,
And so befell, I rested mee
Besides a well vnder a tree,
Which tree in Fraunce men call a pine,
But sith the time of king Pepine

Ne grew there tree in mannes sight
So faire, ne so well woxe in hight,
In all that yard so high was none.
And springing in a marble stone
Had nature set, the sooth to tell,
Under that pine tree a well,
And on the border all without
Was written on the stone about
Letters small, that saiden thus,
Here starfe the faire Narcissus.
Narcissus was a bachelere,
That Loue had caught in his daungere,
And in his nette gan him so straine,
And did him so to weepe and plaine,
That need him must his life forgo:
For a faire lady, that hight Echo,
Him loued ouer any creature,
And gan for him such paine endure,
That on a time she him tolde,
That if he her louen nolde,
That her behoued needes die,
There lay none other remedie.
But nathelesse, for his beaute
So fierce and daungerous was he,
That he nolde graunten her asking,
For weeping, ne for faire praying.
And when she heard him werne her so,
She had in herte so grete wo,
And tooke it in so grete despite,
That she without more respite
Was dead anon: but ere she deide,
Ful pitously to God she preide,
That proude hearted Narcissus,
That was in love so daungerous,
Might on a day ben hampered so
For loue, and ben so hote for wo,
That neuer he might to joy attaine;
Then should he fele in very vaine
What sorrow true louers maken,
That ben so villainously forsaken.

This prayer was but reasonable,
Therefore God held it firme and stable:
For Narcissus shortly to tell,
By auenture came to that well
To rest him in the shaddowing
A day, when he came from hunting.
This Narcissus had suffred paines
For renning all day in the plaines,
And was for thurst in great distresse
Of herte, and of his wearinesse,
That had his breath almost benomen.
Whan he was to that well icomen,
That shaddowed was with braunches grene,
He thought of thilke water shene
To drinke and fresh him wele withall,
And downe on knees he gan to fall,
And forth his necke and head outstraught
To drinke of that well a draught:
And in the water anon was sene
His nose, his mouth, his eyen shene,
And he thereof was all abashed,
His owne shaddow had him betrashed,
For well wend he the forme see
Of a childe of great beautee,
Well couth Loue him wreke tho
Of daungere and of pride also
That Narcissus sometime him bere,
He quite him well his guerdon there,
For he mused so in the well,
That shortely the sooth to tell,
He loued his owne shaddow so,
That at last he starfe for wo:
For when he saw that he his will
Might in no manner way fulfill,
And that he was so faste caught
That he him couthe comfort naught,
He lost his wit right in that place
And deid within a little space,
And thus his warison he tooke
For the lady that he forsoke.
Ladies I praye ensample taketh,
Ye that ayenst your loue mistaketh:
For if of hir death be you to wite,
God can full well your wile quite.
When that this letter of which I tell,
Had taught me that it was the well
Of Narcissus in his beaute,
I gan anon withdrawe me,
When it fell in my remembraunce,
That him betide such mischaunce:
But at the laste than thought I,
That scatheless, full sikerly,
I might vnto the welle go,
Whereof shull I abashen so.
Unto the welle then went I mee,
And downe I louted for to see
The clere water in the stone,
And eke the grauell, which that shone
Downe in the bottome, as siluer fine:
For of the well, this is the fine,
In world is none so clere of hew,
The water is euer fresh and new
That welmeth vp with waues bright
The mountenaunce of two finger hight:
About it is grasse springing,
For moist so thicke and well liking,
That it ne may in winter die,
No more than may the see be drie.

Downe at the bottome set saw I
Two christal stones craftely
In thilke fresh and faire well:
But o thing soothly dare I tell,
That ye woll hold a great meruaile
Whan it is told withouten faile:
For whan the Sunne clere in sight
Cast in that well his beames bright,
And that the heat descended is,
Than taketh the christall stone iwis,
Againe the Sunne an hundred hewis,
Blew, yellow, and red, that fresh and new is:
Yet hath the meruailous christall
Such strength, that the place ouer all,
Both foule and tree, and leaues greene,
And all the yerd in it is seene:
And for to done you to vnderstond,
To make ensample woll I fond:
Right as a mirrour openly
Sheweth all thing that stondeth thereby,
As well the colour as the figure,
Withouten any couertures,
Right so the christall stone shining,
Withouten any deceiuing,
The entrees of the yerd accuseth
To him that in the water museth:
For euer in which halfe ye bee,
Ye may well halfe the garden see:

And if he turne, he may right wele
Seene the remenaunt euery dele:
For there is none so little thing
So hid ne closed with shitting,
That it ne is seene, as though it were
Painted in the chrystall there.
This is the mirrour perillus,
In which the proude Narcissus
Sey all his faire face bright,
That made him sith to lie vpright:
For who so looke in that mirrour,
There may nothing ben his succour
That he ne shall there see something
That shall him lede into laughing:
Full many a worthy man hath it
Yblent, for folke of greatest wit
Ben soone caught here and waited,
Withouten respite ben they baited:
Here commeth to folke of new rage,
Here chaungeth many wight courage,
Here lithe no rede ne wit thereto,
For Venus sonne, dan Cupido,
Hath sowen there of loue the sede,
That helpe ne lithe there none, ne rede,
So cercleth it the well about:
His ginnes hath he set without
Right for to catch in his panters
These damosels and bachelers.
Loue will none other birde catch,
Though he set either nette or latch:
And for the seed that here was sowen,
This well is cleped, as well is knowen,
The Well of Loue, of very right,
Of which there hath full many wight
Spoken in bookes diuersly:
But they shull neuer so verily
Description of the well here,
Ne eke the sooth of this matere,
As ye shull, when I haue vndo
The craft that her belongeth to.

Alway me liked for to dwell,
To seene the christall in the well,
That shewed me full openly
A thousand thinges fiaste by,
But I may say in sorry houre
Stode I to looken or to poure:
For sithen I sore sigked,
That mirrour hath me now entriked:
But had I first knowen in my wit
The vertue and strengthes of it,
I nolde not haue mused there,
Me had bette ben eleswhere,
For in the snare I fell anone,
That had bitreshed many one.
In thilke mirrour sawe I tho,
Among a thousand things mo,
A roser charged full of rosis,
That with an hedge about enclosis,
Tho had I such lust and enuie,
That for Paris ne for Pauie,
Nolde I haue left to gone and see,
There greatest heape of goses bee.
Whan I was with that rage hent,
That caught hath many a man and shent,
Toward the roser gan I go,
And whan I was not ferre therefro,
The sauer of the roses swote
Me smote right to the heart rote,
As I had all enbaumed be:
And if I ne had endouted me
To haue ben hated or assailed,
My thankes woll I not have failed
To pull a rose of all that rout
To beare in mine honde about,
And smellen to it where I went,
But ever I drede me to repent,
And feast it greved or forthought
The lord that thilke gardin wrought.
Of roses there were great wone,
So faire were never in Rone:
Of knopes close, some saw I there,
And some well better woxen were,
And some there been of other muison,
That drowe nigh to hir season,
And sped hem faste for to spred,
I love well such roses red:
For brode roses, and open also,
Ben passed in a day or two,
But knoppes will fresh bee,
Two dayes at least, or els three.
The knoppes greatly liked mee,
For fairer may there no man see:
Who so might have one of all,
It ought him been full lefe withall:
Might I garlonde of hem getten,
For no richesse I would it letten.
Amongs the knoppes I chese one
So faire, that of the remnaunt none
Ne preise I halfe so well as it,
Whan I avise in my wit,
For it so well was enlumined
With colour red, as well fined
As nature couth it make faire,
And it hath leaves well foure paire,
That kind hath set through his knowing
About the red roses springing,
The stalke was as rishe right,
And thereon stood the knoppe upright,
That it ne bowed upon no side,
The swote smell sprung so wide,
That it died all the place about
Whan I had smelled the savour swote,
No will had I fro thence yet go,
But somedele nere it went I tho
To take it, but mine hond for drede
Ne durst I to the rose bede,
For thistles sharpe of many manners,
Nettles, thornes, and hooked briers,
For muche they distourbled me,
For sore I drad to harmed be.

The god of love, with bowe bent,
That all day set had his talent
To pursue and to spien mee,
Was stonding by a figge tree,
And when he sawe how that I
Had chosen so ententifely
The bothum more unto my pey,
Than any other that I sey:
He tooke an arrow full sharpely whet,
And in his bowe when it was set,
He streight up to his eare drough
The strong bowe, that was so tough,
And shot at me so wonder smert,
That through mine eye unto mine hert
The takell smote, and deepe it went:
And therewithall such cold me hent,

That under clothes warme and soft,
Sithen that day I have chivered oft.
When I was hurte thus in stound,
I fell down plat unto the ground,
Mine herte failed and fainted aye,
And long time in swoune I lay:
But when I came out of swouning,
And had my wit, and my feeling.
I was all mate, and wend full wele
Of blood, have lorne a full great dele,
But certes the arrow that in me stood,
Of me ne drew no drop of blood,
For why I found my wounds all drey.
Than tooke I with mine hondes twey
The arrow, and full fast it out plight,
And in the pulling sore I sight,
So at the last the shaft of tree
I drough out, with the feathers three,
But yet the hooked head ywis,
The whiche Beauty called is,
Gan so deepe in mine herte pace,
That I it might not arace,
But in mine herte still it stood,
All bled I not a drop of blood:
I was both anguishous and trouble,
For the perill that I saw double,
I nist what to say or do,
Ne get a leach my wounds to;
For neither through grasse ne rote,
Ne had I helpe of hope ne bote.
But to the bothum evermo
Mine herte drew, for all my wo,
My thought was in none other thing,
For had it been in my keeping,
It would have brought my life againe,
For certes evenly, I dare well saine,
The sight only, and the savour,
Alegged much of my langour.
Than gan I for to drawe mee
Toward the bothum faire to see,
And Love had gette him in his throwe
Another arrowe into his bowe,
And for to shote gan him dresse,
The arrowes name was Simplesse,
And when that love gan nigh me nere,
He drowe it up withouten were,
And shot at me with all his might,
So that this arrow anon right
Throughout eigh as it was found,
Into mine herte hath made a wound.
Than I anon did all my craft
For to drawen out the shaft,
And therwithall I sighed eft,
But in mine herte the head was left,
Which aye increased my desire;
Unto the bothum drow I nere,
And evermo that me was wo
The more desire had I to go
Unto the roser, where that grew
The fresh bothum so bright of hew,
Better me were to have letten be,
But it behoved nede me
To doen right as mine herte bad:
For ever the body must be lad
After the herte, in wele and wo,
Of force together they must go.
But never this archer would fine
To shote at me with all his pine,
And for to make me to him mete.
The third arrow he gan to shete,
Whan best his time he might espie,
The which was named Courtesie,
Into mine herte he did avale,
A swoune I fell, both dead and pale,
Long time I lay, and stirred nought,
Till I abraied out of my thought,
And faste than I avised mee
To drawe out the shaft of tree,
But ever the head was left behind
For ought I couthe pull or wind,
So sore it sticked when I was hit,
That by no craft I might it flit,
But anguishous and full of thought,
I felt such wo, my wound aye wrought,
That summoned me alway to go
Toward the rose, that pleased me so,
But I ne durst in no manere
Because the archer was so nere.
For evermore gladly as I rede,
Brent child of fire hath much drede.
And certes yet for all my pein,
Though that I sigh, yet arrowes rein,
And ground quareles sharpe of stele,
Ne for no paine that I might fele,
Yet might I not my selfe withhold
The faire roser to behold,
For Love me yave such hardement
For to fulfill his commaundement,
Upon my feet I rose up than
Feeble, as a forwounded man:
And forth to gone my might I set,
And for the archer nold I let,
Toward the roser fast I drow
But thornes sharpe, mo than ynow
There were, and also thistles thicke,
And breres bymme for to pricke,
That I ne might get grace
The rough thornes for to pace
To seene the roses fresh of hew,
I must abide, though it me rew,
The hedge about so thicke was,
That closed the roses in compas.
But o thing liked me right wele,
I was so nigh, I might fele
Of the bothum the swote odour,
And also see the fresh colour,
And that right greatly liked mee,
That I so nere might it see,
Such joy anon thereof had I,
That I forgat my malady,
To seene I had such delite,
Of sorrow and anger I was all quite,
And of my wounds that I had thore,
For nothing liken me might more,
Than dwellen by the roser aye,
And thence never to passe awaye:
But whan a while I had be thare,
The god of love, which all to share
Mine heart with his arrowes kene,
Casteth him to yeve me woundes grene,
He shot at me full hastely
An arrow named Company,
The whiche takell is full able
To make these ladies merciable,
Than I anone gan chaungen hew
For greevaunce of my wounde new,
That I againe fell in swouning,
And sighed sore in complaining.
Sore I complained that my sore
On me gan greven more and more,

I had none hope of allegiaunce,
So nigh I drow to disperaunce,,
I rought of death, ne of life,
Whether that love would me drife,
If me a martir would he make,
I might his power not forsake:
And while for anger thus I woke,
The god of love an arrow toke,
Full sharpe it was and pugnaunt,
And it was called Faire Semblaunt,
The which in no wise would consent,
That any lover him repent
To serve his love with herte and all,
For any perill that may befall.
But thought his arrow was kene ground,
As any rasour that is found,
To cut and kerve at the point,
The god of love it had annoint
With a precious oyntment,
Somedele to yeve allegement
Upon the woundes that he hade
Through the body in my heart made,
To helpe hir sores, and to cure,
And that they may the bette endure:
But yet this arrow, without more,
Made in mine heart a large sore,
That in full greate paine I abode,
But aye the ointment went abrode
Throughout my woundes large and wide,
It sprede about in every side:
Through whose vertue and whose might,
Mine herte joyfull was and light.
I had ben dead and all to shent
But for the precious ointment:
The shaft I drow out of the arrow,
Rooking for wo right wonder narrow,
But the head, which made me smart,
Left behinde in mine heart
With other fower, I dare well say,
That never woll be take away,
But the ointment halpe me wele,
And yet such sorrow did I fele,
That all day I chaunged hew,
Of my woundes fresh and new,
As men might see in my visage,
The arrowes were so full of rage,
So variaunt of diversitee,
That men in everiche might see
Both great annoy and eke sweetnesse,
And joy meint with bitternesse:
Now were they easie, now were they wood,
In hem I felt both harme and good,
Now sore without alleggement,
Now softing with the ointement,
It softened here, and priked there,
Thus ease and anger together were.

The god of love deliverly
Come lepande to me hastely,
And saied to me in great yape,
"Yeeld thee, for thou may not escape,
May no defence availe thee here:
Therefore I rede make no daungere.
If thou wold yeeld thee hastely,
Thou shalt rather have mercy:
He is a foole in sikernesse,
That with daunger or stoutnesse
Rebelleth there that he should please,
In such folly is little ease.
Be meeke, where thou must needes bowe,
To strive ayen is not thy prowe:
Come at ones, and have ido,
For I woll that it be so,
Then yeeld thee here debonairly."
And I answered full humbly,
"Gladly sir, at your bidding,
I woll me yeeld in all thing:
To your service I woll me take,
For God defend that I should make
Ayen your bidding resistence.
I woll not doen so great offence,
For if I did, it were no skill,
Ye may doe with me what ye will,
Save or spill, and also slo,
Fro you in no wise may I go,
My life, my death, is in your hond,
I may not last out of your bond,
Plaine at your list I yeeld me,
Hoping in heart, that sometime ye
Comfort and ese shull me send:
Or els shortly, this is the end,
Withouten health I mote aye dure,
But if ye take me to your cure:
Comfort or health, how should I have,
Sith ye me hurt, but ye me save?
The health of love mote be found,
Whereas they token first hir wound:
And if ye list of me to make
Your prisoner, I woll it take
Of heart and will fully at gree,
Holy and plaine I yeeld mee
Without feining or fentise,
To be governed by your emprise:
Of you I heare so much prise,
I woll been whole at your devise
For to fulfill your liking
And repent for nothing,
Hoping to have yet in some tide
Mercy, of that I abide:"
And with that covenaunt yeeld I mee,
Anon downe kneeling upon my knee,
Profering for to kisse his fete,
But for nothing he would me lete.
And said, "I love thee both and preise,
Sens that thine answere doth me ese:
For thou answered so curtesly,
For now I wote well utterly,
That thou art gentle by thy speech:
For though a man ferre would seech,
He shuld not finden in certaine,
No such answere of no villaine:
For such a worde ne might nought
Issue out of a villaines thought.
Thou shalt not lesen of thy speche,
For thy helping woll I eche,
And eke encreasen that I may:
But first I woll that thou obay
Fully for thine avauntage
Anone to doe me here homage:
And sithe kisse thou shalt my mouth,
Which to no villaine was never couth
For to approch it, ne for to touch,
For saufe of cherles I ne vouch
That they shall never neigh it nere;
For curteis, and of faire manere,
Well taught, and full of gentlenesse
He must be, that shall me kisse,
And also of full high Fraunchise,
That shall attaine to that emprise.

" And first of o thing warne I thee,
That paine and great adversitee
He mote endure, and eke travaile
That shall me serve, without faile,
But there against thee to comfort,
And with thy service to disport,
Thou maiest full glad and joyfull bee
So good a maister to have as mee,
And lord of so high renoune,
I beare of Love the gonfenoune,
Of curtesie the banere,
For I am of the selfe manere,
Gentle, courteous, meeke and free,
That who ever ententive bee
Me to honour, doute, and serve,
And also that he him observe
Fro trespasse and fro villanie,
And him governe in courtesie,
With will and entention;
For when he first in my prison
Is caught, then must he utterly,
Fro thenceforth full busily,
Cast him gentle for to be,
If he desire helpe of me."
Anon without more delay,
Withouten daunger or affray,
I become his man anone,
And gave him thankes many a one,
And kneled doune with hondes joint,
And made it in my port full queint:
The joy went to my herte rote,
Whan I had kissed his mouth so swote,
I had such mirth and such liking,
It cured me of languishing.
He asked of me than hostages,
" I have," he sayd, " taken fele homages
Of one and other, where I have bene,
Distreined oft, withouten wene,
These felons full of falsite,
Have many sithes beguiled me,
And through hir falshed hir lust atchieved,
Whereof I repent and am agreeved,
And I hem get in my daungere,
Hir falshed shall they bie full dere,
But for I love thee, I say thee plaine,
I woll of thee be more certaine,
For thee sore I woll now binde,
That thou away ne shalt not winde,
For to denien thy covenaunt,
Or done that is not avenaunt,
That thou were false, it were great ruth,
Sith thou seemest so ful of truth."
" Sir, if thee list to understand,
I marvaile thee asking this demaund,
For why or wherefore should ye,
Hostages or borowes aske of me,
Or any other sikernesse,
Sith ye wote in sothfastnesse,
That ye me have surprised so,
And hole mine heart, taken me fro,
That it woll doe for me nothing,
But if it be at your bidding,
Mine herte is yours, and mine right nought
As it behoveth, in deede and thought,
Ready in all to worke your will,
Whether so tourne to good or ill,
So sure it lusteth you to please,
No man thereof may you disease,
Ye have thereon set such justice,
That it is werried in many wise;
And if ye doubt it nolde obaie,
Ye may thereof doe make a kaie,
And hold it with you for hostage."
" Now certes this is none outrage,"
(Quoth Love) " and fully I accord,
For of the bodie he is full lord
That hath the heart in his treasore,
Outrage it were to asken more."

Than of his aumener he drough,
A little keie fetise inough,
Which was of gold polished clere
And sayed to me, " With this keye here,
Thine herte to me now woll I shet,
For all my joyfull looke and knet,
I binde under this little kay,
That no wight may carie away."
This keye is full of great poste,
With which anone he touched me,
Under the side full softely,
That he mine herte sodainely,
Without any had speered,
That yet right nought it hath me deered.
When he had doen his will all out,
And I had put him out of doubt,
" Sir" I sayd, " I have right great will,
Your lust and pleasure to fulfill,
Looke ye my service take at gree,
By thilke fayth ye owe to me,
I say nought for recreaundise,
For I nought doubt of your service.
" But the servaunt travaileth in vaine,
That for to serven doeth his paine
Unto that lord, which in no wise,
Conne him no thanke for his service."

Love sayed, Dismaie thee nought,
Sith thou for succour hast me sought,
In thanke thy service woll I take,
And high of degree woll thee make,
If wickednesse ne hinder thee,
But (as I hope) it shall nought bee,
To worship no wight by aventure,
May come, but he paine endure.
" Abide and suffer thy distresse,
That hurteth now, it shall be lesse.
I wote my selfe what may thee save,
What medicine thou wouldest have.
And if thy truth to me thou keepe,
I shall unto thine helping eke,
To cure thy woundes and make hem clene,
Where so they be old or grene,
Thou shalt be holpen at wordes few,
For certainly thou shalt well shew,
Where that thou servest with good will,
For to accomplishen and fulfill
My commaundements day and night,
Which I to lovers yeve of right."

" Ah sir, for Godes love" (sayd I)
" Er ye passe hence ententifely,
Your commaundements to me say,
And I shall keepe hem if I may,
For hem to keepen is all my thought:
And if so be I wote hem nought,
Than may I unwittingly,
Wherefore I pray you entierly,

With all mine herte, me to lere,
That I trespace in no manere."
The god of love then charged me
Anon, as ye shall here and see,
Word by word, by right emprise,
So as the Romaunt shall devise.
The maister leseth his time to lere,
When the disciple woll not here,
It is but vaine on him to swinke,
That on his learning woll not thinke,
Who so lust love, let him entend,
For now the Romance beginneth to amend.
Now is good to heare in fay,
If any be that can it say,
And point it as the reason is
Set for other gate iwis,
It shall nat well in all thing,
Be brought to good understanding,
For a reader that pointeth ill,
A good sentence may oft spill:
The booke is good at the ending,
Made of newe and lustie thing:
For who so woll the ending here,
The craft of love he shall now lere,
If that he woll so long abide,
Till I this Romaunce maie unhide,
And undoe the signifiaunce
Of this dreame into Romaunce,
The soothfastnesse that now is hid,
Without coverture shall be kid,
When I undoen haue this dreaming,
Wherein no worde is of leasing.

" Villanie at the beginning,
I woll," sayd Love, " over all thing
Thou leave, if thou wolt ne be
False, and trespace ayenst me;
I curse and blame generally
All hem that loven villany,
For villanie maketh villeine
And by his deeds a chorle is seine.
" These villaines arne without pitie,
Friendship, love, and all bountie.
I nill receive unto my servise
Hem that been villaines of emprise.
" But understond in thine entent,
That this is not mine entendement,
To clepe no wight in no ages
Onely gentle for his linages:
But who so is vertuous,
And in his port not outrageous,
When such one thou seest thee beforne,
Though he be not gentle borne,
Thou maiest well seine this in sooth,
That he is gentle, because he doth
As longeth to a gentleman:
Of hem none other deme I can,
For certainly withouten dreede,
A churle is demed by his deede,
Of hye or lowe, as ye may see,
Or of what kinred that he bee.
Ne say nought for none euill will,
Thing that is to holden still,
It is no worship to missaie,
Thou mayest ensample take of Kaie,
That was sometime for missayeng,
Hated both of old and yeng:
As ferre as Gawein the worthie,
Was prayised for his courtesie,
Kaie was hated, for he was fell,
Of word dispitous and cruell;
Wherefore be wise and acqueintable,
Goodly of word, and reasonable:
Both to lesse and eke to mare,
And when thou commest there men are,
Looke that thou haue in custome ay,
First to salue hem if thou may:
And if it fall, that of hem somme
Salue the first, be not domme,
But quite him courtesly anone
Without abiding, ere they gone.
" For nothing eke thy tongue applie
To speake words of ribauldrie,
To villaine speech in no degree
Let neuer thy lippe unbounden bee:
For I nought hold him in good faith
Curteis, that foule wordes saith:
And all women serue and preise,
And to thy power hir honour reise:
And if that any missayere
Despise women, that thou maist here,
Blame him, and bid him hold him still,
And set thy might and all thy will
Women and ladies for to please,
And to doe thing that may hem ease,
That they euer speake good of thee,
For so thou maiest best praised bee.
" Looke fro pride thou keepe thee wele,
For thou maiest both perceiue and feele,
That pride is both folly and sin,
And he that pride hath him within,
Ne may his herte in no wise,
Meken ne souplen to seruice:
For pride is found in euerie part,
Contrarie vnto Loues art:
And he that loueth truely,
Should him conteine iollily,
Without pride in sundrie wise,
And him disguisen in queintise,
For queint array, without drede,
Is nothing proude, who taketh hede,
For fresh array, as men may see,
Without pride may ofte bee.
" Maintaine thy selfe after thy rent,
Of robe and eke of garment,
For many sithe faire clothing
A man amendeth in much thing.
" And looke alway that they be shape,
(What garment that thou shalt make)
Of him that can best do,
With all that partaineth thereto,
Pointes and sleeues be well sittand,
Right and streight on the hand,
Of shone and bootes, new and faire,
Looke at the least you haue a paire,
And that they sit so fetously,
That these rude may vtterly
Maruaile, sith that they sit so plaine,
How they come on or off againe.
Weare streighte gloues with aumere
Of silke: and alway with good chere
Thou yeue, if thou haue richesse,
And if thou haue nought, spend the lesse.
Alway be merry, if thou may,
But waste not thy good alway;
Haue hatte of floures fresh as May,
Chapelet of roses of Witsunday,
For such arrie ne costneth but lite.
Thine hondes wash, thy teeth make white,

And let no filth upon thee bee,
Thy nayles blacke, if thou maiest see,
Uoide it alwaie deliuerly,
And kembe thine head right iollily:
Farce not thy visage in no wise,
For that of loue is nat themprise,
For loue doth haten, as I finde,
A beautie that commeth not of kinde:
Alway in berte I read thee,
Glad and merry for to be,
And be as joyfull as thou can,
Loue hath no ioy of sorrowfull man,
That euill is full of curtesie,
That knoweth in his maladie,
For euer of loue the sickenesse
Is meint with sweete and bitternesse:
The sore of loue is marvailous,
For now the louer is ioyous,
Now can he plaine, now can he grone,
Now can he singen, now maken mone,
To day he plaineth for heauinesse,
To morrow he plaineth for iolynesse:
The life of loue is full contrarie,
Which stoundemeale can oft varie;
But if thou canst mirthes make,
That men in gre woll glady take,
Doe it goodly I command thee,
For men should, wheresoeuer they be,
Doe thing that hem fitting is;
For thereof commeth good loos and pris.
Whereof that thou be vertuous,
Ne be nat straunge ne daungerous:
For if that thou good rider be,
Pricke gladly that men may see;
In armes also if thou conne,
Pursue till thou a name hast wonne:
And if thy voice be faire and clere,
Thou shalt maken no great daungere.
Whan to sing they goodly pray,
It is thy worship for to obay:
Also to you it longeth aye,
To harpe and citterne, daunce and playe,
For if he can well foot and daunce,
It may him greatly doe auaunce,
Emong eke for thy lady sake,
Songes and complaintes that thou make,
For that meuen in her hart,
When they readen of thy smart.
Looke that no man for scarce thee hold,
For that may greeue thee manifold:
Reason woll that a lover be
In his yeftes more large and free
Than churles that been not of louing,
For who thereof can any thing,
He shall be lefe aie for to yeue,
In londes lore who so woll leue,
For he that through a sodain sight,
Or for a kissing anon right,
Yaue hole his heart, in will and thought,
And to himselfe keepeth right nought,
After this swift, it is good reason,
He yeue his good in abandon.

" Now woll I shortly here reherse,
Of that I haue sayd in verse,
All the sentence by and by,
In wordes fewe compendiously,
That thou the better mayest on hem thinke,
Whether so it be thou wake or winke,
For the wordes little greeue,
A man to keepe, when it is breeue.
" Who so with Loue woll gone or ride
He mote be courteous, and voide of pride,
Merry and full of jollite,
And of largesse a losed be.
" First I joyne thee here in penaunce,
That euer without repentaunce,
Thou set thy thought in thy louing
To last without repenting,
And thinke vpon thy mirthes sweet
That shall follow after whan ye meet.
" And for thou true to love shalt be,
I will and commaunde thee,
That in one place thou set all hole
Thine herte, without halfen dole,
For trecherie and sikernesse,
For I loued neuer doublenesse:
To many his herte that woll depart,
Euerich shall haue but little part,
But of him drede I me right nought,
That in one place setteth his thought:
Therefore in o place it set,
And let it neuer thence flet:
For if thou yeuest it in lening,
I bolde it but wretched thing:
Therefore yeue it whole and quite,
And thou shalt haue the more merite.
If it be lent than after sone,
The bountie and the thankes is done,
But in love, free yeuen thing
Requireth a great guerdoning.
" Yeue it in yeft all quite fully,
And make thy gift debonairly:
For men that yeft holde more dere
That yeuen is with gladsome chere.
" That gifte nought to praysen is
That man yeueth maugre his:
Whan thou hast yeuen thine heart (as I
Haue sayd) thee here openly,
Than aduentures shull thee fall,
Which hard and heauie been withall:
For oft when thou bethinkest thee
Of thy louing, where so thou be,
Fro folke thou must depart in hie,
That none perceiue thy maladie,
But hide thine harme thou must alone,
And go forth sole, and make thy mone:
Thou shalt no while be in o state,
But whilom cold and whilom hate,
Now redde as rose, now yellow and fade,
Such sorow I trow thou neuer hade:
Cotidien, ne quarteine,
It is not so full of peine,
For often times it shall fall,
In loue among thy paines all,
That thou thy selfe all holy,
Foryetten shalt so utterly,
That many times thou shalt bee,
Still as an image of tree,
Domme as a stone, without stirring
Of foote or honde, without speaking.
" Than soone after all thy paine,
To memorie shalt thou come againe,
A man abashed wonder sore,
And after sighen more and more:
For wit thou wele withouten wene,
In such a state full oft haue bene,
That haue the euill of loue assaide,
Where through thou art so dismaide,

" After a thought shall take thee so,
That thy loue is too ferre the fro:
Thou shalt say, ' God, what may this be,
That I ne may my ladie see?
Mine heart alone is to her goe,
And I abide all sole in woe,
Departed fro mine owne thought,
And with mine eien se right nought.
" ' Alas mine eyen sene I ne may,
My carefull herte to conuay,
Mine hertes guide, but they be,
I praise nothing what euer they se:
Shall they abide than, nay,
But gone and visiten without delay
That mine heart desireth so
For certainly, but if they go.
" ' A foole my selfe I may well hold,
When I ne se what mine hart wold,
Wherefore I woll gone her to sene,
Or eased shall I neuer bene,
But I have some tokenning.'
" Then goest thou forth without dwelling,
But oft thou faylest of thy desire,
Er thou mayest come her any nere,
And wastest in vaine thy passage:
Than fallest thou in a new rage,
For want of sight thou ginnest murne,
And homeward pensiue thou doest returne:
In great mischiefe than shalt thou bee,
For than againe shall come to thee
Sighes and plaintes with new wo,
That no itching pricketh so:
Who wote it nought, he may goe lere,
Of hem that buyen loue so dere.
" Nothing thine heart appeasen may,
That oft thou wolt gone and assay,
If thou maiest seene by adventure
Thy lives joy, thine heartes cure,
So that by grace, if thou might
Attaine of her to have a sight,
Than shalt thou done none other deed,
But with that sight thine eyen feed:
That faire fresh whan thou mayst see,
Thine herte shall so ravished bee,
That never thou wouldest thy thankes lete
Ne remove, for to see that swete:
The more thou seest in soothfastnesse,
The more thou covetest of that sweetnesse:
The more thine herte brenneth in fire,
The more thine herte is in desire.
For who considereth euerie dele,
It may be likened wonder wele,
The paine of love unto a fere,
For evermore thou neighest nere,
Thought, or who so that it be,
For verie sooth I tell it thee,
The hotter ever shalt thou brenne,
As experience shall thee kenne,
Where so commest in any cost,
Who is next fire he brenneth most:
And yet forsooth for all thine heat,
Though thou for love swelte and sweat,
Ne for no thing thou felen may,
Thou shalt not willen to passe away,
And though thou goe, yet must thou nede,
Thinke all day on her faire hede,
Whome thou beheld with so good will,
And hold thy selfe beguiled ill,
That thou ne hadst ne hardiment,
To shew her ought of thine entent;
Thine herte full sore thou wolt dispise,
And eke repreve of cowardise,
That thou so dull in every thing,
Were dumme for drede, without speaking.
" Thou shalt eke thinke thou didst folly,
That thou were her so faste by,
And durst not a venture thee to say
Some thing er thou came away,
For thou hadest no more wonne,
To speake of her whan thou begonne:
But yet if she would for thy sake,
In armes goodly thee haue take,
It should haue be more worth to thee,
Than of treasour great plente.
" Thus shalt thou mourne and eke complain,
And yet encheson to gone again,
Unto thy walke, or to thy place,
Where thou beheld her fleshly face,
And never for false suspection,
Thou wouldest finde occasion,
For to gone unto her house,
So art thou than desirouse,
A sight of her for to have,
If thou thine honour mightest save,
Or any errand mightest make
Thider, for thy loves sake:
Full faine thou wouldest, but for dreede
Thou goest not, least that men take heede,
Wherefore I read in thy going,
And also in thine againe coming,
Thou be well ware that men ne wit,
Feine thee other cause than it,
To goe that way, or fast bie,
To heale well is no follie:
And if so be it happe thee,
That thou thy love there mayst see,
In siker wise thou her salewe,
Wherewith thy colour woll transmeve,
And eke thy blood shall all to quake,
Thy hewe eke chaungen for her sake,
But word and wit, with chere full pale
Shall want for to tell thy tale,
And if thou mayest so ferre forth winne,
That thou reason durst beginne,
And wouldest saine three things or me,
Thou shalt full scarcely saine the two,
Though thou bethinke thee never so wele,
Thou shalt foryete yet somedele.

" But if thou deale with trechery,
For false lovers mowe all fouly
Sain what hem lust withouten dred,
They be so double in hir falshed,
For they in herte can thinke o thing
And saine another, in hir speaking,
And when thy speech is ended all,
Right thus to thee it shall befall:
If any word than come to minde,
That thou to say hast left behinde,
Than thou shalt brenne in great martire,
For thou shalt brenne as any fire,
This is the strife and eke the affraie,
And the battaile that lasteth aie:
This bargaine end may never take,
But if that she thy peace will make.
" And whan the night is commen anon,
A thousand angres shall come upon,
To bed as fast thou wolt thee dight,
There thou shalt have but small delight,

For whan thou wenest for to sleepe,
So full of paine shalt thou creepe,
Stert in thy bed about full wide,
And turne full oft on everie side:
Now downeward groffe, and now upright,
And wallow in woe the longe night,
Thine armes shalt thou sprede a brede,
As man in warre were forwerede.
Than shalt the come a remembraunce
Of her shape and her semblaunce,
Whereto none other may be pere,
And wete thou well without were,
That thee shall see sometime that night,
That thou hast her, that is so bright,
Naked betweene thine armes there,
All soothfastnesse as though it were;
Thou shalt make castles than in Spaine,
And dreame of joy, all but in vaine,
And thee delighten of right nought,
While thou so slumbrest in that thought,
That is so sweete and delitable,
The which in sooth nis but a fable,
For it ne shall no while last;
Than shalt thou sigh and weepe fast,
And say, "Deere God, what thing is this,
My dreame is turned all amis,
Which was full sweet and apparent:
But now I wake it is all shent,
Now yede this merry thought away,
Twentie times upon a day
I would this thought would come againe,
For it alleggeth well my paine,
It maketh me full of joyfull thought,
It sleeth me that it lasteth nought.
Ah Lord, why nill ye me succour?
The joy I trow that I langour,
The death I would me shoulde slo,
While I lye in her armes two,
Mine harme is hard withouten wene,
My great unease full oft I mene.

"But woulde Love do so I might
Have fully joy of her so bright,
My paine were quit me richely,
Alas too great a thing aske I:
It is but folly, and wrong wening,
To aske so outragious a thing,
And who so asketh follily,
He mote be warned hastely,
And I ne wore what I may say,
I am so ferre out of the way,
For I would have full great liking,
And full great joy of lasse thing,
For would she of her gentlenesse,
Withouten more, me ones kesse,
It were to me a great guerdon,
Release of all my passion:
But it is hard to come thereto,
All is but folly that I do,
So high I have mine herte set,
Where I may no comfort get,
I wote not where I say well or nought,
But this I wote well in my thought,
That it were bette of her alone
For to flint my woe and mone:
A looke on her I cast goodly,
That for to have all utterly,
Of another all hole the play.
Ah Lord, where I shall bide the day
That ever she shall my ladie be,
He is full cured, that may her see.
Ah God, when shall the dawning spring,
To leggen thus as an angrie thing,
I have no joy thus here to ly,
When that my love is not me by:
A man to lyen hath great disease,
Which may not sleepe ne rest in ease,
I would it dawed, and were now day,
And that the night were went away,
For were it day, I would up rise,
Ah slowe Sunne, shew thine enprise,
Speede thee to spread thy beames bright,
And chase the darknesse of the night,
To put away the stoundes strong,
Which in me lasten all too long.'

"The night shalt thou continue so,
Without rest, in paine and wo,
If ever thou knew of love distresse,
Thou shalt mowe learne in that sicknesse,
And thus enduring shalt thou lye
And rise on morow up earlye,
Out of thy bed, and harneis thee
Er ever dawning thou maiest see:
All privily than shalt thou gone,
What whider it be, thy selfe alone,
For raine, or haile, for snow, for slete,
Theder she dwelleth that is so swete,
The which may fall a sleepe bee,
And thinketh but little upon thee.
Than shalt thou goe, full foule aferde,
Looke if the gate be unsperde,
And waite without in woe and paine,
Full evill a cold in mind and raine:
Than shalt thou goe the dore before,
If thou mayest finde any shore,
Or hole, or reft, what ever it were,
Than shalt thou stoupe, and lay to eare
If they within a sleepe be,
I meane all save thy ladie free,
Whom waking if thou mayest aspie,
Goe put thy selfe in jeopardie,
To aske grace, and thee bimene,
That she may wete without wene,
That thou all night no rest hast had,
So sore for her thou were bestad.

"Women well ought pitie to take
Of hem that sorrowen for hir sake.
And looke for love of that relike,
That thou thinke none other like,
For whan thou hast so great anney,
Shall kisse thee er thou goe awey,
And hold that in full great deinte,
And for that no man shall thee see
Before the house, ne in the way,
Looke thou be gon againe er day.
Suche comming, and such going,
Such heavinesse, and such walking,
Maketh lovers withouten wene,
Under hir clothes pale and lene,
For Love leaveth colour ne clearnesse,
Who loveth trew hath no fatnesse,
Thou shalt well by thy selfe see
That thou must needs assaied bee:
For men that shape hem other way
Falsely hir ladies to betray,
It is no wonder though they be fatte,
With false othes her loves they gatte,
For oft I see such losengeours
Fatter than abbots or priours.

" Yet with o thing I thee charge,
That is to say, that thou be large
Unto the maid, that her doth serve,
So best her thanke thou shalt deserve.
Yeue her giftes, and get her grace,
For so thou may thanke purchace,
That she thee worthy hold and free,
Thy ladie, and all that may thee see.
Also her servaunts worship aie,
And please as muche as thou maie,
Great good through hem may come to thee,
Because with her they been prive:
They shall her tell how they thee fand
Curteous and wise, and well doand,
And she shall preise well thee more.
Looke out of lond thou be not fore,
And if such cause thou have, that thee
Behoveth to gone out of countree,
Leave hole thine herte in hostage,
Till thou againe make thy passage,
Thinke long to see the swete thing
That hath thine heart in her keeping.
" Now have I told thee, in what wise
A lover shall doe me servise,
Do it than, if thou wolte haue
The mede that thou after craue."

When Loue all this had boden me,
I said him: " Sir how may it be
That louers may in such manere,
Endure the paine ye haue sayd here?
I marualle me wonder fast,
How any man may liue or last
In suche paine, and such brenning,
In sorrow and thought, and such sighing,
Aie unreleased woe to make,
Whether so it be they sleepe or wake,
In such annoy continually,
As helpe me God this marualle I
How man, but he were made of steele,
Might liue a moneth, such pains to feele."

The god of loue then sayd me,
" Friend, bye the faith I owe to thee,
May no man haue good, but he it buy:
A man loueth more tenderly
The thing that he hath bought most dere.
For wete thou well without were,
In thanke that thing is taken more,
For which a man hath suffred sore:
Certes no woe ne may attaine,
Unto the sore of loves paine,
None euill thereto ne may amount,
No more than a man count
The drops that of the water bee:
For drie as well the grete see
Thou mightest, as the harmes tell
Of hem that with Loue dwell
In seruice, for paine hem sleeth,
And that eche would flee the death
And trowe they should neuer escape,
Nere that hope couth hem make,
Glad as man in prison sete,
And may not getten for to ete
But barly bread, and water pure,
And lyeth in vermin and in ordure,
With all this yet can he liue,
Good hope such comfort hath him yeue,
Which maketh wene that he shall be
Deliuered and come to libertie,
In fortune is full trust,
Though he lye in straw or dust,
In hope is all his sustaining:
And so faire louers in her wening,
Which loue hath set in his prison
Good hope is her saluation:
Good hope (how sore that they smart)
Yeueth hem both will and hart
To profer her body to martire,
For hope so sore doth hem desire
To suffer each harme that men deuise,
For joy that afterward shall arise.

Hope in desire catch victorie,
In hope of loue is all the glorie,
For hope is all that loue may yeue,
Nere hope, there should no lenger liue.
Blessed be hope, which with desire,
Auaunceth louers in such manire.
Good hope is curteis for to please,
To keepe louers from all disease.
Hope keepeth his lond, and woll abide,
For any perill that may betide,
For hope to louers, as most chiefe,
Doth hem endure all mischiefe,
Hope is hir helpe whan mister is.
And I shall yeue thee eke iwis,
Three other thinges, that great sollace
Doth to hem that be in my lace.
" The firste good that may be found,
To hem that in my lace be bound,
Is swete thought, for to record
Thing wherewith thou canst accord
Best in thine herte, where she be,
Thinking in absence is good to thee.
Whan any louer doth complaine,
And liueth in distresse and in paine
Than swete thought shall come as bliue,
Away his anger for to driue,
It maketh louers to haue remembraunce
Of comfort, and of high pleasaunce,
That hope hath hight him for to winne,
For thought anone than shall beginne,
As farre God wote as he can finde,
To make a mirrour of his minde,
For to behold he woll not let,
Her person he shall afore him set,
Her laughing eyen persaunt and clere,
Her shape, her form, her goodly chere,
Her mouth that is so gracious,
So swete, and eke so sauourous,
Of all her foiters he shall take heed,
His eyen with all her limmes feed.
Thus swete thinking shall aswage
The paine of louers, and hir rage,
Thy joy shall double without gesse
Whan thou thinkest on her seemelinesse,
Or of her laughing, or of her chere
That to thee made thy lady dere,
This comfort woll I that thou take,
And if the next thou wolt forsake
Which is not lesse sauerous,
Thou shouldest not ben too daungerous.

" The second shall be swete speech,
That hath to many one be leech,

To bring hem out of woe and were,
And helpe many a bachelere,
And many a ladie sent succour,
That haue loued paramour,
Through speaking, whan they might heare,
Of hir louers to hem so deare:
To me it voideth all hir smart,
The which is closed in hir hart.
In heart it maketh hem glad and light,
Speech, whan they mowe have sight.
And therefore now it commeth to mind,
In olde dawes as I find,
That clerkes written that her knew,
There was a ladie fresh of hew,
Which of her love made a song,
On him for to remember among,
In which she sayd, 'Whan that I heare
Speaken of him that is so deare,
To me it voideth all smart,
Iwis he sitteth so nere mine hart,
To speake of him at eve or morrow,
It cureth me of all my sorrow,
To me is none so high pleasaunce
As of his person daliaunce:'
She wist full well that sweet speaking
Comforteth in full muche thing,
Her love she had full well assaide,
Of him she was full well apaide,
To speake of him her joy was set.
Therefore I read thee that thou get
A fellow that can well counsele,
And keepe thy counsaile, and welhele
To whom goe shew wholly thine hart
Both well and woe, joy and smart:
To get comfort to him thou go,
And priuely between you two,
Ye shall speake of that goodly thing,
That hath thine heart in her keeping,
Of her beaute and her semblaunce,
And of her goodly countenaunce,
Of all thy state, thou shalt him say,
And aske him counsaile how thou may,
Do any thing that may her please,
For it to thee shall doe great ease,
That he may wete thou trust him so,
Both of thy wele and of thy wo.
And if his heart to loue be set,
His companie is much the bet,
For reason woll he shew to thee
All utterly his priuite,
And what she is he loueth so
To thee plainly he shall vndo,
Without drede of any shame,
Both tell her renome and her name.
Than shall he further farre and nere,
And namely to thy ladie dere
In siker wise, ye euery other,
Shall helpen as his owne bgother,
In trouthe without doublenesse,
And keepen close in sikernesse:
For it is noble thing in fay,
To haue a man thou darste say
Thy priuie counsaile euerie dele,
For that woll comfort thee right wele,
And thou shalt hold thee well apaide,
When such a friend thou hast assaide.

"The thirde good of great comfort
That yeueth to louers most disport,
Commeth of sight and beholding,
The cleped is swete looking,
The whiche may none ease do,
Whan thou art ferre thy ladie fro,
Wherefore thou prese alway to be
In place, where thou mayest her see:
For it is thing most amerous
Most delectable and fauerous,
For to asswage a mannes sorrow
To seen his ladie by the morrow,
For it is a full noble thing
Whan thine eyen have meeting,
With that relike precious,
Whereof they be so desirous.
But all day after sooth it is,
They have no drede to faren amis,
They dreden neither winde ne raine,
Ne none other manner paine:
For when thine eyen were thus in blisse,
Yet of her courtesie iwisse
Alone they cannot haue hir joy,
But to the herte they conuoy
Part of hir blisse, to him thou send,
Of all this harme to make an end.
"The eye is a good messenger,
Which can to the heart in such manner
Tidinges sende, that hath sene
To voide him of his paines clene:
Whereof the heart rejoyseth so
That a great partie of his wo
Is voided, and put away to flight.
Right as the darkenesse of the night
Is chased with clerenesse of the moone,
Right so is all his woe full soone
Deuoided cleane, whan that the sight
Beholden may that fresh wight
That the herte desireth so,
That all his darknesse is ago,
For than the herte is all at ease,
Whan they seen that may hem please.
Now haue I declared thee all out,
Of that thou were in dread and dout,
For I haue told thee faithfully,
What thee may curen utterly,
And all louers that woll be
Faithfull, and full of stabilite,
Good hope alway keepe by thy side,
And sweet thought make eke abide,
Sweet looking and sweet spech
Of all thine harmes they shall be lech,
Of euerie thou shalt haue great pleasaunce,
If thou canst bide in suffraunce,
And serue well without fantise,
Thou shalt be quite of thine emprise
With more guerdoun, if that thou liue,
But all this time this I thee yeue.

The god of love, whan all the day
Had taught me, as ye haue heard say,
And enformed compendously,
He vanished away all sodainly,
And I alone left all soole,
So full of complaint and of doole,
For I saw no man there me by.
My woundes me greened wondersly,
Me for to curen nothing I knewe,
Saue the bothum bright of hewe,
Whereon was sette holly my thought,
Of other comfort knew I nought,

But it were through the God of Loue,
I knew nat else to my behoue
That might me ease or comfort gette,
But if he would him entermette.
The roser was withouten dout
Closed with an hedge without,
As ye toforne haue heard me saine,
And fast I besied, and would faine
Haue passed the haie, if I might
Haue getten in by any sleight
Unto the bothum so faire to see,
But euer I dradde blamed to bee,
If men would haue suspection
That I would of entention
Haue stole the roses that there were,
Therefore to enter I was in fere.
But at the last, as I bethought
Whether I should passe or nought,
I sawe come with a glad chere
To me, a lusty bachelere,
Of good stature and of good height,
And Bialacoil forsooth he height:
Sonne he was to Curtesie,
And he me graunted full gladly,
The passage of the vtter hay,
And sayd: "Sir, how that you may
Passe, if your will bee
The freshe roser for to see:
And ye the swete savour fele,
Your warrans may right wele,
So thou thee keepe fro folly,
Shall no man doe thee villany,
If I may helpe you in ought,
I shall not faine, dredeth nought,
For I am bound to your seruise,
Fully denoid of feintise."
Than vnto Bialacoil sayd I,
"I thanke you sir full hartely,
And your behest take at gree,
That ye so goodly profer mee,
To you it commeth of great fraunchise,
That ye me profer your seruise."
Thanr after full deliuerly,
Through the breres anon went I,
Whereof encombred was the haie,
I was well pleased, the soth to saie,
To se the bothum faire and swote,
So freshe sprong out of the rote.

And Bialacoil me serued wele,
Whan I so nigh me might fele
Of the bothum the sweet odour,
And so lusty hewed of colour:
But than a churle, foule him betide,
Beside the roses gan him hide,
To keepe the roses of that rosere,
Of whom the name was Daungere:
This churle was hid there in the greues,
Couered with grasse and with leues,
To spie and take whom that he fond
Unto that roser put an hond.
He was not soole, for there was mo,
For with him were other two
Of wicked manners, and euill fame,
That one was cleped by his name,
Wicked Tongue, God yeve him sorrow,
For neither at eue ne at morrow,
He can of no man good speake,
On many a iust man doth he wreake.

There was a woman that eke hight
Shame, that who can reckon right,
Trespasse was her fathers name,
Her mother Reason, and thus was Shame
Brought of these ilke two:
And yet had Trespasse neuer ado
With Reason, ne neuer leie her by,
He was hidous and so vgly,
I meane this that Trespasse hight,
But Reason conceiueth of a sight,
Shame of that I spake aforne.
And whan that Shame was thus borne,
It was ordained, that Chastite,
Should of the roser ladie be:
Which of the bothums more and las,
With sundrie folkes assailed was,
That she ne wiste what to do,
For Venus her assaileth so,
That night and day for her she stall
Bothoms and roses our all.
To Reason than prayeth Chastite,
Whom Venus hath flemed ouer the see,
That she her daughter would her lene,
To keepe the roser fresh and grene.
Anon Reason to Chastite
Is fully assented that it be,
And graunted her at her request,
That Shame, because she is honest,
Shall keeper of the roser be:
And thus to keepe it, there were three,
That none should hardy be ne bold,
(Were ye young or were he old)
Againe her will away to bare
Bothoms ne roses, that there were.
I had well sped, had I nat been
Awaited with these three, and seen:
For Bialacoil, that was so faire,
So gracious and debonaire,
Quitte him to me full courteously,
And me to please badde that I,
Should drawe to the bothom nere,
Prese in to touche the rosere
Which bare the roses, he yave me leue,
This graunt ne might but little greue:
And for he saw it liked me,
Right nigh the bothom pulled he
A leafe all grene, and yave me that
The which full nigh the bothom sat.
I made of that leafe full queint,
And whan I felt I was acqueint
With Bialacoil, and so priue,
I wende all my will had be.
Than wext I hardy for to tell
To Bialacoil how me befell,
Of loue, that tooke and wounded me,
And sayd: "Sir, so mote I thee,
I may no joy haue in no wise,
Upon no side, but it arise,
For sithe (if I shall not faine)
In herte I haue had so great paine,
So great annoy, and such affraie,
That I ne wotte what I shall saie,
I drede your wrothe to deserue,
Leuer me were, that kniues kerue
My bodie should in peces small,
Than in any wise it should fall,
That ye wrothed should been with me."
"Say boldely thy will" (quod he)
"I nill be wroth if that I may,
For nought that thou shalt to me say."

Than sayd I, "Sir, not you displese,
To knowen of my great uncase,
In which only loue hath me brought,
For paines great, disease and thought,
Fro day to day it doth me drie,
Supposeth not, sir, that I lie;
In me fiue woundes did he make,
The sore of which shall neuer slake,
But ye the bothom graunt me,
Which is most passaunt of beaute,
My life, my death, and my martire,
And treasour that I most desire."
Than Bialacoil affraied all
Sayd "Sir, it may not fall,
That ye desire it may not arise,
What would ye shend me in this wise:
A mokell foole than I were,
If I suffred you away to beare
The fresh bothom, so faire of sight,
For it were neither skill ne right,
Of the roser ye broke the rinde,
Or take the rose aforne his kinde;
Ye are not courteous to aske it,
Let it still on the roser sit,
And let it grow till it amended be,
And perfectly come to beaute,
I nolde not that it pulled were,
Fro the roser that it bere,
To me it is so lefe and dere."
With that anon start out Daungere,
Out of the place where he was hidde,
His malice in his chere was kidde:
Full great he was and blacke of hewe,
Sturdy, and hidous, who so him knewe,
Like sharpe vrchons his haire was grow,
His eyes red sparkling as the fire glow,
His nose frounced full kirked stood,
He come criand as he were wood,
And sayd, "Bialacoil, tell me why
Thou bringest hider so boldely
Him that so nigh the rosere,
Thou worchest in a wrong manere,
He thinketh to dishonour thee,
Thou art well worthy to haue maugre,
To let him of the rosere witte,
Who serueth a felon is euill quitte:
"Thou wouldest have done great bounte,
And he with shame would quite thee,
Flye hence, fellow, I rede thee go,
It wanteth little he woll thee slo,
For Bialacoil ne knew thee nought,
Whan thee to serue he set his thought,
For thou wolt shame him if thou might,
Both againe reson and right,
I woll no more in thee affie,
That commest so slightly for tespie:
For it prooueth wonder wele,
Thy sleight and treason euerie dele."
I durst no more make there abode,
For the churle he was so wode,
So gan he threat and manace,
And through the haie he did me chace,
For feare of him I trembled and quoke,
So churlish his head he shoke,
And sayd, if eft he might me take,
I should not from his hands scape.
Than Bialacoil is fled and mate,
And I all soole and disconsolate,
Was left alone in paine and thought,
Fro shame to death I was nigh brought.
Than thought on my high folly,
How that my bodie vtterly,
Was yeue to paine and martire,
And thereto had I so great desire,
That I ne durst the haies passe,
There was no hope, there was no grace,
I trow neuer man wist of paine,
But he were laced in Loues chaine,
Ne no man, and sooth it is,
But if he loue, what anger is.
Loue holdeth his hest to me right wele,
Whan paine (he sayd) I should fele,
No herte may thinke, no tongue saine,
A quarter of my woe and paine,
I might not with the anger last,
Mine heart in point was for to brast,
Whan I thought on the rose, that so,
Was through Daunger cast me fro,
A long while stoode I in that state,
Till that me sawe so madde and mate,
The ladie of the high ward,
Which from her tower looked thiderward.
Reason, men clepe that lady,
Which from her tower deliuerly,
Come downe to me without more.
But she was neither young, ne hore,
Ne high ne low, ne fat ne leane,
But best, as it were in a meane:
Her eyen two were clere and light
As any candle that brenneth bright,
And on her head she had a croune,
Her seemed well an high persoune:
For round enuiron her crounet
Was full of riche stones fret.
Her goodly semblaunt by deuise,
I trow was made in Paradise,
For nature had neuer such a grace,
To forge a worke of such compace:
For certain, but if the letter lye,
God him selfe, that is so hye,
Made her after his image,
And yafe her sith such auantage,
That she hath might and seignory
To keepe men from all folly,
Who so woll trowe her lore,
Ne may offenden neuermore.
And while I stoode this darke and pale,
Reason began to me her tale,
She saied: "Alhaile my sweete frend,
Folly and childhood woll thee shend,
Which thee haue put in great affraie,
Thou hast bought dere time of Maie,
That made thine herte merrie to be;
In euill time thou wentest to see
The gardin, whereof Idlenesse
Bare the key and was maistresse
Whan thou yedest in the daunce
With her, and had acquaintaunce:
Her acquaintance is perillous,
First soft, and after noyous,
She hath thee trashed without wene,
The god of loue had thee not sene,
Ne had Idlenesse thee conuaid
In the verge where Mirth him pleid,
If Folly haue surprised thee,
Do so that it recouered be,
And be well ware to take no more
Counsaile, that greeneth after sore:
He is wise, that woll himselfe chastise.
And though a young man in any wise

Trespasse emong, and do follie,
Let him nat tarie, but hastelie
Let him amend what so be mis,
And eke I counsaile thee iwis,
The god of love holly foryete,
That hath thee in such paine sete,
And thee in herte tormenteth so,
I cannot seen how thou maist go
Other waies thee to garisoun,
For Daunger, that is so foloun,
Fellie purposeth thee to werreie,
Which is full cruell the sooth to scie.

" And yet of Daunger cometh no blame,
In reward of my daughter Shame,
Which hath the roses in her ward,
As she that may be no musard,
And Wicked Tongue is with these two,
That suffreth no man thider goe,
For er a thing be doe he shall,
Where that he commeth over all,
In fortie places, if it be sought,
Saie thing that never was done ne wrought,
So much treason is in his male,
Of falsenesse for to faine a tale:
Thou dealest with angrie folke iwis,
Wherefore to thee better is,
From these folke away to fare,
For they woll make thee live in care;
This is the evill that love they call,
Wherein there is but folly all,
For love is folly everie dell;
Who loveth, in no wise may do well,
Ne set his thought on no good werke,
His schoole he leseth, if he be a clerke,
Or other craft eke, if that he be,
He shall not thrive therein, for he
In love shall have more passioun,
Than monke, hermite, or chanoun:
This paine is heard out of measure,
The joy may eke no while endure,
And in the possession,
Is much tribulation,
The joye it is so short and lasting,
And but in hap is the getting;
For I see there many in travaile,
That at last foule faile,
I was nothing thy counsailer,
Whan thou were made the homager
Of god of love so hastely:
Where was no wisedome but folly,
Thine herte was jolly, but not sage,
Whan thou were brought in such a rage,
To yelde thee so readyly,
And to Love of his great maistrie.

" I rede thee Love away to drive,
That maketh the retch not of thy live,
The folly more fro day to day
Shall growe, but thou it put away;
Take with thy teeth the bridle fast,
To daunt thy herte, and eke the cast
If that thou mayest, to get the defence
For to redresse thy first offence.
Who so his herte alway woll leve,
Shall finde emong that shall him greve."
Whan I heard her thus me chastise,
I answeard in full angrie wise,
I prayed her cesse of her speach,
Either to chastise me or teach,
To bidde me my thought refrein,
Which Love hath caught in his demein!
" What wene ye Love woll consent,
(That me assaieth with bowe bent)
To draw mine herte out of his hond,
Which is so quiekly in his bond?
That ye counsaile, may never bee,
For whan he first arested mee,
He tooke mine herte so sore him till,
That it is nothing at my will,
He tought it so him for to obey,
That he it sparred with a key.
I pray you let me be all still,
For ye may well, if that ye will,
Your wordes wast in idlenesse,
For utterly withouten gesse,
All that ye sain is but in vaine,
Me were lever die in the paine,
Than Love to me ward should arette,
Falshed or treason on me sette,
I woll me get pris or blame,
And love true to save my name,
Who that me chastiseth, I him hate."
With that word, Reason went her gate,
Whan she saw for no sermoning
She might me fro my folly bring.
Than dismayed I left all soole,
Forwearie, forwandred as a foole,
For I ne knew ne cherisaunce.
Than fell into my remembraunce,
How Love bad me to purvey
A fellow, to whome I might sey
My counsaile and my privite,
For that should much auaile me.
With that bethought I me, that I
Had a fellowe faste by,
True and siker, courteous, and hend,
And he called was by name a frend,
A truer fellowe was no where none,
In hast to him I went anone,
And to him all my woe I told,
Fro him right nought I would withhold,
I told him all without were,
And made my complaint on Daungere,
How for to sey he was hidous,
And to me ward contrarious,
The whiche through his cruelte,
Was in point to have meimed me,
With Bialacoil whan he me sey
Within the gardin walke and pley,
Fro me he made him for to goe,
And I be left alone in woe:
I durst no longer with him speake,
For Daunger sayd he would be wreake,
Whan that he sawe how I went,
The freshe bothum for to hent,
If I were hardie to come nere,
Betweene the haie and the rosere,
This frend when he wist of my thought,
He discomforted me right nought,
But saied, " Fellow, be nat so madde,
Ne so abashed nor bestadde,
My selfe I know full well Daungere,
And how he is fierce of chere,
At prime temps, Love to manace,
Full oft I have beene in his case;
A felon first though that he be,
After thou shalt him souple see;

Of long passed I knew him wele,
Ungodly first though men him fele,
He woll meeke after in his bering
Been, for seruice and obeissing:
I shall thee tell what thou shalt do:
Meekely I rede thou go him to,
Of herte pray him specially
Of thy trespace to haue mercy,
And hote him well here to please,
That thou shalt neuer more him displease:
Who can best serue of flattery,
Shall please Daunger vtterly."
My friend hath saied to me so wele,
That he me eased hath somedele,
And eke ailegged of my tourment,
For through him had I hardement
Againe to Daunger for to go,
To preue if I might meeke him so.

To Daunger came I all ashamed,
The which aforne me had blamed,
Desiring for to pease my wo,
But ouer hedge durst I not go,
For he forbode me the passage:
I found him cruell in his rage,
And in his hond a great bourdoun,
To him I kneeled low adoun,
Full meeke of port, and simple of chere,
And saied, " Sir, I am comen here
Onely to aske of you mercy,
It greeueth me full greatly
That euer my life I wrathed you,
But for to amend I am come now,
With all my might, both loud and still,
To doen right at your owne will,
For Loue made me for to do
That I haue trespassed hiderto,
Fro whom I ne may withdraw mine herte,
Yet shall I neuer for ioy ne smart
(What so befall good or ill)
Offende more againe your will,
Leuer I haue endure disease,
Than doe that should you displease.

" I you require, and pray that ye
Of me haue mercy and pite,
To stint your ire that greueth so,
That I woll sweare for euermo
To be redressed at your liking
If I trespace in any thing,
Saue that (I pray thee) graunt me
A thing, that may nat warned be,
That I may loue all onely,
None other thing of you aske I:
I shall doen all ywis,
If of your grace ye graunt me this,
And ye may not letten mee,
For well wote ye that loue is free:
And I shall louen such that I will,
Whoever like it well or ill:
And yet ne would I not for all Fraunce
Doe thing to doe you displeasaunce."
Than daunger fell in his entent
For to foryeue his male talent,
But all his wrathe yet at last
He hath released, I praide so fast:
" Shortly" (he saied) " thy request
Is not too mockell dishonest,
Ne I woll not werne it thee,
For yet nothing engreeueth mee:
For though thou loue thus euermore,
To me is neither soft ne sore:
Loue where that thee list, what retcheth me,
So ferre fro my roses be:
Trust not on me for none assaie,
In any time fo passe the haie."
Thus hath he graunted my prayere,
Than went I forth withouten were
Unto my frend, and told him all,
Which was right ioyfull of my tale,
(He saied) " Now goeth well thine affaire,
He shall to thee be debonaire,
Though he aforne was dispiteous,
He shall hereafter be gracious:
If he were touched on some good veine,
He should yet rewen on thy peine,
Suffer I rede, and no boast make,
Till thou at good mes maist him take."
By suffraunce, and by wordes soft,
A man may ouercome oft
Him that aforne he had in drede,
In bookes soothly as I rede.
Thus hath my friend with great comfort
Anaunced me with high disport,
Which would me good, as much as I:
And than anon full sodainely
I tooke my leave, and streight I went
Unto the hay, for great talent
I had to seene the fresh bothom,
Wherein lay my saluation,
And Daunger tooke keepe, if that I
Keepe him couenaunt truely;
So sore I dread his manasing,
I durst not breake his bidding,
For least that I were of him shent,
I brake not his commaundement,
For to purchase his good will,
It was for to come there till,
His mercy was too ferre behind
I kept, for I ne might it find.
I complained and sighed sore,
And languished euermore,
For I durst nat ouergo,
Unto the rose I loued so,
Throughout my deming vtterly,
That he had knowledge certainly:
Than Loue me ladde in such wise,
That in me there was no feintise,
Falshood, ne no trecherie:
And yet he full of villanie,
Of disdaine, and crueltie,
On me ne would haue pitie
His cruell will for to refraine,
Tho I wept alway, and me complaine.

And while I was in this turment,
Were come of grace, by God sent,
Fraunchise, and with her Pity,
Fulfilde the bothum of bounty:
They go to Daunger anon right
To ferther me with all hir might,
And helpe in worde and in deed,
For well they saw that it was need.
First of her grace dame Fraunchise
Hath taken of this emprise:
She saied, " Daunger great wrong ye do
To worche this man so much wo,

Or pinen him so angerly,
It is to you great villany:
I cannot see why ne how
That he hath trespassed againe you,
Saue that he loveth, wherfore ye shold
The more in charitie of him hold:
The force of love maketh him do this,
Who would him blame he did amis.
He leueth more than he may do,
His paine is hard, ye may see lo:
And love in no wise would consent
That ye haue power to repent,
For though that quicke ye would him slo,
Fro love his herte may nat go.
" Now swete sir, it is your ease
Him for to anger or disease.
Alas, what may it you auaunce
To doen to him so great greuaunce?
What worship is it againe him take,
Or on your man a werre make,
Sith he so lowly euery wise
Is ready, as ye lust deuise?
If Love have caught him in his laas,
You for to beie in euery caas,
And been your subject at your will,
Should ye therefore willen him ill?
Ye shuld him spare more all out,
Than him that is both proud and stout:
Courtesie would that ye succoure
Hem that been meeke vnder your cure:
His herte is hard that woll not meeke,
Whan men of meekenesse him beseeke."

" This is certaine," saied Pitie,
" We see oft that humilitie,
Both ire, and also felonie
Uenquisheth, and also malancholie,
To stonde forth in such duresse
This crueltie and wickednesse:
Wherefore I pray you, sir Daungere,
For to maintaine no lenger here
Such cruell warre againe your man,
As wholly yours as euer he can,
Nor that ye worchen no more wo
Upon this caitife that languisheth so,
Which woll no more to you trespace,
But put him wholly in your grace:
His offence ne was but lite,
The god of love it was to wite,
That he your thrall so greatly is,
And if ye hanne him ye doen amis,
For he hath had full hard pennaunce,
Sith that ye reft him thaquaintaunce
Of Bialacoil, his most joy,
Which all his paines might acoy:
He was before annoyed sore,
But than ye doubled him well more,
For he of blisse hath been full bare,
Sith Bialacoil was fro him fare:
Love hath to him great distresse,
He hath no need of more duresse:
Uoideth from him your ire I rede,
Ye may not winnen in this dede,
Maketh Bialacoil repaire againe,
And haveth pitie vpon his paine,
For Fraunchise woll, and I Pite,
That mercifull to him ye be,
And sith that she and I accorde,
Have vpon him misericorde,
For I you pray, and eke moneste,
Nought to refusen our requeste:
For he is hard and fell of thought,
That for vs two woll doe right nought."
Daunger ne might no more endure,
He meeked him vnto measure.
" I woll in no wise," saieth Daungere,
" Denie that ye have asked here:
It were too great vncourtesie,
I woll ye have the companie
Of Bialacoil, as ye deuise,
I woll him let in no wise."
To Bialacoil than went in hie,
Fraunchise, and saied full curteslie:
" Ye have too long be deignous
Unto this lover, and daungerous
Fro him to withdraw your presence,
Which hath do to him great offence,
That ye not would vpon him see,
Wherefore a sorrowfull man is hee:
Shape ye to pay him, and to please,
Of my love if ye woll have ease,
Fulfill his will, sith that ye know
Daunger is daunted and brought low
Through helpe of me and of Pite
You dare no more aferde be."
" I shall doe right as ye will"
Saieth Bialacoil, " for it is skill,
Sith Daunger woll that it so be:"
Than fraunchise hath him sent to me.

Bialacoil at the beginning
Salued me in his comming,
No straungenesse was in him seene,
No more than ne had wrathed been,
As faire semblaunt than shewed he me,
And goodly, as aforne did he,
And by the honde without dout,
Within the haie right all about,
He lad me with right good chere,
All enuiron the vergere,
That Daungere had me chased fro:
Now have I leave ouer all to go,
Now am I raised at my deuise
Fro Hell vnto Paradise.
Thus Bialacoil of gentlenesse
With all his paine and businesse,
Hath shewed me onely of grace
The efters of the swote place.
I saw the rose when I was nigh,
Was greater woxen, and more high,
Freshe, roddy, and faire of hew,
Of colour euer iliche new:
And whan I had it long seene,
I saw that through the leaues greene
The rose spread to spannishing,
To seene it was a goodly thing,
But it ne was so sprede on brede,
That men within might know the sede,
For it couert was and close
Both with the leaves and with the rose,
The stalke was euen and grene upright,
It was thereon a goodly sight,
And well the better without wene
For the seede was not sene,
Full faire it sprad, the god of blesse,
For such another, as I gesse,
Aforne ne was, ne more vermaile,
I was abawed for marualle,

For euer the fairer that it was,
The more I am bounden in Loues laas.
Long I abode there sooth to say,
Till Bialacoil I gan to pray,
Whan that I saw him in no wise
To me warnen his seruise,
That he me would graunt a thing,
Which to remember is well sitting;
This is to saine, that of his grace
He would me yeue leisure and space
To me that was so desirous
To haue a kissing precious
Of the goodly fresh rose,
That so sweetly smelleth in my nose,
" For if it you displeased nought,
I woll gladly, as I haue sought,
Haue a kiss thereof freely
Of your yeft, for certainely
I woll none have but by your leue,
So loth me were you for to greue."

He saied, " Frend, so God me spede,
Of Chastitie I haue such drede,
Thou shouldest not warned be for me,
But I dare not for Chastite:
Againe her dare I not misdo,
For alway biddeth she me so
To yeve no louer leaue to kisse,
For who therto may winnen iwisse,
He of the surplus of the praie
May live in hope to get some day,
For who so kissing may attaine,
Of loues paine hath (sooth to saine)
The best and moste auenaunt,
And earnest of the remenaunt."

Of his answere I sighed sore,
I durst assay him tho no more,
I had such drede to greve him aye;
A man shuld not too much assaye
To chafe his friend out of measure,
Nor put his life in auenture;
For no man at the first stroke
Ne may not fell downe an oke,
Nor of the reisins haue the wine,
Till grapes be ripe and well afine,
Be sore empressed, I you ensure,
And drawen out of the pressure:
But I forpeined wonder strong,
Though that I abode right long
And after the kisse, in paine and wo,
Sith I to kisse desired so:
Till that renning on my distresse,
There come Uenus the goddesse
(Which aye werrieth Chastite)
Came of her grace to succour me,
Whose might is know ferre and wide,
For she is mother of Cupide,

The god of Loue, blinde as stone,
That helpeth louers many one.
This lady brought in her right hond
Of brenning fire a blasing brond,
Whereof the flame and hote fire
Hath many a lady in desire
Of loue brought, and sore hotte,
And in her seruice her herte is sette.

This lady was of good entaile,
Right wonderfull of apparaile,
By her attire so bright and shene,
Men might perceiue well and sene,
She was not of religioun:
Nor I nill make mentioun
Nor of robe, nor of treasour,
Of broche, neither of her rich attour,
Ne of her girdle about her side,
For that I nill not long abide,
But knoweth well, that certainly
She was arraied richely;
Deuoid of pride certaine she was,
To Bialacoil she went apaas,
And to him shortely in a clause
She said: " Sir, what is the cause
Ye ben of port so daungerous
Unto this louer, and dainous,
To graunt him nothing but a kisse?
To warne it him ye done amisse,
Sith well ye wot, how that hee
Is Loues seruaunt, as ye may see,
And hath beautie, where through is
Worthy of loue to haue the blis:
How he is seemely behold and see,
How he is faire, how he is free,
How he is swote and debonaire,
Of age young, lusty, and faire,
There is no lady so hautaine,
Duchesse, countesse, ne chastelaine,
That I nolde hold her vngodly,
For to refuse him vtterly.
" His breath is also good and swete,
And eke his lips roddy and mete,
Onely to plaine, and to kisse,
Graunt him a kisse of gentlenisse.
" His teeth arne also white and clene,
Me thinketh wrong withouten wene,
If ye now warne him, trusteth me,
To graunt that a kisse haue he,
The lasse ye helpe him that ye haste,
And the more time shull ye waste."
Whan the flame of the very brond
That Uenus brought in her right hond,
Had Bialacoil with his hete smete,
Anone he bad me withouten lete,
Graunt to me the rose kisse,
Than of my paine I gan to lisse,
And to the rose anon went I,
And kissed it full faithfully:
There need no man aske if I was blith,
Whan the savour soft and lith
Stroke to mine herte without more,
And me allegged of my sore,
So was I full of joy and blisse,
It is faire such a floure to kisse,
It was so swote and sauerous,
I might not be so anguishous,
That I mote glad and jolly be,
Whan that I remembre me,
Yet euer among soothly to saine,
I suffer noie and muche paine.

The see may neuer be so still,
That with a little wind at will
Ouerwhelme and tourne also,
As it were wood in wawes go,
After the calme the trouble soone
Mote follow, and chaunge as the Moone,

Right so fareth Love, that selde in one
Holdeth his anker, for right anone
Whan they in ease wene best to live,
They ben with tempest all fordriue:
Who serueth Love, can tell of wo,
The stoundmele joy mote ouergo,
Now he hurteth, and now he cureth,
For selde in o point Love endureth.
Now is it right me to proceed,
How Shame gan meddle and take heed,
Through whom fell angers I have hade,
And how the strong wall was made,
And the castle of brede and length,
That god of love wan with his strength:
All this romance will I set,
And for no thing ne will I let,
So that it liking to her be,
That is the floure of beaute,
For she may best my labour quite,
That I for her love shall endite.
Wicked Tongue, that the couine
Of euery lover can deuine
Worst, and addeth more somdele
(For wicked tongue saith neuer wele)
To me ward bare he right great hate,
Espying me early and late,
Till he hath seene the great chere
Of Bialacoil and me ifere:
He might not his tongue withstond
Worse to reporte than he fond,
He was so full of cursed rage;
It sat him wele of his linage,
For him an irous woman bare;
His tongue was filed sharpe and square,
Poignaunt and right keruing,
And wonder bitter in speaking;
For whan that he me gan espy,
He swore (affirming sikerly)
Betweene Bialacoil and me
Was euill acquaintaunce and priue:
He spake thereof so folilie,
That he awaked Ielousie,
Which all afraied in his rising,
When that he heard iangling,
He ran anon as he were wood
To Bialacoil there that he stood,
Which had leuer in this caas
Haue ben at Reines or Amias,
For fote hote in his fellonie,
To him thus said Ielousie:
"Why hast thou ben so negligent,
To keepen, whan I was absent,
This verger here left in thy ward?
To me thou haddest no regard,
To trust (to thy confusion)
Him thus, to whom suspection
I haue right great, for it is nede,
It is well shewed by the dede.
Great fault in thee now have I found,
By God anon thou shalt be bound,
And faste locken in a toure,
Without refuite or succoure.

"For Shame too long hath be thee fro,
Ouersoone she was ago,
Whan thou hast lost both drede and fere,
It seemed well she was not here,
She was busie in no wise,
To keepe thee and chastise,
And for to helpen Chastite
To keepe the roser, as thinketh me,
For then this boy knaue so boldly,
Ne should not have be hardy
In this verge had such game,
Which now me turneth to great shame."

Bialacoil nist what to say,
Full faine he would have fled away,
For feare have hid, nere that he
All suddainly tooke him with me:
And whan I saw he had so,
This Ielousie take vs two,
I was astonied, and knew no rede,
But fled away for very drede.
Then Shame came forth full simply,
She wend have trespaced full greatly,
Humble of her port, and made it simple,
Wearing a vaile in stede of wimple,
As nonnes done in hir abbey:
Because her herte was in affray,
She gan to speake within a throw
To Ielousie, right wonder low.
First of his grace she besought,
And said: "Sir, ne leueth nought
Wicked Tongue, that false espie,
Which is so glad to faine and lie,
He hath you made, through flattering,
On Bialacoil a false leasing:
His falsenesse is not now anew,
It is too long that he him knew:
This is not the first daie,
For Wicked Tongue hath custome aie,
Younge folkes to bewrie,
And false lesings on hem lie.
"Yet neuerthelesse I see among,
That the soigne it is so long
Of Bialacoil, hertes to lure,
In Loves seruice for to endure,
Drawing suche folke him to,
That he had nothing with to do,
But in soothnesse I trowe nought,
That Bialacoil had euer in thought
To do trespace or villanie,
But for his mother Curtesie
Hath taught him euer to be
Good of acquaintaunce and priue,
For he loveth none heauinesse,
But mirth and play, and all gladnesse;
He hateth all trechious,
Soleine folke and enuious:
For ye weten how that he
Woll euer glad and joyfull be
Honestly with folke to pley:
I have be negligent in good fey
To chastise him, therefore now I
Of herte I crie you here mercy,
That I haue ben so recheles
To tamen him withouten lees,
Of my folly I me repent,
Now woll I hole set mine entent
To keepe both low and still
Bialacoil to do your will."
"Shame, Shame" (said Ielousy)
"To be bitrashed great drede haue I,
"Lecherie hath clombe so hie,
That almost bleared is mine eie,
No wonder is, if that drede haue I,
Ouer all reigneth Lechery,

Whose might groweth night and dey,
Both in cloyster and in abbey,
Chastitie is werried ouer all,
Therefore I woll with siker wall
Close both roses and rosere,
I have too long in this manere
Left hem vnclosed wilfully:
Wherefore I am right inwardly
Sorrowfull, and repent me,
But now they shall no lenger be
Unclosed, and yet I drede sore;
I shall repent ferthermore,
For the game goeth all amis,
Counsaile I must new ywis,
I haue too long trusted thee,
But now it shall no lenger bee:
For he may best in euery cost
Deceine that men tresten most:
I see well that I am nigh shent,
But if I set my full entent
Remedy to purney:
Wherefore close I shall the wey
From hem that woll the rose espie,
And come to wait me villonie,
For in good faith and in trouth
I woll not let for no slouth
To liue the more in sikernesse,
Do make anon a fortresse.
Than close the roses of good sauour;
In middes shall I make a tour
To put Bialacoil in prison,
For ever I drede me of treason;
I trow I shall him keepe so,
That he shall have no might to go
About to make compagnie
To hem that thinke of villanie,
Ne to no such as hath ben here
Aforne, and found in him good chere,
Which han assailed him to shend,
And with hir trowandise to blend,
A foole is eith to beguile,
But may I liue a little while,
He shall forthinke his faire semblaunt."
And with that word came Drede Auaunt,
Which was abashed, and in great fere,
Whan he wist Ielousie was there.
He was for drede in such affray,
That not a worde durst he say,
But quaking stood full still alone
(Till Ielousie his way was gone)
Saue Shame, that him not forsoke,
Both Drede and she full sore quoke,
That at last Drede abraide,
And to his cousin Shame saide.
"Shame" (he said) "in soothfastnesse,
To me it is great heauinesse,
That the noise so ferre is go,
And the slaunder of vs two:
But sithe that it is befall,
We may it not againe call,
When once sprung is a fame:
For many a yeare withouten blame
We haue ben, and many a day,
For many an April and many a May
We han passed, not ashamed,
Till Ielousie hath vs blamed
Of mistrust and suspection
Causelesse, without encheson:
Go we to Daunger hastely,
And let vs shew him openly,
That he hath not aright wrought,
Whan that he set not his thought
To keepe better the purprise;
In his doing he is not wise.
He hath to vs do great wrong,
That hath suffred now so long
Bialacoil to have his will
All his lustes to fulfill:
He must amend it vtterly,
Or els shall he villanously
Exiled be out of this lond:
For he the warre may not withstond
Of Ielousie, nor the greefe,
Sith Bialacoil is at mischeefe."

To Daunger, Shame and Drede anon
The right way ben gon:
The chorle they founde hem aforne
Ligging vnder an hawthorne.
Under his head no pillow was,
But in the stede a trusse of gras:
He slombred, and a nappe he toke,
Till Shame pitously him shoke,
And great manace on him gan make.
"Why sleepest thou when thou should wake?"
(Quod Shame) "thou dost vs villanie,
Who trusteth thee, he doth follie,
To keepe roses or bothums
When they be faire in hir seasons:
Thou art woxe too familiere
Where thou should be straunge of chere,
Stout of thy port, ready to greue:
Thou doest great folly for to leue
Bialacoil here in to call
The yonger man to shenden vs all:
Though that thou sleepe, we may here,
Of Ielousie great noise here,
Art thou now late, rise vp and hye,
And stop soone and deliuerlye
All the gaps of the hay;
Do no fauour I thee pray:
It falleth nothing to thy name,
To make fair semblant, were thou maist blame.

"If Bialacoil be sweet and free,
Dogged and fell thou shuldest bee,
Froward and outragious iwis,
A chorle chaungeth that curteis is:
This haue I heard oft in saying,
That man may for no daunting
Make a sperhauke of a bosarde:
All men hold thee for musarde,
That debunaire haue founden thee,
It sitteth thee nought curteis to bee,
To do men pleasaunce or seruise,
In thee it is recreaundise:
Let thy werkes ferre and nere
Be like thy name, which is Daungere."
Then all abashed in shewing,
Anon spake Drede, right thus saying,
And said, "Daunger, I drede me,
That thou ne wolt besie be
To keepe that thou hast to keepe,
When thou shuldest wake, thou art asleepe:
Thou shalt be grecued certainely,
If thee aspie Ielousy,
Or if he finde thee in blame.
He hath to do assailed Shame,

And chased away with great manace
Bialacoil out of this place,
And sweareth shortly that he shall
Enclose him in a sturdy wall;
And all is for thy wickednesse,
For that thee faileth straungenesse;
Thine herte I trow be failed all;
Thou shalt repent in speciall,
If Ielousie the soothe knew,
Thou shalt forthinke, and sore rew."
With that the chorle his clubbe gan shake,
Frouning his eyen gan to make,
And hidous chere, as man in rage,
For ire he brent in his visage:
Whan that he heard him blamed so,
He said, "Out of my witte I go,
To be discomfite I haue great wrong,
Certes, I haue now liued too long,
Sith I may not this closer keepe,
All quicke I would be doluen deepe,
If any man shall more repaire
Into this garden for foule or faire,
Mine herte for ire gothe afere,
That I let any entre here,
I haue doe folly now I see,
But now it shall amended be,
Who setteth foot here any more,
Truly he shall repent it sore,
For no man more into this place
Of me to enter shall haue grace,
Lever I had with swerdes twaine,
Throughout mine herte, in every vaine
Perced to be, with many a wound,
Than sleuth should in me be found:
From henceforth by night or day,
I shall defend it if I may
Withouten any exception
Of eache manner condition,
And if I it any man graunt,
Holdeth me for recreaunt."

Then Daunger on his feet gan stond,
And hent a burdon in his hond,
Wroth in his ire ne left he nought,
But through the verger he hath sought,
If he might find hole or trace,
Where through that me mote forth by pace,
Or any gappe, he did it close,
That no man might touch a rose
Of the roser all about,
He shetteth euery man without.
Thus day by day Daunger is wers,
More wonderfull and more diuers,
And feller eke than euer he was,
For him full oft I sing alas,
For I ne may nought through his ire
Recouer that I most desire;
Mine herte alas woll brest atwo,
For Bialacoil I wrathed so:
For certainly in euery member
I quake, when I me remember
Of the bothum, which I would
Full oft a day seene and behold,
And when I thinke vpon the kisse,
And how muche ioy and blisse,
I had through the sauour swete,
For want of it I grone and grete:
Me thinketh I fele yet in my nose
The swete sauour of the rose,
And now I wote that I mote go
So ferre the fresh floures fro,
To me full welcome were the death,
Absence thereof (alas) me sleath,
For whylome with this rose, alas,
I touched nose, mouth, and face,
But now the death I must abide;
But Love consent another tide,
That ones I touch may and kisse,
I trow my paine shall neuer lisse;
Thereon is all my couetise,
Which brent my heart in many wise.
Now shall repaire againe sighing,
Long watch on nights, and no sleeping,
Thought in wishing, turment, and wo,
With many a turning to and fro,
That halfe my paine I cannot tell,
For I am fallen into Hell,
From paradise and wealth, the more
My turment greueth more and more,
Annoyeth now the bitternesse,
That I toforne haue felt sweetnesse,
And Wicked Tongue, through his falshede,
Causeth all my wo and drede,
On me he lieth a pitous charge,
Because his tongue was too large.
Now it is time shortly that I
Tell you something of Ielousie,
That was in great suspection:
About him left he no mason,
That stone could lay, ne querrour,
He hired hem to make a tour:
And first the roses for to keepe,
About hem made he a ditch deepe,
Right wonder large, and also brode,
Upon the whiche also stode
Of squared stone a sturdy wall,
Which on a cragge was founded all,
And right great thicknesse eke it bare,
About it was founded square
An hundred fadome on euery side,
It was all liche long and wide,
Least any time it were assailed,
Full well about it was battailed,
And round enuiron eke were set
Full many a rich and faire tournet,
At euery corner of this wall
Was set a tour full principall,
And eueriche had without fable
A portcullise defensable
To keepe off enemies, and to greue,
That there hir force would preue.
And eke amidde this purprise
Was made a tour of great maistrise,
A fairer saugh no man with sight,
Large and wide, and of great might,
They dradde none assaut,
Of ginne, gonne, nor skaffaut,
The temprure of the mortere
Was made of liquour wonder dere,
Of quicke lime persaunt and egre,
The which was tempred with vinegre.
The stone was hard of adamaunt,
Whereof they made the foundemaunt,
The toure was round made in compas,
In all this world no richer was,
Ne better ordained therewithall,
About the tour was made a wall,
So that betwixt that and the tour,
Roses were set of sweet sauour,

With many roses that they bere,
And eke within the castle were
Springolds, gonnes, bowes, and archers,
And eke about at corners
Men seine ouer the wall stond
Great engines, who were nere hond,
And in the kernels here and there,
Of arblasters great plentie were.
None armour might hir stroke withstond,
It were folly to prease to hond;
Without the diche were listes made,
With wall battailed large and brade,
For men and horse should not attaine
Too nigh the diche ouer the plaine.
Thus Ielousie hath enuiron
Sette about his garnison
With walles round, and diche deepe,
Onely the roser for to keepe,
And Daunger early and late
The keyes kept of the vtter gate,
The which opened toward the east,
And he had with him at least
Thirtie seruants echone by name.
That other gate kept Shame,
Which opened, as it was couth,
Toward the parte of the south,
Sergeaunts assigned were her to
Full many, her will for to do.
Than Drede had in her baille
The keeping of the constablerie,
Toward the north I vnderstond,
That opened vpon the left hond,
The which for nothing may be sure,
But if she doe busie cure
Early on morrow and also late,
Strongly to shette and barre the gate:
Of euery thing that she may see,
Drede is aferde, where so she bee,
For with a puffe of little wind,
Drede is astonied in her mind,
Therefore for stealing of the rose,
I rede her nat the yate vnclose,
A foules flight would make her flee,
And eke a shaddow if she it see.

Than Wicked Tongue full of enuie,
With souldiers of Normandie,
As he that causeth all debate,
Was keeper of the fourth gate,
And also to the tother three,
He went full ofte for to see.
When his lotte was to walke a night,
His instrumentes would he dight,
For to blowe and make soune,
Ofter than he hath enchesoune,
And walken oft vpon the wall,
Corners and wickettes ouer all,
Full narrow searchen and espie;
Though he nought fond, yet would he lie
Discordaunt euer fro armonie,
And dissoned from melodie,
Controue he would, and foule faile,
With hornepipes of Cornewaile.
In floites made he discordaunce,
And in his musicke with mischaunce,
He would seine with notes newe,
That he fond no woman trew,
Ne that he saw neuer in his life,
Vnto her husbond a trew wife;
Ne none so full of honeste,
That she nill laugh and merry be,
Whan that she heareth or may espie
A man speaken of lecherie.
Eueriche of hem hath some vice,
One is dishonest, another is nice,
If one be full of villanie,
Another with a licorous eie,
If one be full of wontonnesse,
Another is a chideresse.
Thus Wicked tong, God yeve him shame,
Can put hem euerichone in blame,
Without desert and causelesse,
He lieth, though they ben guiltlesse;
I have pity to seene the sorrow,
That waketh both euen and morrow,
To innocents doth such greuaunce,
I pray God yeue him euill chaunce,
That he euer so busie is,
Of any woman to seine amis.
Eke Ielousie God confound,
That hath made a toure so round,
And made about a garison,
To sette Bialacoil in prison,
The which is shette there in the tour,
Full long to holde there soiour,
There for liue in pennaunce,
And for to do him more greuaunce,
Which hath ordained Ielousie,
An olde vecke for to spie
The manner of his gouernaunce,
The which deuill in her enfaunce
Had learned of Loues art,
And of his plais tooke her part,
She was expert in his seruis,
She knew each wrenche and euery gise
Of loue, and euery wile,
It was hard her to beguile.
Of Bialacoil she tooke aye hede,
That euer he liueth in wo and drede,
He kept him coy and eke priue,
Least in him she hadde see
And folly countenance,
For she knew all the old daunce.
And after this, whan Ielousie
Had Bialacoil in his baillie,
And shette him vp that was so free,
For sure of him he would bee,
He trusteth sore in his castell,
The strong werke him liketh well,
He dradde nat that no glotons
Should steale his roses or bothoms,
The roses weren assured all
Defenced with the strong wall,
Now Ielousie full well may be
Of drede deuoid in liberte,
Whether that he sleepe or wake,
For of his roses may none betake.

But I (alas) now mourne shall,
Because I was without the wall,
Full muche dole and mone I made,
Who had wist what wo I hade,
I trow he would haue had pite,
Loue too deare had solde me
The good that of his loue had I,
I went about it all queintly,
But now through doubling of my paine
I see he woll it sell againe,

And me a new bargaine lere,
The whieh all out the more is dere,
For the sollace that I haue lorne,
Than I had it neuer aforne;
Certaine I am full like indeed
To him that cast in earth his seed,
And hath ioy of the new springing,
Whan it greeneth in the ginning,
And is also faire and fresh of flour,
Lustie to seene, swote of odour,
But ere he it in his sheues shere,
May fall a weather that shall it dere,
And make it to fade and fall,
The stalke, the greine, and floures all,
That to the tillers is fordone,
The hope that he had too soone:
I drede certaine that so fare I,
For hope and trauaile sikerly
Ben me beraft all with a storme,
The floure nill seden of my corne,
For Loue hath so auaunced me,
When I began my priuite,
To Bialacoil all for to tell,
Whom I ne found froward ne fell,
But tooke agree all whole my play;
But Loue is of so hard assay,
That all at ones he reued me,
Whan I weent best abouen to haue be.
It is of Loue, as of Fortune,
That chaungeth oft, and nill contune,
Which whylome woll of folke smile,
And glombe on hem another while,
Now friend, now foe, shalt her feele,
For a twinckling tourneth her wheele.
She can writhe her head away,
This is the concourse of her play,
She can areise that doeth mourne,
And whirle adoune, and ouertourne
Who sitteth highest, but as her lust,
A foole is he that woll her trust,
For it is I that am come doun
Through charge and reuolutioun,
Sith Bialacoil mote fro me twin,
Shette in her prison yonde within,
His absence at mine herte I fele,
For all my ioy and all mine hele
Was in him and in the rose,
That but you will, which him doeth close,
Open, that I may him see,
Loue woll not that I cured bee
Of the paines that I endure,
Nor of my cruell auenture.

Au, Bialacoil mine owne dere,
Though thou be now a prisonere,
Keepe at least thine herte to me,
And suffer nat that it daunted be,
Ne let not Ielousie in his rage,
Putten thine heart in no seruage,
Although he chastice thee without,
And make thy bodie vnto him lout,
Haue herte as hard as Diamaunt,
Stedfast, and naught pliaunt:
In prison through thy bodie bee
At large keepe thine herte free,
A true herte will not plie
For no mannace that it may drie.
If Ielousie doeth thee paine,
Quite him his while thus againe,
To venge thee at least in thought,
If other way thou maiest nought,
And in this wise subtelly
Worch, and winne the maistrie.
But yet I am in great affray,
Least thou doe nat as I say,
I drede thou canst me great maugre,
That thou emprisoned art for me,
But that nat for my trespas,
For through me neuer discouered was
Yet thing that ought be secre:
Well more annoie is in me,
Than is in thee of this mischaunce,
For I endure more hard pennaunce
Than any can saine or thinke,
That for the sorrow almost I sinke,
Whan I remember me of my wo,
Full nigh out of my witte I go.
Inward mine herte I feele blede,
For comfortlesse the death I drede,
Owe I nat well to haue distresse,
Whan false, through hir wickednesse,
And traitours, that arne envious,
To noien me be so coragious.
Ah, Bialacoil full well I see,
That they hem shape to deceiue thee,
To make thee buxum to hir law,
And with hir corde thee to draw
Where so hem lust, right at hir will,
I drede they haue thee brought theretill:
Without comfort, thought me sleath,
This game would bring me to my death,
For if your good will I lese,
I mote be dead, I may not chese,
And if that thou foryete me,
Mine herte shall neuer in liking be,
Nor elswhere find sollace,
If I be put out of your grace,
As it shall neuer ben I hope,
Than should I fall in wanhope.
Alas, in wanhope, nay parde,
For I woll neuer dispaired be;
If Hope me faile, than am I
Ungracious and unworthy;
In Hope I woll comforted be,
For Loue, when he betaught her me,
Saied, that Hope where so I go,
Should aye be relees to my wo.
But what and she my bales bete,
And be to me curteis and swete?
She is in nothing full certaine,
Louers she put in full great paine,
And maketh hem with wo to dele,
Her faire beheste deceiueth fele,
For she woll behote sikerly,
And failen after vtterly.
Ah, that is a full noyous thing,
For many a louer in louing
Hangeth upon her, and trusteth fast,
Which lese hir trauaile at the last.
Of thing to commen she wot right nought,
Therefore if it be wisely sought,
Her counsaile follie is to take,
For many times, when she woll make
A full good sillogisme, I drede,
That afterward there shall indede
Follow an euill conclusion,
This put me in confusion.
For many times I haue it seene,
That many haue beguiled beene,
For trust that they haue set in hope,
Which fell hem afterward a slope.

But nathelesse yet gladly she would,
That he that woll him with her hold,
Had all times her purpose clere,
Without deceit any where,
That she desireth sikerly;
Whan I her blamed, I did folly;
But what auaileth her good will,
Whan she ne may staunch my stound ill,
That helpeth little that she may do,
Or take behest vnto my wo:
And heste certaine in no wise,
Without ifete is not to preise.
When heste and deed asunder vary,
They doen a great contrary;
Thus am I posted vp and doun
With dole, thought, and confusioun,
Of my desease there is no number,
Daunger and Shame me encumber,
Drede also, and Jelousie,
And Wicked Tongue full of enuie,
Of which the sharpe and cruell ire
Full oft me put in great mattire;
They haue my ioie fully let,
Sith Bialacoil they haue beshet
Fro me in prison wickedly,
Whom I loue so entierly,
That it woll my bane bee,
But I the sooner may him see.
And yet moreouer worst of all,
There is set to keepe, foule her befall,
A rimpled vecke ferre ronne in rage,
Frouning and yellow in her visage,
Which in await lieth day and night,
That none of him may haue a sight.

Now mote my sorrow enforced be,
Full sooth it is, that Loue yafe me
Three wonder yeftes of his grace,
Which I haue lorne, now in this place,
Sith they ne maie without drede
Helpen but little, who taketh hede:
For her auaileth no Sweet Thought,
And Sweet Speech helpeth right nought,
The third was called Sweet Looking,
That now is lorne without lesing.
Yeftes were faire, but nat for thy
They helpe me but simply,
But Bialacoil loosed bee
To gone at large and to be free,
For him my life lieth all in dout,
But if he come the rather out.
Alas, I trow it woll nat beene,
For how should I euermore him seene?
He may nat out, and that is wrong,
Because the toure is so strong,
How should he out, or by whose prowesse
Of so strong a forteresse?
By me certaine it nill be do,
God wote I haue no wit thereto,
But well I wote I was in rage,
When I to Loue did homage;
Who was the cause (in soothfastnesse)
But her selfe dame Idlenesse?
Which me conueide through faire praiere
To enter into that faire vergere:
She was to blame me to leue,
The which now doeth me sore greue,
A fooles word is nought to trow,
Ne worth an apple for to low,
Men should hem snibbe bitterly,
At prime temps of his folly:
I was a foole, and she me leued,
Through whom I am right nought releued,
She accomplished all my will,
That now me greueth wonder ill.

Reason me saied what should fall,
A foole my selfe I may well call,
That loue aside I had not laied,
And trowed that dame Reason saied.
Reason had both skill and right,
When she me blamed with all her might
To meddle of loue, that hath me shent,
But certaine now I woll repent.

And should I repent? Nay parde,
A false traitour then should I be,
The devils engins would me take,
If I Love would forsake,
Or Bialacoil falsly betray.
Should I at mischeefe hate him? nay,
Sith he now for his courtesie
Is in prison of Ielousie;
Courtesie certaine did he me,
So much, that it may not yolden be,
When he the haie passen me lete,
To kisse the rose, faire and swete,
Should I therefore coune him maugre?
Nay certainely, it shall nat be,
For Love shall neuer (yeue God will)
Here of me, through word or will,
Offence or complaint more or lesse,
Neither of Hope nor Idlenesse:
For certes, it were wrong that I
Hated hem for hir courtesie.
There is not els, but suffer and thinke,
And waken whan I should winke,
Abide in hope, till Loue through chaunce
Send me succour or allegeaunce,
Expectaunt aye till I may mete,
To getten mercie of that swete.
Whilome I thinke how Loue to mee
Saied he would take at gree
My service, if vnpatience
Caused me to doen offence:
He saied, "In thanke I shall it take,
And high maister eke thee make,
If wickednesse ne reue it thee,
But soone I trow that shall nat bee."
These were his wordes by and by,
It seemed he loved me truely.
Now is there not but serue him wele,
If that I thinke his thanke to fele,
My good, mine harme, lithe hole in me,
In Love may no defaut be,
For true Love ne failed neuer man:
Soothly the faute mote needs than
As God forbide, be found in me,
And how it commeth, I cannot see.
Now let it gone as it may go,
Whether Love woll succour me or slo,
He may do hole on me his will,
I am so sore bound him till,
From his seruice I may not flene,
For life and death withouten wene
Is in his hond, I may nat chese,
He may me doe both winne and lese,

And sith so sore he doth me greue,
Yet if my lust he would acheue,
To Bialacoil goodly to be,
I yeue no force what fell on me:
For though I die, as I mote nede,
I pray Love of his goodlyhede,
To Bialacoil doe gentlenesse,
For whom I liue in such distresse,
That I mote dien for penaunce,
But first, without repentaunce,
I will me confesse in good entent,
And make in hast my testament,
As louers doen that feelen smart:
To Bialacoil leaue I mine herte
All hole, without departing,
Or doublenesse of repenting.

COMENT RAISON VIENT A LAMANT.

Thus as I made my passage
In complaint, and in cruell rage,
And I not where to finde a leche,
That couth vnto mine helping eche,
Suddainely againe comen doun
Out of her toure I saw Reasoun,
Discreet and wise, and full pleasaunt,
And of her port full auenaunt;
The right waie she tooke to me,
Which stood in gret perplexite
That was poshed in euery side,
That I nist where I might abide,
Till she demurely sad of chere
Saied to me as she came nere.
" Mine owne friend, art thou greued,
How is this quarrell yet atcheued
Of Loves side? Anone me tell,
Hast thou not yet of love thy fill?
Art thou nat wearie of thy seruice
That thee hath in suche wise?
" What joy hast thou in thy louing?
Is it sweet or bitter thing?
Canst thou yet chese, let me see,
What best thy succour might bee?
" Thou seruest a full noble lord,
That maketh thee thrall for thy reward,
Which aye reneweth thy tourment,
With folly so he hath thee blent;
Thou fell in mischeefe thilke day,
When thou diddest the sooth to say
Obeisaunce and eke homage
Thou wroughtest nothing as the sage;
When thou became his liege man,
Thou diddest a great follie than;
Thou wistest nat what fell thereto,
With what lord thou haddest to do,
If thou haddest him well know
Thou haddest nought be brought so low,
For if thou wiste what it were,
Thou noldest serue him halfe a yere,
Nat a weeke, nor halfe a day,
Ne yet an houre without delay:
Ne neuer iloved paramours,
His lordship is so full of shours:
Knowest him ought?"
Lamaunt. Ye, dame, parde.
Raisoun. Nay nay. Lamaunt. Yes I.
Raisoun. Wherefore let see.
Lamaunt. Of that he saied I should be
Glad to haue such lord as (he)
And maister of such seignorie.
Raisoun. Knowest him no more?
Lamaunt. Nay, certes, I,
Saue that he yafe me rules there,
And went his way I nist where,
And I abode bound in ballaunce,
Lo there a noble cognisaunce.

RAISOUN.

But I woll that thou know him now
Ginning and end, sithe thatthou
Art so anguishous and mate,
Disfigured out of astate,
There may no wreche haue more of wo,
Ne caitife none endureu so;
It were to euery man sitting,
Of his lord haue knowledging:
For if thou knew him out of dout,
Lightly thou shouldest scapen out
Of thy prison that marreth thee.

LAMAUNT.

Yea dame sith my lord is hee,
And I his man made with mine hond,
I would right faine understond
To knowe of what kind he be,
If any would enforme me.

RAISOUN.

" I would" (saied Reason) " thee lere,
Sith thou to learne hast such desire,
And shewe thee withouten fable
A thing that is not demonstrable;
Thou shalt withouten science,
And know withouten experience
The thing that may not knowen bee,
Ne wist ne sheweth in no degree,
Thou maiest the sooth of it not witten,
Though in thee it were written,
Thou shalt not knowe thereof more,
While thou art ruled by his lore,
But unto him that loue woll flie,
The knotte may unlosed be,
Which hath to thee, as it is found,
So long to knitte and not unbound,
Now set well thine entention,
To heare of loue the description.

Love it is an hatefull pees,
A free acquitaunce without relees,
And through the fret full of falshede,
A sikernesse all set in drede,
In herte is a despairing hope,
And full of hope it is wanhope,
Wise woodnesse, and void reasoun,
A swete perill in to droun,
An heauie burthen light to beare,
A wicked wawe away to weare.
It is Caribdes perillous,
Disagreeable and gracious,
It is discordaunce that can accord,
And accordaunce to discord,
It is conning without science,
Wisedome without sapience,
Witte without discretion,
Hauoire without possession;
It is like heale and hole sickenesse,
A trust drowned and dronkennesse,

And health full of maladie,
And charitie full of enuie,
And anger full of aboundance,
And a greedie suffisaunce,
Delight right full of heauinesse,
And dreried full of gladnesse,
Bitter sweetnesse and sweet errour,
Right euill sauoured good sauour,
Sin that pardon hath within,
And pardon spotted without sin,
A paine also it is ioyous,
And fellonie right pitous,
Also play that selde is stable,
And stedfast right meuable,
A strength weiked to stond upright,
And feeblenesse full of might,
Witte unauised, sage follie,
And ioy full of tourmentrie,
A laughter it is weeping aie,
Rest that trauaileth night and daie,
Also a sweete Hell it is,
And a sorrowfull Paradis,
A pleasaunt gaile and easie prisoun,
And full of froste summer seasoun,
Prime temps full of frostes white,
And Maie deuoid of all delite,
With seer braunches, blossoms vngrene,
And new fruit filled with winter tene,
It is a slowe may nat forbeare,
Ragges ribaned with gold to weare,
For also well woll loue be sette
Under ragges as rich rotchette,
And eke as well by amorettes
In mourning blacke, as bright burnettes,
For none is of so mokell prise,
Ne no man founden so wise,
Ne none so high of parage,
Ne no man found of witte so sage,
No man so hardie ne so wight,
Ne no man of so mokell might,
None so fulfilled of bounte,
That he with loue may daunted be;
All the worlde holdeth this way,
Loue maketh all to gone misway,
But it be they of euill life,
Whom genius cursed man and wife,
That wrongly werke againe nature,
None such I loue, ne haue no cure
Of such as loues seruaunts beene,
And woll nat by my counsaile fleene,
For I ne preise that louing,
Wherethrough man at the last ending
Shall call hem wretches full of wo,
Loue greueth hem and shendeth so;
But if thou wolt well loue eschew,
For to escape out of his mew,
And make all whole the sorrow to slake,
No better counsaile maiest thou take,
Than thinke to fleen well iwis,
May nought helpe els: for wit thou this,
If thou flye it, it shall flye thee,
Follow it, and followen shall it thee."

LAMAUNT.

When I had heard Reason sain,
Whiche had spilt her speech in vain:
"Dame" (sayd I) "I dare well say
Of this auaunt me well I may
That from your schoole so deuiaunt
I am, that neuer the more auaunt
Right nought am I through your doctrine,
I dull vnder your discipline,
I wote no more than wist euer
To me so contrarie and so fer
Is euerie thing that ye me lere,
And yet I can it all by partuere:
Mine herte foyeteth thereof right nought,
It is so writen in my thought,
And deepe grauen it is so tender
That all by herte I can it render,
And rede it ouer communely,
But to my selfe lewdest am I.

But sith ye loue discriuen so
And lacke and preise it bothe two
Defineth it into this letter,
That I may thinke on it the better:
For I heard neuer defined here,
And wilfully I would it lere."
"If loue be searched well and sought
It is a sickenesse of the thought
Annexed and knedde betwixt tweine,
With male and female with o cheine,
So freely that bindeth, yet they nill twinne,
Wheder so thereof they lese or winne:
The roote springeth through hot brenning
Into disordinate desiring,
For to kissen and embrace,
And at hir lust them to solace,
Of other thing love retcheth nought
But setteth hir herte and all hir thought,
More for delectatioun
Than any procreatioun
Of other fruit by engendrure:
Which love, to God is not pleasure,
For of hir body fruit to get
They yene no force, they are so set
Upon delight to play in fere.
And some have also this manere,
To fainen hem for love seke,
Such love I preise not at a leke.
For paramours they doe but faine,
To love truely they disdaine,
They falsen ladies traitorously,
And swerne hem othes vtterly,
With many a leasing, and many a fable,
And all the finden deceiuable.
"And when they han hir lust getten
The hote ernes they all foryetten;
Women the harme buyen full sore:
But men thus thinken euermore,
The lasse harme is, so mote I thee,
Deceiue them, than deceiued be.
And namely where they ne may
Finde none other meane way:
For I wote well in soothfastnesse,
That who doeth now his businesse
With any woman for to dele,
For any lust that he may fele,
But if it be for engendrure,
He doth trespasse I you ensure:
For he should setten all his will
To getten a likely thing him till,
And to sustaine, if he might,
And keepe forth by kindes right
His owne likenesse and semblable:
For because all is corrumpable
And faile should succession
Ne were there generation,

Our sectes sterne for to saue,
Whan father or mother arne in graue,
Her children should, whan they been dead,
Full diligent been in hir stead
To vse that worke on such a wise,
That one may through another rise.
Therefore set kinde therein delight,
For men therein should hem delight,
And of that deede be not erke,
But ofte sithes haunt that werke:
For none would draw thereof a draught
Ne were delight, which hath hem caught,
This had subtill dame Nature:
For none goeth right I thee assure
Ne hath entent hoole ne perfite,
For hir desire is for delite,
The which fortened crease and eke
The play of love, for oft seeke
And thrall hem selfe they be so nice
Unto the prince of euerie vice:
For of each sinne it is the roote
Unlefull lust, though it be soote,
And of all euill the racine,
As Tullius can determine,
Which in his time was full sage,
In a booke he made of age,
Where that more he praiseth Elde
Though he be crooked and unwelde,
And more of commendatioun,
Than youth in his discriptioun:
For youth set bothe man and wife
In all perill of soule and life,
And perill is, but men have grace,
The perill of youth for to pace,
Without any death or distresse,
It is so full of wildnesse,
So oft it doeth shame and domage
To him or to his linage,
It leadeth man, now vp now doun
In mokell dissolutioun,
And maketh him love euill companie,
And lead his life disrulilie,
And halt him payd with none estate
Within himselfe in such debate,
He chaungeth purpose and entent,
And yalte into some couent,
To liuen after hir emprise,
And leeseth freedome and fraunchise,
That nature in him had set,
The which againe he may not get,
If he there make his mansion,
For to abide profession.
Though for a time his herte absent
It may not faile, he shall repent,
And eke abide thilke day,
To leaue his abite, and gone his way,
And leaseth his worship and his name,
And dare not come againe for shame,
But all his life he doth so mourne,
Because he dare not home retourne,
Freedome of kinde so lost hath he
That neuer may recured be,
But that if God him graunt grace
That he may, er he hence pace,
Conteine vnder obedience
Through the vertue of patience.
For youth set man in all follie,
In vnthrift and inribaudrie,
In lecherie, and in outrage,
So oft it chaungeth of courage.

Youth ginneth oft suche bargaine,
That may not ende without paine.
In great perill is set youth hede
Delight so doeth his bridell lede,
Delight this hangeth, drede thee nought,
Both mannes bodie and his thought,
Onely through youthes chambere,
That to doen evill is customere,
And of naught else taketh hede,
But onely folkes for to lede
Into disport and wildenesse,
So is froward from sadnesse,
But elde draweth hem therefro,
Who wote it not, he may well go,
And mo of them, that now arne old,
That whilom youth had in hold,
Which yet remembreth of tender age
How it him brought in many a rage,
And many a follie therein wrought:
But now that elde hath him through sought
They repent hem of hir follie,
That youth hem put in jeopardie,
In perill and in muche woe,
And made hem oft amisse to doe,
And sewen evill companie
Riot and advoutrie.

But elde gan againe restraine
From such follie, and refraine
And set men by her ordinaunce,
In good rule and governaunce,
But evil she spendeth her servise,
For no man woll her love, neither preise,
She is hated, this wote I wele,
Her acquaintance would no man fele,
Ne han of elde companie,
Men hate to be of her alie,
For no man would becommen old,
Ne die, when he is young and bold,
And elde maruaileth right greatly,
When they remember hem inwardly
Of many a perillous emprise
Which that they wrought in sundry wise,
However they might without blame
Escape awaie without shame,
In youth without domage
Or reprefe of her linage,
Losse of member, shedding of blood,
Perill of death, or losse of good.
Wost thou nat where youth abit,
That men so preisen in hir wit?
With Delight she halt sojour,
For both they dwellen in o tour,
As long as youth is in season,
They dwellen in one mansion:
Delight, of youth woll have servise
To doe what so he woll devise,
And youth is readie evermore
For to obey, for smert or sore,
Unto Delight, and him to yeve
Her servise, while that she may live.
" Where elde abitte, I woll thee tell
Shortly, and no while dwell,
For thider behoveth thee to go
If death in youth thee not slo:
Of this journey thou mayst not faile,
With her Labour and Trauaile,
Lodged been with Sorrow and Wo,
That never out of her court go:

Paine and Distresse, Sickenesse, and Ire,
And Melancholly that angrie sire,
Ben of her paleis senatours,
Groning and grutching, her herbegeours,
The day and night her to tourment
With cruell death they her present,
And tellen her erlich and late
That Death stondeth armed at her gate:
Than bring they to her remembraunce
The folly deedes of her enfaunce,
Which causen her to mourne in wo
That youth hath her begüiled so
Which sodainly away is hasted,
She weeped the time that she hath wasted,
Complaining of the preteritte,
And the present, that nat abitte,
And of her olde vanitee
That but aforne her she may see,
In the future some succour,
To leggen her of her dolour
To graunt her time of repentaunce,
For her sinnes to doe penaunce,
And at the last so her gouerne
To winne the joy that is eterne,
Fro which goe backeward youth he made
In vanitie to drowne and wade,
For present time abideth nought,
It is more swift than any thought,
So little while it doth endure
That there nis compte ne measure.
" But how that ever the game go
Who list to love joy and mirth also
Of love, be it he or she,
Hie or lowe who it be,
In fruite they should hem delite,
Hir part they may not else quite,
To save hem selfe in honeste,
And yet full many one I see
Of women, soothly for to saine,
That desire and would faine
The play of love, they be so wilde
And not covet to go with childe:
And if with childe they be perchaunce,
They woll it hold a great mischaunce,
But whatsoever woe they fele,
They woll not plaine, but concele,
But if it be any foole or nice,
In whome that shame hath no justice,
For to delight each one they draw,
That haunt this worke both hie and law,
Save such that arne worth right nought,
That for money woll be bought,
Such love I preise in no wise,
Whan it is given for covetise;
I praise no woman, though she be wood
That yeveth her selfe for any good:
For little should a manne tell
Of her, that will her bodie sell,
Be she maide, be she wife,
That quicke woll sell her by her life,
How faire chere that ever she make,
He is a wretch I undertake
That loved such one, for sweete or soure,
Though she him called her paramoure,
And laugheth on him, and maketh him feast,
For certainly no suche beast
To be loved is not worthy
Or beare the name of Drury,
None should her please, but he wer wood,
That woll dispoile him of his good:
Yet nathelesse I woll not say
That she for solace and for play,
Maie a jewell or other thing
Take of her loves free yeving:
But that she aske it in no wise,
For drede of shame or covetise.
And she of hers may him certaine
Without slaunder yeven againe,
And joyne hir hearts togither so
In love, and take and yeve also.
Trow not that I woll hem twinne,
When in hir love there is no sinne,
I woll that they together go,
And done all that they han ado,
As curtes should and debonaire,
And in hir love beren hem faire,
Without vice, both he and she,
So that alway in honeste,
Fro folly Love to keepe hem clere
That brenneth hertes with his fere,
And that hir love in any wise,
Be devoide of covetise.
Good love should engendred be
Of true herte, just, and secree,
And not of such as set hir thought
To have hir lust, and else nought:
So are they caught in Loves lace,
Truly for bodily solace,
Fleshly delighte is so present
With thee, that set all thine entent,
Without more, what should I glose,
For to get and have the rose,
Which maketh thee so mate and wood
That thou desirest none other good;
But thou art not an inch the nerre,
But ever abidest in sorrow and werre,
As in thy face it is seene,
It maketh thee both pale and leene,
Thy might, thy vertue goeth away:
A sorry guest (in good fay)
Thou harbourest in thine inne
The god of love whan thou let inne:
Wherefore I read thou shette him out,
Or he shall greve thee out of dout,
For to thy profite it woll tourne,
If he no more with thee sojourne.
In great mischiefe and sorrow sonken,
Ben hertes, that of love arne dronken,
As thou peraventure knowen shall,
When thou hast lost the time all,
And spent thy thought in idlenesse,
In waste, and wofull lustinesse:
If thou maiest live the time to see
Of love for to delivered bee,
Thy time thou shalt beweepe sore
The which never thou mayest restore:
For time lost, as men may see,
For nothing may recovered bee,
And if thou scape, yet at last,
Fro Love that hath thee so fast
Knitte and bounden in his lace,
Certaine I hold it but a grace,
For many one as it is seine
Have lost, and spent also in veine
In his servise without succour
Bodie and soule, good, and treasour,
Wit, and strength, and eke richesse,
Of which they had never redresse.

LAMANT.

Thus taught and preached hath Reason,
But Love spilte her sermon,
That was so imped in my thought,
That her doctrine I set at nought,
And yet ne sayd she never a dele,
That I ne understood it wele,
Word by word the matter all,
But unto Love I was so thrall,
Which calleth ever all his praie,
He chaseth so my thought aie,
And holdeth mine herte under his sele,
As trustie and true as any stele:
So that no devotion
Ne had I in the sermon
Of dame Reason, ne of her rede
I tooke no soiour in mine hede.
For all yede out at one ere
That in that other she did lere,
Fully on me she lost her lore
Her speech me greeved wonder sore.

That unto her for ire I said
For anger, as I did abraid:
" Dame, and is it your will algate,
That I not love, but that I hate
All men, as ye me teach,
For if I doe after your speach,
Sith that you seine love is not good,
Than must I nedes say with mood
If I it leve, in hatred aie
Liven, and voide love awaie,
From me a sinfull wretch,
Hated of all that tetch,
I may not go none other gate,
For either must I love or hate,
And if I hate men of new,
More than love it woll me rew,
As by your preching seemeth mee,
For love nothing ne praiseth thee:
Ye yeve good counsaile sikerly
That precheth me all day, that I
Should not loues lore alowe,
He were a foole woulde you not trowe?
In speech also ye han me taught,
Another love that knowne is naught
Which I have heard you not repreve,
To love each other by your leve,
If ye would diffine it mee,
I would gladly here to see,
At the least if I may lere
Of sundrie loves the manere."

RAISON.

" Certes friend, a foole art thou
Whan that thou nothing wilt allow
That I for thy profite say:
Yet woll I say thee more in fay,
For I am readie at the leest,
To accomplish thy request,
But I not where it woll auaile,
In vaine peraventure I shall trauaile:
Loue there is in sundrie wise,
As I shall thee here deuise.
" For some loue lefull is and good,
I meane not that which maketh thee wood,
And bringeth thee in many a fitte,
And ranisheth fro thee all thy witte,
It is so maruailous and queint,
With such loue be no more aquaint.

COMMENT RAISON DIFFINIST AUNSETE.

" Loue of friendship also there is
Which maketh no man done amis,
Of will knitte betwixt two,
That woll not breake for wele ne wo,
Which long is likely to contune,
Whan will and goods been in commune,
Grounded by Gods ordinaunce,
Hoole without discordaunce,
With hem holding commaunce
Of all her good in charite,
That there be none exceptioun,
Through chaunging of ententioun,
That each helpe other at her nede,
And wisely hele both word and dede,
True of meaning, deuoide of slouth,
For wit is nought without trouth:
So that the tone dare all his thought
Saine to his friend, and spare nought,
As to himselfe without dreding,
To be discouered by wreiyng,
For glad is that coniunction,
Whan there is none suspection,
Whom they would proue
That true and perfite weren in loue:
For no man may be amiable,
But if he be so firme and stable,
That fortune change him not ne blinde,
But that his friend alway him finde,
Both poore and riche in o state:
For if his friend through any gate,
Woll complaine of his pouerte,
He should not bide so long, till he
Of his helping him require,
For good deed done through praiere
Is sold and bought too deere iwis
To herte that of great valour is.
For herte fulfilled of gentlenesse,
Can euill demeane his distresse.
And man that worthy is of name,
To asken often hath great shame.
" A good man brenneth in his thought,
For shame when he asketh ought,
He hath great thought, and dredeth aie
For his disease when he shall praie
His friend, least that he warned be
Till that he preue his stabilitie:
But when that he hath founden one
That trustie is and true as stone,
And assayed him at all,
And found him stedfast as a wall,
And of his friendship be certaine,
He shall him shew both ioy and paine,
And all that he dare thinke or say,
Without shame, as he well may,
For how should he ashamed be,
Of such one as I told thee?
For whan he wote his secret thought,
The third shall know thereof right nought,
For twey in number is bet than three,
In euerie counsaile and secree:
Repreue he dredeth neuer a dele,
Who that beset his wordes wele,
For euerie wise man out of drede,
Can keepe his tongue till he see nede.
" And fooles cannot hold hir tongue,
A fooles bell is soone ronge,

Yet shall a true friend doe more
To helpe his fellow of his sore,
And succour him whan he hath need
In all that he may done indeed,
And gladder that he him pleaseth
Than his felowe that he easeth,
And if he doe not his request,
He shall as muche him molest
As his felowe, for that he
Maie not fulfill his volunte
Fully, as he hath required;
If both the hertes loue hath fired
Joy and woe they shall depart,
And take euenly each his part,
Halfe his annoy he shall haue aie,
And comforte what that he may,
And of this blisse part shall he,
If loue woll departed be.

And whilom of this vnitie
Spake Tullius in a ditie,
And should maken his request
Vnto his friend, that is honest,
And he goodly should it fulfill,
But it the more were out of skill,
And otherwise not graunt thereto,
Except onely in causes two.
" If men his friend to death would driue
Let him be busie to saue his liue.
" Also if men wollen hem assaile,
Of his worship to make him faile
And hindren him of his renoun,
Let him with full ententioun,
His deuer done in each degree
That his friend ne shamed be:
" In this two case with his might,
Taking no keepe to skill nor right,
As farre as loue may him excuse,
This ought no manne to refuse.
" This loue that I haue told to thee
Is nothing contrarie to mee,
This woll I that thou follow wele,
And leaue the other euerie dele,
This loue to vertue all attendeth,
The tother fooles blent and shendeth.
" Another love also there is,
That is contrarie vnto this,
Which desire is so constrained
That is but will fained;
Away fro trouth it doth so varie
That to good love it is contrarie;
For it maymeth in many wise
Sicke hertes with couetise;
All in winning and in profite,
Such love setteth his delite:
This love so hangeth in balaunce
That if it lese his hope perchaunce,
Of lucre, that he is set vpon,
It woll faile, and quench anon,
For no man may be amorous,
Ne in his liuing vertuous,
But he love more in mood
Men for hem selfe than for hir good:
For loue that profite doth abide,
Is false, and hideth not in no tide.
Love commeth of dame Fortune,
That little while woll contune,
For it shall chaungen wonders soone,
And take eclips as the Moone
Whan she is from vs let
Through Earth, that betwixt is set
The Sunne and her, as it may fall,
Be it in partie, or in all;
The shadow maketh her beames merke,
And her hornes to shew derke,
That part where she hath lost her light
Of Phebus fully, and the sight,
Till whan the shadow is ouerpast,
She is enlumined againe as fast,
Through the brightnesse of the sunbeames
That yeueth to her againe her leames:
That love is right of such nature,
Now is faire, and now obscure,
Now bright, now clipsy of manere,
And whilom dimme, and whilom clere,
Assoone as pouerte ginneth take,
With mantell and weedes blake
Hideth of love the light away,
That into night it tourneth day,
It may not see richesse shine,
Till the blacke shadowes fine,
For whan richesse shineth bright
Love recouereth ayen his light,
And whan it faileth, he woll flit,
And as she grecueth, so greeneth it.
" Of this love heare what I saie:
The riche men are loved aie,
And namely tho that sparand beene,
That woll not wash hir hertes cleene
Of the filth, nor of the vice
Of greedy brenning auarice.
" The rich man full fond is iwis,
That weneth that he loved is,
If that his herte it vnderstood,
It is not he, it is his good,
He may well weten in his thought,
His good is loved, and he right nought:
For if he be a niggard eke,
Men would not set by him a leke,
But haten him, this is the sooth,
Lo what profite his cattell dooth,
Of every man that may him see,
It getteth him nought but enmitee:
But he amend himselfe of that vice,
And know himselfe, he is not wise.
" Certes he should aye friendly be,
To get him love also been free,
Or else he is not wise ne sage
No more than is a gote ramage.
That he not loueth, his deede proueth,
Whan he his richesse so well loueth,
That he woll hide it aie and spare,
His poore friends seene forfare
To keepen aie his purpose
Till for drede his eyen close,
And till a wicked death him take
Him had leuer asunder shake,
And let all his limmes asunder riue,
Than leaue his richesse in his liue;
He thinketh to part it with no man,
Certaine no love is in him than:
How should love with him be,
Whan in his herte is no pite?
That he trespasseth well I wate,
For each man knoweth his estate,
For well him ought to be reproued
That loveth nought, ne is not loved.
" But sith we arne to Fortune comen,
And hath our sermon of her nomen,

A wonder will I tell thee now,
Thou hardest neuer such one I trow;
I not where thou me leuen shall,
Though soothfastnesse it be all,
As it is written, and is sooth
That vnto men more profite dooth
The froward Fortune and contraire,
Than the swote and debonaire:
And if they thinke it is doutable,
It is through argument provable,
For the debonaire and soft
Falseth and beguileth oft,
For lich a mother she can cherish
And milken as doth a norice,
And of her good to him deles
And yeueth him part of her ieweles,
With great riches and dignitie,
And hem she hoteth stabilitie,
In state that is not stable,
But changing aie and variable,
And feedeth him with glorie vaine,
And worldly blisse none certaine,
Whan she him setteth on her whele,
Than wene they to be right wele,
And in so stable state withall
That neuer they wene for to fall,
And when they set so high to be,
They wene to have in certainte
Of heartly friendes to great numbre,
That nothing might hir state encombre,
They trust hem so on euerie side,
Weming with hem they would abide,
In euerie perill and mischaunce
Without chaunge or variaunce,
Both of cattell and of good,
And also for to spend hir blood,
And all hir members for to spill
Onely to fulfill hir will,
They maken it whole in many wise
And hoten hem hir full servise
How sore that it doe hem smert,
Into hir very naked shert,
Herte and also hole they yeve,
For the time that they may live,
So that with hir flatterie,
They maken fooles glorifie
Of hir wordes speaking,
And han chere of a rejoysing,
And trow them as the Evangile,
And it is all falshede and gile,
As they shall afterward see,
Whan they arne full in poverte,
And ben of good and cattell bare,
Than should they seene who friendes ware;
For of an hundred certainly,
Nor of a thousand full scarcely,
Ne shall they finde unnethes one,
Whan povertie is commen upon.
" For thus Fortune that I of tell,
With men whan her lust to dwell,
Maketh hem to lese hir conisaunce,
And nourisheth hem in ignoraunce.
" But froward Fortune and perverse,
When high estates she doth reverse,
And maketh hem to tumble doune
Off her whele with sodaine tourne,
And from her richesse doth hem flie,
And plungeth hem in povertie,
As a stepmother envious,
And layeth a plaister dolorous,
Unto hir hertes wounded egre,
Which is not tempered with vinegre;
But with povertie and indigence,
For to shew by experience,
That she is Fortune verilie
In whome no man should affie,
Nor in her yeftes have fiaunce,
She is so full of variaunce.
" Thus can she maken hye and lowe,
Whan they from richesse arne throwe,
Fully to knowen without were
Friend of effect, and friend of chere,
And which in love weren true and stable,
And which also weren variable,
After Fortune hir goddesse,
In povertie, either in richesse,
For all that yeveth here out of drede,
Unhappe beareth it indeede,
For infortune let not one
Of friendes, whan Fortune is gone,
I meane tho friendes that woll fle
Anone as entreth poverte,
And yet they woll not leave hem so,
But in each place where they go
They call hem wretch, scorne and blame,
And of hir mishappe hem diffame,
And namely such as in richesse,
Pretendeth most of stablenesse
Whan that they saw hem set on loft,
And weren of hem succoured oft,
And most iholpe in all hir need:
But now they take no maner heed,
But saine in voice of flatterie,
That now appeareth hir follie,
Over all where so they fare,
And sing, Go farewell felde fare.
" All such friendes I beshrew,
For of true there be too few,
But soothfast friendes, what so betide,
In every fortune wollen abide,
They han hir hertes in such nobless:
That they nill love for no richesse,
Nor for that Fortune may hem send
They wollen hem succour and defend,
And chaunge for softe ne for sore;
For who his friend loveth evermore
Though men draw sword him to sle,
He may not hew hir love a two:
But in case that I shall say,
For pride and ire lese it he may,
And for reproove by nicete,
And discovering of privite,
With tongue wounding, as felon,
Through venemous detraction.
" Friend in this case will gone his way,
For nothing grieve him more ne say,
And for nought else woll he fle,
If that he love in stabilitie.
And certaine he is well begone
Among a thousand that findeth de:
For there may be no richesse,
Ayenst friendship of worthinesse
For it ne may so high attaine,
As may the valour, sooth to saie,
Of him that loveth true and wel:
Friendship is more than is cattll,
For friend in court aie better is
Than penny in purse certis,
And Fortune mishaping,
Whan upon men she is fallin;

Through misturning of her chaunce,
And cast hem out of balaunce.
" She maketh through her adversite
Men full clerely for to see
Him that is friend in existence
From him that is by appearence:
For infortune maketh anone,
To know thy friendes fro thy foue,
By experience, right as it is,
The which is more to praise iwis,
Than in much richesse and treasour,
For more deepe profite and valour,
Povertie, and such adversitie
Before, than doth prosperitie,
For that one yeveth conisaunce,
And the tother ignoraunce.
" And thus in povertie is indeed
Trouth declared fro falshede,
For faint friendes it woll declare,
And true also, what way they fare.
For whan he was in his richesse,
These friendes full of doublenesse
Offred him in many wise
Herte and body, and service,
What wold he than have you to have bought,
To knowen openly hir thought,
That he now hath so clerely seen?
The lasse beguiled he should have been,
And he had than perceived it,
But richesse nolde not let him wit:
Well more avauntage doeth him than,
Sith that he maketh him a wise man,
The great mischief that he perceiveth
Than doeth richesse that him deceiveth:
Richesse richesse maketh nought
Him that on treasour set his thought,
For richesse sont in suffisaunce,
And nothing in aboundaunce:
For suffisaunce all onely
Maketh menne to live richly.

For he that hath mitches tweine,
Ne value in hisdemeine,
Liveth more at ease, and more is rich,
Than doeth he hat is chich,
And in his barn hath sooth to saine,
An hundred mais of wheat graine,
Though he be chapman or marchaunt,
And have of gold many besaunt:
For in getting he hath such wo,
And in the keeping drede also,
And set evermor his businesse
For to encrease, and not to lesse,
For to augment and multiply,
And though on hopes that lye him by,
Yet never shall make his richesse,
Asseth unto his gredinesse:
But the poore tha retcheth nought,
Save of his livelod in his thought,
Which that he getteth with his travaile,
He dredeth nought that it shall faile,
Though he have litle worldes good,
Meate and drinke, and easie food,
Upon his travaile and living,
And also suffisaunt clothing,
Or if in sickenesse that he fall,
And loath meat and drinke withall,
Though he have not his meat to buy,
He shall bethinke him hastely,
To put him out of all daungere,
That he of meat hath no mistere,
Or that he may with little eke
Be founden, while that he is seke,
Or that men shull him berne in hast,
To live till his sickenesse be past,
To some maisondewe beside,
He cast nought what shall him betide,
He thinketh nought that ever he shall
Into any sickenesse fall.

And though it fall, as it may be,
That all betime spare shall he,
As mokell as shall to him suffice,
While he is sicke in any wise,
He doeth for that he woll be
Content with his poverte
Without neede of any man,
So much in little have he can,
He is apaide with his fortune,
And for he nill be importune
Unto no wight, ne onerous,
Nor of his goodnesse covetous:
Therefore he spareth, it may well been,
His poore estate for to susteen.

Or if him lust not for to spare,
But suffereth forth, as not yet ware,
At last it happeneth, as it may
Right unto his laste day,
And take the world as it would be:
For ever in herte thinketh he
The sooner that Death him slo,
To paradise the sooner go
He shall, there for to live in blisse
Where that he shall no good misse:
Thider he hopeth God shall him send
After this wretched liues end.
Pythagoras himselfe rehearses
In a booke that the Golde Verses
Is cleped, for the nobilite
Of the honourable dite:
' Than whan thou goest thy body fro,
Free in the ayre thou shalt up go
And leaven all humanitie,
And purely live in deitie,
He is a foole withouten were
That troweth have his countrey here.'
" In yearth is not our countrey,
That may these clarkes seine and sey.
In Boece of Consolation
Where it is maked mention
Of our countrey plaine at the eie,
By teaching of philosophie,
Where lewd men might lere wit,
Who so that would translaten it.
If he be such that can well live.
After his rent, may him yeve,
And not desireth more to have,
Than may fro povertie him save,
A wise man saied, as we may seen,
Is no man wretched, but he it ween,
Be he king, knight, or ribaude,
And many a ribaud is merrie and baude,
That swinketh, and beareth both day and night
Many a burthen of great might,
The which doeth him lasse offence,
For he suffreth in patience:

They laugh and daunce, trippe and sing,
And lay nought up for hir living,
But in the taverne all dispendeth
The winning that God hem sendeth;
Than goeth he fardels for to beare,
With as good chere as he did eare;
To swinke and travaile he not faineth,
For to robben he disdaineth,
But right anon, after his swinke,
He goeth to taverne for to drinke:
All these are rich in aboundance,
That can thus have suffisance
Well more than can an usurere,
As God well knoweth, without were.
For an usurer, so God me see,
Shall never for richesse riche bee,
But evermore poore and indigent,
Scarce, and greedy in his entent.
" For sooth it is, whom it displease,
There may no marchaunt live at ease,
His herte in such a where is set
That it quicke brenneth to get,
Ne never shall, though he hath getten,
Though he have gould in garners yeten,
For to be needy he dredeth sore;
Wherefore to getten more and more
He set his herte and his desire;
So hote he brenneth in the fire
Of covetise, that maketh him wood
To purchase other mennes good;
He vnderfongeth a great paine,
That vndertaketh to drinke vp Saine:
For the more he drinketh aie
The more he leaveth, the sooth to say:
Thus is thurst of false getting,
That last ever in coveting,
And the anguish and distresse
With the fire of greedinesse;
She fighteth with him aie, and striveth,
That his herte asunder riveth,
Such greedinesse him assaileth,
That when he most hath, most he faileth.
" Phisitions and advocates
Gone right by the same yates,
They sell hir science for winning,
And haunt hir craft for great getting:
Hir winning is of such sweetnesse,
That if a man fall in sicknesse,
They are full glad, for hir encrease:
For by hir will, without lease,
Everich man shoulde be seeke,
And though they die, they set not a leeke;
After whan they the gould have take,
Full little care of hem they make;
They would that forties were sicke at ones,
Yea two hundred, in flesh and bones,
And yet two thousand, as I gesse,
For to encreasen hir richesse.
" They woll not worchen in no wise,
But for lucre and couetise,
For phisicke ginneth first by (phi)
The phisition also soothly,
And sithen it goeth fro fie to fie,
To trust on hem it is follie,
For they nill in no manner gree,
Doe right nought for charitee.
Eke in the same sect are set
All tho that preachen for to get
Worships, honour, and richesse.
Hir hertes arne in great distresse,
That folke live not holyly,
But aboven all specially,
Such as preachen vaine glorie
And toward God have no memorie,
But forth as ipocrites trace,
And to hir soules death purchace
And outward shewing holynesse,
Though they be full of cursednesse,
Nor lich to the apostles twelve,
They deceiue other and hem selve:
Beguiled is the guiler than,
For preaching of a cursed man
Though to other may profite
Himself it availeth not a mite:
For oft good predicatioun
Commeth of evil ententioun:
To him not vaileth his preaching
All helpe he other with his teaching,
For where they good example take,
There is he with vaine glory shake.
" But let us leaven these preachours,
And speake of hem which in hir tours
Heape vp hir gould, and fast eshet,
And sore thereon their herte set:
They neither love God ne drede,
They keepe more than it is nede,
And in hir bagges sore it bind
Out of the sunne, and of the wind:
They put vp more than need ware,
Whan they seen poore folke forfare,
For hunger die, and for cold quake;
God can wel vengeance therof take;
The great mischiefes hem assaileth,
And thus in gadering ay travaileth;
With muche paine they winne richesse,
And drede hem holdeth in distresse,
To keepe that they gather fast,
With sorrow they leave it at the last:
With sorrow they both die and live,
That unto richesse her hertes yeve.
And in defaute of love it is,
As it sheweth full well iwis:
For if these greedy, the sooth to saine,
Loveden, and were loved againe,
And good love raigned over all,
Such wickednesse ne should fall,
But he should yeve, that most good had
To hem that wereu in neede bestad,
And live without false vsure,
For charitie, full cleane and pure:
If they hem yeve to goodnesse,
Defending hem from idlenesse,
In all this world than poore none
We should finde, I trow not one:
But chaunged is this world vnstable,
For love is over all vendable.
" We see that no man loveth now
But for winning and for prow,
And love is thralled in servage
Whan it is sold for advantage;
Yet women woll hir bodies sell:
Such soules goeth to the Divell of Hell."
When Love had told hem his entent,
The baronage to counsaile went,
In many sentences they fill,
And diversly they said hir will:
But after discord they accorded,
And hir accord to Love recorded:
" Sir," sayden they, " we been at one,
By even accord of everichone,

Out take Richesse all onely
That sworne hath full hauteinly,
That she the castle nill not assaile,
Ne smite a stroke in this battaile,
With dart, ne mace, speare, ne knife,
For man that speaketh and beareth the life,
And blameth your emprise iwis,
And from our host departed is,
At least waie, as in this plite,
So hath she this man in dispite:
For she sayth he ne loved her never,
And therefore she woll hate him ever;
For he woll gather no treasore,
He hath her wrathe for evermore;
He agilte her never in other caas,
Lo here all holly his trespas.
She sayeth well, that this other day
He asked her leave to gone the way
That is cleped too much yeving,
And spake full faire in his praying:
But whan he prayed her, poore was he,
Therefore she warned him the entre,
Ne yet is he not thriven so
That he hath getten a pennie or two,
That quietly is his owne in hold:
Thus hath Richesse us all told,
And whan Richesse us this recorded,
Withouten her we been accorded.
" And we finde in our accordaunce,
That False Semblaunt and Abstinaunce,
With all the folke of hir battaile
Shull at the hinder gate assaile,
That Wicked Tongue hath in keeping,
With his Normans full of jangling,
And with hem Courtesie and Largesse,
That shull shew hir hardynesse,
To the old wife that kept so hard
Faire Welcomming within her ward:
Than shall Delight and Well Heling
Fond Shame adoune to bring,
With all her host early and late,
They shull assaylen that ilke gate,
Against Drede shall Hardynesse
Assaile, and also Sikernesse,
With all the folke of hir leading
That never wist what wast slaying.

Fraunchise shall fight and eke Pite,
With Daunger full of cruelte,
Thus is your host ordained weale;
Downe shall the castle every deale,
If everiche doe his entent,
So that Venus be present,
Your mother full of vesselage
That can inough of such usage;
Withouten her may no wight speed
This worke, neither for word ne deed:
Therefore is good ye for her send,
For through her may this worke ameud."

" Lordinges, my mother, the gooddes,
That is my ladie, and my mistres,
Nis nat all at my willing,
Ne doth all my desiring.
Yet can she sometime doen labour,
Whan that her lust, in my succour.
As my neede is for to atchieve:
But now I thinke her not to grieve,
My mother is she, and of childhede
I both worship her, and eke drede,
For who that dredeth sire ne dame,
Shall it abie in bodie or name.
And nathelesse, yet can we
Send after her if need be,
And were she nigh, she commen would,
I trow that nothing might her hold.
" My mother is of great prowesse,
She hath tane many a forteresse,
That cost hath many a pound er this,
There I nas not present iwis,
And yet men sayd it was my deede,
But I come never in that steede,
Ne me ne liketh so mote I thee,
That such towers been take with mee,
For why? Me thinketh that in no wise,
It may be cleped but marchaundise.

Go by a courser blacke or white,
And pay therefore, than art thou quite,
The marchaunt oweth thee right nought,
Ne thou him whan thou it bought.
I woll not selling clepe yeving,
For selling asketh no guerdoning,
Here lithe no thanke, ne no merite,
That one goeth from that other all quite,
But this selling is not semblable:
" For when his horse is in the stable
He may it sell againe parde,
And winnen on it, such happe may be,
All may the manne not lese iwis,
For at the least the skinne is his.
" Or else, if it so betide
That he woll keepe his horse to ride,
Yet is he lord aie of his horse:
But thilke chafare is well worse,
There Venus entermeteth ought;
For who so such chaffare hath bought,
He shall not worchen so wisely,
That he ne shall lese utterly
Both his monney and his chaffare:
But the seller of the ware,
The prise and profite have shall,
Certaine the buyer shall lese all,
For he ne can so dere it buy
To have lordship and full maistry,
Ne have power to make letting,
Neither for yeft ne for preaching,
That of his chaffare maugre his,
Another shall have as much iwis,
If he woll yeve as much as he,
Of what countrey so that he be,
Or for right nought, so happe may,
If he can flatter her to her pay.
" Been then suche marchauntes wise?
No, but fooles in every wise,
Whan they buy such thing wilfully,
There as they lese hir good follily.
But nathelesse, this dare I say,
My mother is not wont to pay,
For she is neither so foole ne nice,
To entremete her of such vice,
But trust well, he shall paie all,
That repent of his bargaine shall,
Whan Poverte put him in distresse,
All were he schooller to Richesse,
That is for me in great yerning,
Whan she assenteth to my willing,

But by my mother saint Venus,
And by her father Saturnus,
That her engendred by his life,
But nat upon his wedded wife,
Yet woll I more unto you swere,
To make this thing the surere.
" Now by that faith, and that beautee
That I owe to all my brethren free,
Of which there nis wight under Hevin
That can hir fathers names nevin,
So divers and so many there be,
That with my mother have be prive,
Yet woll I sweare for sikernesse,
The pole of Hell to my witnesse,
Now drinke I not this yeare clarre,
If that I lye, or forsworne be,
For of the goddes the usage is,
That who so him forsweareth amis,
Shall that yeere drinke no clarre.
" Now have I swome inough parde,
If I forsweare me than am I lorne,
But I woll never be forsworne:
Sith Richesse hath me failed here,
She shall abie that trespasse dere,
At least way but I her harme,
With sweard, or sparth, or gisarme.
" For certes sith she loveth not me,
Fro thilke time that she may see
The castle and the tower to shake,
In sorrie time she shall awake;
If I may gripe a rich man
I shall so pull him, if I can,
That he shall in a fewe stoundes,
Lese all his markes, and his poundes.
" I shall him make his pence out sling,
But they in his garner spring,
Our maidens shall eke plucke him so,
That him shall needen feathers mo,
And make him sell his lond to spend,
But he the bet can him defend.

Poore men han made hir lord of me;
Although they not so mightie be,
That they may feede me in delite,
I woll not have them in dispite:
No good man hateth hem, as I gesse,
For chinch and feloun is Richesse,
That so can chase hem and dispise,
And hem defoule in sundrie wise:
They loven full bette, so God me spede,
Than doeth the rich chinchy grede,
And been (in good faith) more stable
And truer, and more serviable:
And therefore it suffiseth me
Hir good herte, and hir beaute;
They han on me set all their thought,
And therefore I foryete hem nought.
" I woll hem bring in great noblesse,
If that I were god of richesse,
As I am god of love soothly,
Such ruth upon hir plaint have I:
Therefore I must his succour be,
That paineth him to serven me,
For if he dyed for love of this,
Than seemeth in me no love there is."
" Sir," sayd they, " sooth is everie dele
That ye rehearse, and we wote wele
Thilke oath to hold is reasonable,
For it is good and covenable,
That ye on riche men han sworne:
For, sir, this wote we well beforne,
If rich men doen you homage,
That is as fooles doen outrage,
But ye shull not forsworne be,
Ne let therefore to drinke clarre,
Or piment maked fresh and new,
Ladies shull hem such pepir brew,
If that they fall into hir laas,
That they for woe mow saine Alas!
Ladies shullen ever so courteous be,
That they shall quite your oath all free;
Ne seeketh never other vicaire,
For they shall speake with hem so faire
That ye shall hold you payd full well,
Though ye you meddle never a deale,
Let ladies worch with hir thinges,
They shall hem tell so fele tidinges,
And moove hem eke so many requestes
By flatterie, that not honest is,
And thereto yeve hem such thankinges,
What with kissing, and with talkinges,
That certes if they trowed be,
Shall never leave hem lond ne fee
That it nill as the moeble fare,
Of which they first delivered are:
Now may you tell us all your will,
And we your hestes shall fulfill.

But False Semblaunt dare not for drede
Of you, sir, meddle him of this dede,
For he sayth that ye been his foe,
He not, if ye will worch him woe:
Wherefore we pray you all, beau sire,
That ye foryeve him now your ire,
And that he may dwell as your man
With Abstinence his deere lemman,
This our accord and our will now."
" Parfey," said Love, " I graunt it you,
I woll well hold him for my man,
Now led him come:" and he forth ran.
" False semblant," (quod Love) " in this wise
I take thee here to my service,
That thou our friendes helpe alwaie,
And hindreth hem neither night ne daie,
But doe thy might hem to relieve,
And eke our enemies that thou grieve,
Thine be this might, I graunt it thee,
My king of harlotes shalt thou bee:
We woll that thou have such honour,
Certaine thou art a false traitour,
And eke a theefe; sith thou were borne,
A thousand times thou art forsworne:
But nathelesse in our hearing,
To put our folke out of doubting,
I bidde thee teach hem, wost thou how?
By some generall signe now,
In what place thou shalt founden be,
If that men had mister of thee,
And how men shall thee best espie,
For thee to know is great maistrie,
Tell in what place is thine haunting."
" Sir I have full divers wonning,
That I keepe not rehearsed be,
So that ye would respiten me,
For if that I tell you the sooth,
I may have harme and shame both,
If that my fellowes wisten it,
My tales shoulden me be quit,

For certaine they would hate me,
If ever I knew hir cruelte,
For they would over all hold hem still
Of troth, that is againe hir will,
Such tales keepen they not here,
I might eftsoone buy it full dere,
If I saied of hem any thing,
That ought displeaseth to hir hearing,
For what word that hem pricketh or biteth,
In that word none of hem deliteth,
All were it gospell the euangile,
That would reproue hem of hir guile,
For they are cruell and hautain;
And this thing wote I well certain,
If I speake ought to paire or loos,
Your court shall not so well be cleos,
That they ne shall wite it at last:
Of good men am I nought agast,
For they woll taken on hem nothing,
Whan that they know all my meaning,
But he that woll it on him take,
He woll himselfe suspecious make,
That he his life let couertly,
In guile and in hypocrisie,
That me engendred and yave fostring."
" They made a full good engendring,"
(Quod Love) " for who so soothly tell,
They engendred the Diuell of Hell.
" But needely, howsoeuer it bee"
(Quod Love) " I will and charge thee,
To tell anon thy wonning placis,
Hearing each wight that in this place is:
And what life thou livest also,
Hide it no lenger now, whereto:
Thou must discouer all thy worching,
How thou seruest, and of what thing,
Though that thou shuldest for thy sothsaw
Ben all to beaten and to draw,
And yet art thou not wont parde,
But nathelesse, though thou beaten be,
Thou shalt not be the first, that so
Hath for soothsawe suffred wo."
" Sir, sith that it may liken you,
Though that I should be slaine right now,
I shall doen your commaundement,
For thereto have I great talent."
Withouten words mo, right than
False Semblaunt his sermon began,
And saied hem thus in audience,
" Barons, take heed of my sentence,
That wight that list to have knowing
Of False Semblant full of flattering,
He must in worldly folke him take,
And certes in the cloysters eke,
I won no where, but in hem tway,
But not like euen, sooth to say,
Shortly I woll herborow me,
There I hope best to hulstred be,
And certainely, sikerest hiding
Is underneath humblest clothing.
" Religious folke ben full couert,
Secular folke ben more apert:
But nathelesse, I woll not blame
Religious folke, ne hem diffame
In what habite that euer they go:
Religion humble, and true also,
Woll I not blame, ne dispise,
But I nill love it in no wise,
I meane of false religious,
That stout been, and malicious,
That wollen in an habite go,
And setten not hir herte thereto.

Religious folke been all pitous,
Thou shalt not seene one dispitous,
They loven no pride, ne no strife,
But humbly they woll lede hir life,
With which folke woll I neuer be,
And if I dwell, I faine me
I may well in hir habite go,
But me were leuer my necke atwo,
Than let a purpose that I take,
What couenaunt that euer I make.
" I dwell with hem that proude be,
And full of wiles and subtelte,
That worship of this world coueiten,
And great nede connen expleiten,
And gone and gadren great pitaunces,
And purchase hem the acquaintaunces
Of men that mightie life may leden,
And faine hem poore, and hemselfe feden
With good morsels delicious,
And drinken good wine precious,
And preach vs pouert and distresse,
And fishen hemselfe great richesse,
With wily nettes that they cast,
It woll come foule out at the last.
" They ben fro cleane religion went,
They make the world an argument,
That hath a foule conclusion.
I have a robe of religion,
Than am I all religious:
This argument is all roignous,
It is not worth a crooked brere,
Habite ne maketh neither monke ne frere,
But cleane life and deuotion,
Maketh men of good religion.
" Nathelesse, there can none answere,
How high that euer his head he shere,
With rasour whetted neuer so kene,
That guile in braunches cutte thurtene,
There can no wight distinct it so,
That he dare say a word thereto.
" But what herborow that euer I take,
Or what semblaunt that euer I make,
I meane but guile, and follow that,
For right no more than Gibbe our cat,
(That awaiteth mice and rattes to killen)
Ne entend I but to beguilen,
Ne no wight may, by my clothing,
Wete with what folke is my dwelling,
Ne by my wordes yet parde,
So soft and so pleasaunt they be.
" Behold the deedes that I do,
But thou be blind thou oughtest so,
For varie hir wordes fro hir deed,
They thinke on guile withouten dreed,
What manner clothing that they were,
Or what estate what euer they bere,
Lered or leud, lord or ladie,
Knight, squire, burgeis, or bailie."
Right thus while False Semblant sermoneth,
Eftsoones Love him aresoneth,
And brake his tale in his speaking
As though he had him told leasing.
And saied: " What deuill is that I heare?
What folke hast thou vs nempned here?
May menne find religioun
In worldly habitatioun?"

" Yea, sir, it followeth nat that they
Should lend a wicked life parfey,
Ne not therefore hir soules lese,
That hem to worldly clothes chese,
For certes it were great pitee;
Men may in secular clothes see,
Florishen holy religioun;
Full many a saint in field and toun,
With many a virgine glorious,
Deuout, and full religious;
Han died, that common cloth aye beren,
Yet saintes neuerthelesse they weren.
I could recken you many a ten,
Yea welnigh all these holy women
That men in churches herry and seke,
Both maidens, and these wiues eke,
That baren full many a faire child here,
Weared alway clothes seculere,
And in the same diden they
That saints weren, and ben alway.
" The nine thousand maidens dere,
That beren in Heauen hir cierges clere,
Of which men rede in church and sing,
Were take in secular clothing,
When they receiued martirdome,
And wonnen Heauen unto hir home.
" Good herte maketh the good thought,
The clothing yeueth ne reueth nought:
The good thought and the worching,
That maketh the religion flouring,
There lieth the good religioun,
After the right ententioun.
" Who so tooke a weathers skin,
And wrapped a greedy wolfe therein,
For he should go with lambes white,
Wenest thou not he would hem bite?
Yes: neuerthelesse as he were wood
He would hem wirry, and drinke the blood,
And well the rather hem deceiue,
For sith they coude nat perceiue
His tregette, and his crueltie,
They would him follow, altho he flie.

If there be wolues of such hew,
Amonges these apostles new
Thou, holy church, thou maist be wailed,
Sith that thy citie is assailed
Through knightes of thine owne table,
God wot thy lordship is doutable:
If they enforce it to win,
That should defend it fro within,
Who might defence ayenst hem make?
Without stroke it mote be take,
Of trepeget or mangonell,
Without displaying of pensell,
And if God nill done it succour,
But let renne in this colour,
Thou must thy hestes letten bee,
Than is there nought, but yeeld thee,
Or yeue hem tribute douteles,
And hold it of hem to have pees:
But greater harme betide thee,
That they all maister of it bee:
Well eon they scorne thee withall,
By day stuffen they the wall,
And all the night they minen there:
Nay, thou planten must els where
Thine impes, if thou wolt fruit have,
Abide not there thy selfe to save.

But now peace, here I turne againe,
I woll no more of this thing faine,
If I might passen me hereby;
For I might maken you weary;
But I woll heten you alway,
To helpe your friendes what I may,
So they wollen my company,
For they been shent all ytterly,
But if so fall, that I be
Oft with hem, and they with me,
And eke my lemman mote they serue,
Or they shull not my love deserue,
Forsooth I am a false traitour,
God iudged me for a theefe trechour,
Forsworne I am, but well nigh none
Wote of my guile, till it be done.
" Through me hath many one deth receiued,
That my treget neuer aperceiued,
And yet receiueth, and shall receiue,
That my falsenesse shall neuer apperceiue:
But who so doth, if he wise be,
Him is right good beware of me.
But so sligh is the aperceiuing
That all to late commeth knowing;
For Protheus that could him chaunge,
In euery shape homely and straunge,
Coud neuer such guile ne treasoun
As I, for I come neuer in toun
There as I might knowen be,
Though men me both might here and see.
Full well I can my clothes chaunge,
Take one, and make another straunge.
Now am I knight, now chastelaine,
Now prelate, and now chaplaine,
Now priest, now clerke, now fostere,
Now am I maister, now schollere
Now monke, now charion, now baily,
What euer mister man am I.
" Now am I prince, now am I page,
And can by herte euery language,
Sometime am I hoore and old,
Now am I younge, stoute, and bold,
Now am I Robert, now Robin,
Now frere minor, now jacobin,
And with me followeth my loteby,
To done me sollace and company,
That hight dame Abstinence, and raigned
In many a queint array faigned,
Right as it commeth to her liking,
I fulfill all her desiring.
" Sometime a womans cloth take I,
Now am I a maid, now lady.
" Sometime I am religious,
Now like an anker in an hous.
" Sometime am I prioresse,
And now a nonne, and now abbesse,
And go through all regiouns,
Seeking all religioun.
" But to what order that I am sworne,
I take the straw and beat the corne,
To jolly folke I enhabite,
I aske no more but hir habite.
" What woll ye more? in every wise
Right as me list I me disguise?
" Well can I beare me under wede,
Unlike is my word to my dede,
Thus make I into my trappes fall
The people, through my priuiledges all,
That ben in Christendome alive.
" I may assoile, and I may shrive,

That no prelate may let me,
All folke, where ever they found be:
I not no prelate may done so,
But it the pope be, and no mo,
That made thilke establishing,
Now is not this a proper thing?
But were my sleights apperceiued
.....
As I was wont, and woll thou why?
For I did hem a tregetry,
But thereof yeue I a little tale,
I have the siluer and the male,
So have I preached and eke shriuen,
So have I take, so have I yeuen,
Through hir folly, husbond and wife,
That I lede right a jolly life,
Through simplesse of the prelacie,
They know not all my tregettrie.

But for as much as man and wife
Should shew hir parish priest hir life
Ones a yeare, as sayth the booke,
Ere any wight his housel tooke,
Than have I priviledges large,
That may of muche thing discharge,
For he may say right thus pardee:
" 'Sir Priest, in shrift I tell it thee,
That he to whom that I am shriven,
Hath me assoyled, and me yeven
Pennaunce soothly for my sin,
Which that I found me guilty in,
Ne I ne haue never entencion
To make double confession,
Ne rehearse eft my shrift to thee,
O shrift is right ynough to mee,
This ought thee suffice wele,
Ne be not rebell never adele,
For certes, though thou haddest it sworne,
I wote no priest ne prelate borne
That may to shrift eft me constraine,
And if they done I woll me plaine,
For I wote where to plaine wele,
Thou shalt not streine me adele,
Ne enforce me, ne not me trouble,
To make my confession double;
Ne I have none affection
To have double absolution:
The first is right ynough to mee,
This latter assoyling quite I thee,
I am unbound, what maist thou find
More of my sinnes me to unbind?
For he that might hath in his hond,
Of all my sinnes me unbond:
And if thou wolt me thus constraine
That me mote nedes on thee plaine,
There shall no judge imperiall,
Ne bishop, ne officiall,
Done judgement on me, for I
Shall gone and plaine me openly
Unto my shriftfather new,
That hight Frere Wolfe untrew,
And he shall chuse him for mee,
For I trow he can hamper thee;
But lord he would be wroth withall,
If men would him Frere Wolfe call,
For he would have no patience,
But done all cruell vengience,
He would his might done at the leest,
Nothing spare for Goddes heest,
And God so wise be my succour,
But thou yeve me my saviour
At Easter, whan it liketh mee,
Without preasing more on thee,
I woll forth, and to him gone,
And he shall housell me anone,
For I am out of thy grutching,
I keepe not deale with thee nothing.'
" Thus may he shrive him, that forsaketh
His parish priest, and to me taketh,
And if the priest woll him refuse,
I am full ready him to accuse,
And him punish and hamper so,
That he his churche shall forgo.
" But who so hath in his feeling
The consequence of such shriving,
Shall seene, that priest may never have might
To know the conscience aright
Of him that is under his cure:
And this is ayenst holy scripture,
That biddeth every herde honest
Have very knowing of his beest.
But poore folke that gone by strete,
That have no gold, ne summes grete,
Hem would I let to hir prelates,
Or let hir priests know hir states,
For to me right nought yeve they,
And why it is, for they ne may.
" They ben so bare, I take no keepe,
But I woll have the fat sheepe;
Let parish priests have the lene,
I yeve not of hir harme a bene;
And if that prelates grutch it,
That oughten wroth be in hir wit,
To lese hir fat beastes so,
I shall yeve hem a stroke or two,
That they shall lesen with force,
Yea, both hir mitre and hir croce.
" Thus yape I hem, and have do long,
My priviledges ben so strong."
False Semblant would have stinted here,
But Love ne made him no such chere,
That he was weary of his saw,
But for to make him glad and faw,
He said, "Tell on more specially,
How that thou servest untruly.
" Tell forth, and shame thee never adele,
For as thine habit sheweth wele,
Thou servest an holy hermite.
" Sooth is, but I am but an hypocrite,
Thou goest and preachest poverte?
" Yea, sir, but Richesse hath poste,
Thou preachest abstinence also?"
" Sir, I woll fillen, so mote I go,
My paunche, of good meat and wine,
As should a maister of divine,
For how that I me poore faine,
Yet all poore folke I disdaine.

I love better the acquaintaunce
Ten times of the king of Fraunce,
Than of a poore man of mild mood,
Though that his soule be also good.
" For whan I see beggers quaking,
Naked on mixins all stinking,
For hunger crie, and eke for care,
I entremet not of hir fare,
They ben so poore, and full of pine,
They might not ones yeve me a dine,

For they have nothing but hir life,
What should he yeve that licketh his knife?
It is but folly to entremete
To seeke in houndes nest fat mete:
Let beare hem to the spittle anone,
But fro me comfort get they none:
But a rich sicke usurere
Would I visite and draw nere,
Him would I comfort and rehete,
For I hope of his gold to gete,
And if that wicked Death him have,
I woll go with him in his grave,
And if there any reprove me,
Why that I let the poore be,
Wost thou how I not escape?
I say and sweare him full rape,
That riche men han more tetches
Of sinne, than han poore wretches,
And han of counsaile more mistere,
And therefore I would draw hem nere:
But as great hurt, it may so be,
Hath a soule in right great poverte,
As soule in great richesse forsooth,
Albeit that they hurten both,
For richesse and mendicities
Ben cleped two extreamities,
The meane is cleped suffisaunce,
There lieth of vertue the aboundaunce.
"For Salomon full well I wote,
In his parables us wrote,
As it is knowen of many a wight,
In his thirteene chapiter right,
God thou me keepe for thy poste,
Fro richesse and mendicite,
For if a rich man him dresse,
To thinke too much on richesse,
His herte on that so ferre is sette,
That he his creator doth forvette,
And him that beggeth, woll aye greve,
How should I by his word him leve,
Unneth that he nis a micher,
Forsworne, or els Goddes lier,
Thus sayth Salomon sawes.
"Ne we find written in no lawes,
And namely in our Christen lay,
(Who saith ye, I dare say nay)
That Christ, ne his apostles dere,
While that they walked in earth here,
Were never seene herbred begging,
For they nolden beggen for nothing.
"And right thus were men wont to teach,
And in this wise would it preach,
The maisters of divinitie
Sometime in Paris the citie.

And if men would there gaine appose
The naked text, and let the glose,
It might soone assoiled bee,
For men may well the sooth see,
That pard they might aske a thing
Plainely forth without begging,
For they weren Goddes heerdes dere,
And cure of soules hadden here,
They nolde nothing begge hir food,
For after Christ was done on rood,
With their proper honds they wrought,
And with travaile, and els nought,
They wonnen all hir sustenaunce,
And liueden forth in hir pennaunce,
And the remenaunt yafe away
To other poore folkes alway.
"They neither builden toure ne halle,
But they in houses small with alle.
"A mighty man that can and may,
Should with his hond and body alway,
Winne him his food in labouring,
If he ne have rent or such a thing;
Although he be religious,
And God to serven curious,
Thus mote he done, or do trespaas,
But if it be in certaine caas,
That I can rehearse, if mister bee,
Right well, whan the time I see.
"Seeke the booke of Saint Augustine,
Be it in paper or perchemene,
There as he witte of these worchings,
Thou shalt seene that none excusings
A perfit man ne should seeke
By wordes, ne by deedes eke,
Although he be religious,
And God to serven curious,
That he ne shall, so mote I go,
With proper honds and body also
Get his food in labouring,
If he ne have properte of thing,
Yet should he sell all his substaunce,
And with his swinke have sustenaunce,
If he be perfite in bounte;
Thus han the bookes told me:
For he that woll gone idelly,
And useth it aye busily
To haunten other mennes table,
He is a trechour full of fable,
Ne he ne may by good reason
Excuse him by his orison,
For men behoveth in some gise,
Ben sometime in Goddes service,
To gone and purchasen hir nede.
"Men mote eaten, that is no drede,
And sleepe, and eke do other thing,
So long may they leave praying.
"So may they eke hir prayer blinne,
While that they werke hir meat to winne,
Saint Austine woll thereto accord,
In thilke booke that I record.
"Justinian eke, that made lawes,
Hath thus forboden by old sawes:
'No man, vp paine to be dead,
Mighty of body, to beg his bread,
If he may swinke it for to gete,
Men should him rather maine or bete,
Or done of him aperte iustice,
Than suffren him in such mallice.'
"They done not well so mote I go,
That taken such almesse so,
But if they have some priviledge,
That of the paine hem woll alledge.
"But how that is, can I not see,
But if the prince deceived bee,
Ne I ne wene not sikerly,
That they may have it rightfully.
"But I woll not determine
Of princes power, ne define,
Ne by my word comprehend ywis,
If it so ferre may stretch in this;
I woll not entremete a dele,
But I trow that the booke sayth wele,
Who that taketh almesses, that bee
Dew to folke that men may see

Lame, feeble, weary, and bare,
Poore, or in such manner care,
That con winne hem nevermo,
For they have no power thereto,
He eateth his owne dampning,
But if he lie that made all thing.
And if ye such a truant find,
Chastise him well, if ye be kind,
But they would hate you parcaas,
If ye fillen in hir laas.
" They would eftsoones do you scathe,
If that they might, late or rathe,
For they be not full patient,
That han the world thus foule blent,
And weteth well, that God bad
The good man sell all that he had,
And follow him, and to poore it yeve:
He would not therefore that he live,
To serven him in mendience,
For it was never his sentence,
But he bad werken whan that need is,
And follow him in goode deedis.
" Saint Poule that loved all holy church,
He bade the apostles for to wurch,
And winnen hir livelode in that wise,
And hem defended truandise,
And said, werketh with your honden,
Thus should the thing be vnderstonden.
" He nolde iwis have bid hem begging,
Ne sellen gospell, ne preaching,
Least they beraft, with hir asking,
Folke of hir catteli or of hir thing.
" For in this world is many a man
That yeveth his good, for he ne can
Werne it for shame, or else he
Would of the asker delivered be,
And for he him encombreth so,
He yeveth him good to let him go:
But it can him nothing profite,
They lese the yeft and the merite.
" The good folke that Poule to preached,
Profred him oft, whan he hem teached,
Some of hir good in charite,
But thereof right nothing tooke he,
But of his honde would he gette
Clothes to wrine him, and his mete.

Tell me than how a man may liven,
That all his good to poore hath yeven,
And woll but onely bidde his bedes,
And never with honds labour his nedes.
May he do so? Yea sir: and how?
Sir I woll gladly tell you:
Saint Austen saith, a man may be
In houses that han properte,
As templers and hospitelers,
And as these chanons regulers,
Or white monkes, or these blake,
I woll no mo ensamples make,
And take thereof his susteining,
For therein lithe no begging,
But otherwaies not iwis,
Yet Austen gabbeth not of this,
And yet full many a monke laboureth,
That God in holy church honoureth:
For whan hir swinking is agone,
They rede and sing in church anone.
" And for there hath ben great discord,
As many a wight may beare record,
Upon the estate of mendicience,
I woll shortely in your presence,
Tell how a man may begge at need,
That hath not wherewith him to feed,
Maugre his fellowes ianglings,
For soothfastnesse woll none hidings,
And yet percase I may obey,
That I to you soothly thus sey.

Lo here the case especiall,
If a man be so bestiall,
That he of no craft hath science,
And nought desireth ignorence,
Than may he go a begging yerne,
Till he some other craft can lerne,
Through which without truanding,
He may in trouth have his living.
" Or if he may done no labour,
For elde, or sicknesse, or langour,
Or for his tender age also,
Than may he yet a begging go.
" Or if he have peraventure,
Through vsage of his noriture,
Lived over deliciously,
Than oughten good folke comenly,
Han of his mischeefe some pite,
And suffren him also, that he
May gone about and begge his bread,
That he be not for honger dead;
Or if he have of craft conning,
And strength also, and desiring
To worchen, as he had what,
But he find neither this ne that,
Than may he begge till that he
Have getten his necessite.
" Or if his winning be so lite,
That his labour woll not aquite
Sufficiauntly all his living,
Yet may he go his brede begging
Fro dore to dore, he may go trace,
Till he the remnaunt may purchase.
" Or if a man would vndertake
Any emprise for to make,
In the rescuous of our lay,
And it defenden as he may,
Be it with armes or lettrure,
Or other convenable cure,
If it be so he poore be,
Than may he begge, till that he
May find in trouth for to swinke
And get him clothe, meat, and drinke,
Swinke he with his hondes corporell,
And not with hondes espirituell.

In all this case, and in semblables,
If that there ben mo reasonables,
He may begge, as I tell you here,
And eles not in no manere,
As William Saint Amour would preach,
And oft would dispute and teach
Of this matter all openly
At Paris full solemnely,
And also God my soule blesse
As he had in this stedfastnesse
The accord of the vniversite
And of the people, as seemeth me.
" No good man ought it to refuse,
Ne ought him thereof to excuse,

Be wrothe or blithe who so be,
For I woll speake, and tell it thee,
All should I die, and be put doun,
As was saint Poule in derke prisoun,
Or be exiled in this caas
With wrong, as maister William was,
That my mother Hypocrisie
Banished for her great envie.
" My mother flemed him Saint Amour:
This noble did suche labour
To sustene ever the loyalte,
That he too much agilte me:
He made a booke, and let it write,
Wherein his life he did all write,
And would eche renied begging,
And live by my traveiling,
If I ne had rent ne other good,
What weneth he that I were wood?
For labour might me never please,
I have more will to ben at ease,
And have well lever, sooth to say,
Before the people patter and pray,
And wrie me in my foxerie
Under a cope of papelardie."
(Quod Love) " What divell is this that I here,
What wordes tellest thou me here?"
" What, sir, falsenesse; that apert is."
" Than dredest thou not God?" " No certes:
For selde in great thing shall he spede
In this world, that God woll drede,
For folke that hem to vertue yeven,
And truely on hir owen liven,
And hem in goodnesse aye content,
On hem is little thrift isent,
Such folke drinken great misease,
That life may me never please.
" But see what gold han vserers,
And silver eke in garners,
Tailagiers, and these moniours,
Bailiffes, beadles, provost, countours,
These liven well nigh by ravine,
The small people hem mote encline,
And they as wolves woll hem eten:
Upon the poore folke they geten
Full much of that they spend or kepe,
Nis none of hem that they nill streps,
And wrine hem selfe well at full,
Without scalding they hem pull.
" The strong the feeble overgothe,
But I that weare my simple clothe,
Robbe both robbed, and robbours,
And guile guiling, and guilours:
By my treget, I gather and threste
The great treasour into my cheste,
That lieth with me so fast bound,
Mine high paleis doe I found,
And my delightes I fulfill,
With wine at feastes at my will,
And tables full of entremees;
I woll no life, but ease and pees,
And winne gold to spend also,
For whan the greate bagge is go,
It commeth right with my yapes,
Make I not well tomble mine apes:
To winnen is alway mine entent,
My purchase is better than my rent,
For though I should beaten be,
Over all I entremete me;
Without me maie no wight dure,
I walke soules for to cure,
Of all the world cure have I
In brede and length; boldely
I woll both preach and eke counsailen,
With hondes woll I not travailen,
For of the pope I have the bull,
I ne hold not my wittes dull,
I woll not stinten in my live
These emperours for to shrive,
Or kinges, dukes, and lords grete:
But poore folke all quite I lete,
I love no such shriving parde,
But it for other cause be:
I recke not of poore men,
Hir estate is not worth an hen.
" Where findest thou a swinker of labour
Have me to his confessour?
But empresses, and duchesses,
These queenes, and eke countesses,
These abbesses, and eke bigins,
These great ladies palasins,
These iolly knights, and bailives,
These nonnes, and these burgeis wives
That riche ben, and eke pleasing,
And these maidens welfaring,
Where so they clad or naked be,
Uncounsailed goeth there none fro me;
And for hir soules safete,
At lord and lady, and hir meine,
I aske, whan they hem to me shrive,
The propertie of all hir live,
And make hem trow, both most and least,
Hir parish priest is but a beast
Ayenst me and my company,
That shrewes been as great (as I)
For which I woll not hide in hold,
No privete that me is told,
That I by word or signe iwis,
Ne woll make hem know what it is,
And they wollen also tellen me,
They hele fro me no privite.
And for to make you hem perceiven,
That vsen folke thus to deceiven,
I woll you saine withouten drede,
What men may in the Gospell rede,
Of Saint Mathew the gospellere,
That saieth, as I shall you say here.

Vpon the chaire of Moses
Thus it is glosed douteles,
(That is the olde testament,
For thereby is the chaire ment)
Sitte scribes and pharisen,
That is to saine, the cursed men,
Which that we ipocrites call:
Doeth that they preache, I rede you all,
But doeth not as they doen adele,
That been not weary to say wele,
But to doe well, no will have they,
And they would bind on folke alway
(That been to be beguiled able)
Burdons that been importable,
On folkes shoulders things they couchen,
That they nill with their fingers touchen.
And why woll they not touch it, why?
For hem ne list nat sikerly,
For sadde burdons that men taken,
Make folkes shoulders aken.
" And if they do ought that good bee,
That is for folke it should see:

Hir burdons larger maken they,
And maken hir hemmes wide alwey,
And loven seates at the table
The first and most honourable,
And for to han the first chairis,
In synagogues, to hem full dere is,
And willen that folke hem loute and grete,
Whan that they passen through the strete,
And wollen be cleped maister also:
But they ne should not willen so,
The gospell is there ayenst I gesse,
That sheweth well hir wickednesse.

Another custome vse we
Of hem that woll ayenst vs be,
We hate hem deadly everychone,
And we woll werry him, as one,
Him that one hateth, hate we all,
And coniect how to doen him fall:
And if we seene him winne honour,
Richesse or preise, through his valour,
Provende, rent, or dignite,
Full fast iwis compassen we
By what ladder he is clomben so,
And for to maken him downe to go,
With treason we woll him defame,
And doen him lese his good name.
" Thus from his ladder we him take,
And thus his frendes foes we make,
But word ne wete shall he none,
Till all his frendes been his fone,
For if we did it openly,
We might have blame readily,
For had he wist of our mallice,
He had him kept, but he were nice.
" Another is this, that if so fall,
That there be one among vs all
That doeth a good tourne, out of drede,
We saine it is our alder dede,
Yea sikerly, though he it fained,
Or that him list, or that him dained
A man through him avaunced be,
Thereof all parteners be we,
And tellen folke where so we go,
That man through vs is sprongen so.
" And for to have of men praising,
We purchase through our flattering
Of riche men of great poste
Letters, to witnesse our bounte,
So that man weeneth that may vs see,
That all vertue in vs bee.
" And alway poore we vs faine,
But how so that we begge or plaine,
We ben the folke without leasing,
That all thing have without having.
" Thus be dradde of the people iwis,
And gladly my purpose is this.
" I deale with no wight, but he
Have gold and treasour great plente,
Hir acquaintaunce well love I:
This much my desire shortly,
I entremete me of brocages,
I make peace and mariages,
I am gladly executour,
And many times a procuratour,
I am sometime messangere,
That falleth not to my mistere.
" And many times I make enquest,
For me that office is nat honest,
To deale with other mennes thing,
That is to me a great liking:
And if that ye have ought to do
In place that I repaire to,
I shall it speden through my wit,
As soone as ye have told me it,
So that ye serve me to pay,
My service shall be yours alway.
" But who so woll chastice me,
Anone my love lost hath he,
For I love no man in no gise,
That woll me reprove or chastise,
But I woll all folke vndertake,
And of no wight no teaching take,
For I that other folke chastie,
Woll not be taught fro my follie.

I love none hermitage more,
All desertes and holtes hoore
And greate woodes everychon,
I let hem to the Baptist Iohn,
I queth him quite, and him relesse
Of Egipt all the wildernesse;
Too ferre were all my mansiouns
Fro all cities and good touns.
" My paleis and mine house make I
There men may renne in openly,
And say that I the world forsake,
But all amidde I build and make
My house, and swim and play therein
Bette than a fish doeth with his finne.

Of Antichristes men am I,
Of which that Christ sayeth openly,
They have habite of holinesse,
And liven in such wickednesse.
" Outward lamben seemen we,
Full of goodnesse and of pite,
And inward we withouten fable
Been greedy wolves ravisable.
" We enviroun both lond and see,
With all the world werrien wee,
We woll ordaine of all thing,
Of folkes good, and hir living.
" If there be castell or cite
Within that any bougerons be,
Although that they of Millaine were,
For thereof been they blamed there;
Or if a wight out of measure,
Would lene hir gold, and take vsure,
For that he is so covetous,
Or if he be too lecherous,
Or these that haunten simonie,
Or provost full of trecherie,
Or prelate living iollily,
Or priest that halt his quein him by,
Or olde hoores hostillers,
Or other baudes or bordellers,
Or els blamed of any vice,
Of which men shoulden doen iustice:
" By all the saintes that we prey,
But they defend them with lamprey,
With luce, with elis, with samons,
With tender geese, and with capons,
With tartes, or with cheffes fat,
With daintie flaunes, brode and flat,
With caleweis, or with pullaile,
With coninges, or with fine vitaile,

That we vnder our clothes wide,
Maken through our gollet glide,
Or but he woll doe come in hast
Rae venison bake in past,
Whether so that he loure or groine,
He shall haue of a corde a loigne,
With which men shall him bind and lede,
To brenne him for his sinful dede,
That men shull heare him crie and rore
A mile way about and more,
Or els he shall in prison die,
But if he woll his friendship buy,
Or smerten that, that he hath do,
More than his guilt amounteth to.
" But and he couth through his sleight
Doe maken up a toure of height,
Nought rought I whether of stone or tree,
Or yearth, or turves though it be,
Though it were of no vounde stone,
Wrought with squier and scantilone,
So that the toure were stuffed well
With all riches temporell:
" And than that he would vp dresse
Engines, both more and lesse,
To cast at vs by every side,
To beare his good name wide:
" Such sleightes I shall you yeven,
Barrels of wine, by sixe or seven,
Or gold in sackes great plente,
He should soone delivered be,
And if he have no such pitences,
Let him studie in equipolences,
And let lies and fallaces,
If that he would deserve our graces,
Or we shall beare him such witnesse
Of sinne, and of his wretchednesse,
And doun his lose so wide renne
That all quicke we should him brenne,
Or els yeve him soch pennaunce,
That is well worse than the pitaunce.
" For thou shalt never for nothing
Con knowen aright by hir clothing
The traitours full of trecherie,
But thou hir werkes can espie.
" And ne had the good keeping be
Whylome of the vniversite,
That keepeth the key of Christendome,
We had been tourmented all and some.
" Such been the stinking prophetis,
Nis none of hem, that good prophet is,
For they through wicked entention,
The yeare of the incarnation
A thousand and two hundred yere,
Five and fiftie ferther ne nere,
Brought en a booke with sorie grace,
To yeven ensample in common place,
That saied thus, though it were fable,
This is the gospell perdurable,
That fro the Holy Ghost is sent.
Well were it worthe to be brent.
Entitled was in such manere
This booke, of which I tell here,
There nas no wight in all Paris,
Beforne our ladie at parvis,
That they ne might the booke by,
The sentence pleased hem well truely.
To the copie, if him talent tooke
Of the evangelistes booke,
There might he see by great traisoun
Full many a false comparisoun.

" As much as through his greate might,
Be it of heate or of light,
The Sunne surmounteth the Moone,
That troubler is, and chaungeth soone,
And the nutte kernell the shell,
I scorne nat that I you tell:
" Right so withouten any gile
Surmounteth this noble evangile,
The word of any evangelist,
And to hir title they tooken Christ,
And many such comparisoun,
Of which I make no mentioun,
Might menne in that booke find,
Who so could of hem have mind.
" The vniversitie that tho was asleepe
Gan for to braide, and taken keepe,
And at the noise, the head vp cast,
Ne never sithen slept it fast,
But vp it stert, and armes tooke
Ayenst this false horrible booke,
All ready battaile for to make,
And to the iudge the booke they take.
" But they that broughten the booke there,
Hent it anone away for feare,
They nolde shew it no more adele,
But than it kept, and keepen wele,
Till such a time that they may see,
That they so stronge woxen bee,
That no wight may hem well withstond,
For by that booke they durst not stond,
Away they gonne it for to bere,
For they ne durst not answere
By exposition no glose
To that that clerkes woll appose
Ayenst the cursednesse iwis
That in that booke written is.
" Now wote I nat, ne I can nat see
What manner end that there shall bee
Of all this that they hide,
But yet algate they shall abide,
Till that they may it bette defend,
This trow I best woll be hir end.
" Thus Antichrist abiden we,
For we ben all of his meine,
And what man that woll not be so,
Right soone he shall his life forgo.
We woll a people vpon him areise,
And through our guile doen him ceise,
And him on sharpe speares riue,
Or other waies bring him fro liue,
But if that he woll follow ywis,
That in our booke written is.

Thus much woll our booke signifie,
That while Peter had maistrie
May never Iohn shew well his might.
" Now have I you declared right,
The meaning of the barke and rinde,
That maketh the entencions blinde,
But now at erst I woll begin,
To expoune you the pith within,
And the seculers comprehend,
That Christes lawe woll defend,
And should it kepen and maintainen
Ayenst hem that all sustenen,
And falsely to the people teachen,
That Iohn betokeneth hem to preachen,
That there nis law couenable,
But thilke gospell perdurable,

That fro the Holy Ghost was sent
To turne folke that ben miswent.
" The strength of Iohn they vnderstond,
The grace in which they say they stond;
That doeth the sinfull folke conuert,
And hem to Iesu Christ reuert,
Full many another horriblee,
May menne in that booke see,
That been commaunded doubtlesse
Ayenst the law of Rome expresse,
And all with Antichrist they holden,
As men may in the booke beholden.
" And than commaunden they to sleen,
All tho that with Peter been,
But they shall never have that might,
And God toforne, for strife to fight,
That they ne shall ynough find,
That Peters law shall have in mind,
And euer hold, and so mainteen,
That at the last it shall be seen,
That they shall all come thereto,
For ought that they can speake or do.
" And thilke lawe shall not stond,
That they by Iohn have vnderstond,
But maugre hem it shall adoun,
And been brought to confusioun,
" But I woll stint of this matere,
For it is wonder long to here,
But had that ilke booke endured,
Of better estate I were ensured,
And friendes have I yet pardee,
That han me set in great degree.

Or all this world is emperour
Guile my father, the trechour,
And empresse my mother is,
Maugre the Holy Ghost iwis,
Our mightie linage and our rout
Reigneth in every reigne about,
And well is worthy we ministers be,
For all this worlde governe we,
And can the folke so well deceive,
That none our guile can perceive,
And though they doen, they dare not say,
The sooth dare no wight bewray.
" But he in Christes wrath him leadeth,
That more than Christ my brethren dredeth,
He nis no full good champion,
That dredeth such similation,
Nor that for paine woll refusen,
Us to correct and accusen.
" He woll not entremete by right,
Ne have God in his eyesight,
And therefore God shall him punice;
But me ne recketh of no vice,
Sithen men vs loven communably,
And holden vs for so worthy,
That we may folke repreve echone,
And we nill have repreſe of none:
Whom shoulden folke worshippen so,
But vs that stinten never mo
To patren while that folke may vs see,
Though it not so behind hem be.

And where is more wood follie,
Than to enhaunce chivalrie,
And love noble men and gay,
This iolly clothes wearen alway?
If they be such folke as they seemen,
So cleane, as men hir clothes demen,
And that hir wordes follow hir dede,
It is great pitie out of drede,
For they woll be none hypocritis,
Of hem me thinketh greate spight is,
I cannot love hem on no side.
" But beggers with these hoodes wide,
With sleigh and pale faces leane,
And graie clothes nat full cleane,
But fretted full of tatarwagges,
And high shoes knopped with dagges,
That frouncen like a quale pipe,
Or bootes riveling as a gipe.
" To such folke as I you devise,
Should princes and these lordes wise,
Take all hir landes and hir things,
Both warre and peace in governings,
To such folke should a prince him yeve,
That would his life in honour live.
" And if they be nat as they seme,
They serven thus the world to queme,
There would I dwell to deceive
The folke, for they shall nat perceive.
" But I ne speake in no such wise,
That men should humble habite dispise,
So that no pride there vnder be,
No man should hate, as thinketh me,
The poore man in such clothing,
But God ne preiseth him nothing,
That saith he hath the world forsake,
And hath to worldly glory him take,
And woll of such delices vse,
Who may that begger well excuse?
" That papelarde, that him yeeldeth so,
And woll to worldly ease go,
And saith that he the world hath left,
And greedily it gripeth eft,
He is the hound, shame is to saine,
That to his casting gooth againe.

But vnto you dare I not lie,
But might I feelen or espie,
That ye perceiued it nothing,
Ye should have a starke leasing:
Right in your hond thus to beginne,
I nolde it let for no sinne."
The god lough at the wonder tho,
And every wight gan lough also,
And saied: " Lo here a man right,
For to be trustie to every wight."

" False semblaunt," (quod Love) " say to mee,
Sith I thus have avaunced thee,
That in my court is thy dwelling,
And of ribaudes shalt be my king,
Wolt thou well holden my forwardes?"
" Yea, sir, from hence forwardes,
Had never your father here beforne,
Seruaunt so true, sith he was borne,
That is ayenst all nature.
" Sir, put you in that auenture,
For though ye borowes take of me,
The sikerer shall ye never be
For hostages, ne sikernesse,
Or chartres, for to beare witnesse:
I take your selfe to record here,
That men ne may in no manere

Is this the sermon that ye make?
To all the diuels I me take,
Or else God thou me confound,
But er men didden this castle found,
It passed not ten dayes of twelue,
But it was told right to my selue,
And as they sayd, right so told I,
He kist the rose prilily:
Thus sayd I now, and have sayd yore,
I not where he did any more.
Why should men say me such a thing,
If it had been gabbing?
Right so saide I, and woll say yet,
I trow I lyed not of it,
And with my bemes I woll blow
To all neighbours arrow,
How he hath both commen and gone."
Tho spake False Semblant right anone,
"All is not gospell out of dout,
That men saine in the towne about,
Lay no defe eare to my speaking,
I swere you, sir, it is gabbing,
I trow you wote well certainly,
That no man loveth him tenderly,
That sayth him harme, if he wote it,
All be he never so poore of wit;
And sooth is also sikerly,
This know ye, sir, as well as I,
That lovers gladly woll visiten
The places there hir loves habiten:
This man you loveth and eke honoureth,
This man to serve you laboureth,
And clepeth you his freind so deere,
And this man maketh you good cheere,
And euerie man that you meeteth,
He you saleweth, and he you greeteth;
He preseth not so oft, that ye
Ought of his comming encombred be:
There presen other folke on you,
Full ofter than he doeth now,
And if his herte him strained so
Unto the rose for to go,
Ye should him seene so oft need,
That ye should take him with the deed;
He coud his comming not forbeare,
Though ye him thrilled with a speare;
It nere not than as it is now,
But trusteth well, I sweare it you,
That it is clene out of his thought.
Sir, certes he ne thinketh it nought,
No more ne doth Faire Welcomming,
That sore abieth all this thing:
And if they were of one assent,
Full soone were the rose hent,
The maugre yours would be.
"And sir, of o thing hearkeneth me,
Sith ye this man, that loveth you,
Han sayd such harme and shame, now
Witteth well, if he gessed it,
Ye may well demen in your wit,
He nolde nothing love you so,
Ne callen you his friend also,
But night and daie he woll wake,
The castle to destroy and take,
If it were sooth, as ye devise;
Or some man in some manner wise
Might it warne him everidele,
Or by himselfe perceive wele,
For sith he might not come and gone
As he was whilom wont to done,
He might it soone wite and see,
But now all otherwise wote hee.
"Than have ye, sir, all vterly
Deserved Hell, and iollyly
The death of Hell doubtlesse,
That thrallen folke so guiltlesse."
False Semblant so prooveth this thing,
That he can none answering,
And seeth alwaie such apparaunce,
That nigh he fell in repentaunce,
And sayd him, "Sir, it may well be.
Semblant, a good man seemen ye,
And Abstinence, full wise ye seeme,
Of o talent yon both I deeme,
What counsaile woll ye to me yeven?"
"Right here anon thou shalt be shriven
And say thy sinne without more,
Of this shalt thou repent sore,
For I am priest, and have poste,
To shrive folke of most dignite
That ben as wide as world my dure,
Of all this world I have the cure,
And that had yet never persoun,
Ne vicarie of no manner toun.
"And God wote I have of thee,
A thousand times more pitee,
Than hath thy priest parochiall
Though he thy friend be speciall.
"I have avauntage, in o wise,
That your priests be not so wise
Ne halfe so lettred (as am I)
I am licensed boldly,
In divinitie for to read,
And to confessen out of dread.
"If ye woll you now confesse,
And leave your sinnes more and lesse,
Without abode, kneele doune anon,
And you shall have absolution."

HERE ENDETH THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE.

HERE AFTER FOLLOWETH THE

BOOKE OF TROILUS AND CRESEIDE,

In this excellent book is shewed the fervent love of Troylus to Creiseid, whom he enjoyed for a time: and her great untruth to him again in giving herself to Diomedes, who in the end did so cast her off, that she came to great misery. In which discourse Chaucer liberally treateth of the divine purveyance.

The double sorrow of Troilus to tellen,
That was kinge Priamus sonne of Troy,
In loving, how his aventures fellen
From woe to wele, and after out of ioy,
My purpose is, er that I part froy.
Thou Thesiphone, thou helpe me for tendite
These wofull verses, that wepen as I write.

To thee I clepe, thou goddesse of tourment
Thou cruell furie, sorrowing ever in paine,
Helpe me that am the sorrowfull instrument,
That helpeth lovers, as I can complaine:
For well sit it, the sooth for to saine,
A wofull wight to have a drery feare,
And to a sorrowfull tale a sorie cheare.

For I that god of loves servaunts serve,
Ne dare to love, for mine vnlikelynesse,
Prayen for speed, all should I therefore sterve,
So farre am I fro his helpe in derkenesse.
But nathelesse, if this may done gladnesse
To any lover, and his cause availe,
Have he my thanke, and mine be the travaile.

But ye lovers that bathen in gladnesse,
If any droppe of pite in you be,
Remembreth you of passed heavinesse
That ye have felt, and on the adversite
Of other folke, and thinketh how that ye
Han felt, that Love durst you to displease,
Else ye han won him with too great an ease.

And prayeth for hem that been in the case
Of Troilus, as ye may after heare,
That he hem bring in Heaven to solace.
And eke for me prayeth to God so deare,
That I have might to shew in some manere,
Such paine and woe, as Loves folke endure,
In Troilus vnsely aventure.

And biddeth eke for hem that ben dispeired
In love, that never will recovered be:
And eke for hem that falsely ben apeired,
Through wicked tongues, be it he or she:
Thus biddeth God for his benignite,
So grant hem sone out of this world to pace.
That hen dispaired out of Loves grace.

And biddeth eke for hem that ben at ease,
That God hem graunt aie good perseveranee,
And send hem grace hir loves for to please,
That it to love be worship and pleasance:
For so hope I my selfe best to avance
To pray for hem, that Loves servaunts be,
And write hir woe, and live in charite.

And for to have of hem compassioun,
As though I were hir owne brother dere,
Now hearkeneth with a good ententioun,
For now woll I go straight to my matere:
In which ye may the double sorrowes here
Of Troilus, in loving of Creseide,
And how she forsoke him er that she deide.

It is well wist, how that the Greekes strong
In armes with a thousand shipes went
To Troie wardes, and the citie long
Besiegeden, nigh ten yeres ere they stent,
And how in divers wise, and one entent,
The ravishing to wreake of queen Heleine,
By Paris don, they wroughten all hir peine.

Now fell it so, that in the toune there was
Dwelling a lord of great authorite
A great divine that eleped was Calcas,
That in that science so expert was, that he
Knew well, that Troie should destroyed be,
By answeare of his god, that hight thus,
Dan Phebus, or Apollo Delphicus.

So whan this Calcus knew by calculing,
And eke by the answeare of this god Apollo,
That the Greekes should such a people bring,
Thorow the which that Troy must be fordo,
He cast anone out of the toune to goe:
For well he wist by sort, that Troie sholde
Destroyed be, ye would who so or nolde.

Wherefore he to departen softely,
Tooke purpose full, this forknowing wise,
And to the Greekes host full prively
He stale anone, and they in courteous wise
Did to him both worship and servise,
In trust that he hath cunning hem to rede
In every perill, which that was to dread.

Great rumour rose, whan it was first espied,
In all the toune, and openly was spoken,
That Calcas traitour fled was and alied
To hem of Grece: and cast was to be wroken
On him, that falsely hath his faith broken,
And sayd, he and all his kinne atones,
Were worthy to be brent, both fell and bones.

Now had Calcas lefte in this mischaunce,
Unwist of this false and wicked dede,
A daughter, whiche was in great penaunce,
And of her life she was full sore in drede,
And wist ne never what best was to rede:
And as a widdow was she, and all alone,
And nist to whome she might make her mone.

Creseide was this ladies name aright,
As to my dome, in all Troies citie
Most fairest ladie, far passing every wight
So angellike shone her native beaute,
That no mortall thing seemed she:
And therewith was she so perfect a creature,
As she had be made in scorning of nature.

This ladie, that all day hearde at eare
Her fathers shame, falshede, and treasoun,
(Full nigh out of her wit for sorrow and feare,
In widdowes habite large of samite broun)
Before Hector on knees she fell adoun,
And his mercy bad, her selfe excusing,
With pitous voice, and tenderly weeping.

Now was this Hector pitous of nature,
And saw that she was sorrowfull begone,
And that she was so faire a creature,
Of his goodnesse he gladed her anone,
And said: "Let your fathers traison gone
Forth with mischance, and ye your selfe in joy
Dwelleth with us while you list in Troy.

"And all the honour that men may do ye have,
As ferforth as though your father dwelt here,
Ye shull haue, and your body shull men save,
As ferre as I may ought enquire and here:"
And she him thanked with full humble chere,
And ofter would, and it had been his will.
She took her leve, went home, and held her still.

And in her house she abode with such meine
As till her honour nede was to hold,
And while she was dwelling in that cite,
She kept her estate, and of yong and old
Full well beloved, and men well of her told:
But whether that she children had or none,
I rede it nat, therefore I let it gone.

The thinges fellen as they don of werre,
Betwixen hem of Troy and Greekes oft,
For sometime broughten they of Troy it derre,
And este the Greekes founden nothing soft
The folke of Troy: and thus fortune aloft,
And under efte gan hem to whelmen both,
After her course, aie while that they were wroth.

But how this toune came to destruction,
Ne falleth not to purpose me to tell,
For it were a long digression
Fro my matter, and you too long to dwell;
But the Troyan iestes all as they fell,
In Omer, or in Dares, or in Dite,
Who so that can, may reden hem as they write.

But though the Greekes hem of Troy in shetten,
And hir citie besieged all about,
Hir old usages nolde they not letten,
As to honouren hir gods full devout,
But aldermost in honour out of dout,
They had a relike hight Palladion,
That was hir trust aboven everychon.

And so befell, whan comen was the time
Of Aprill, whan clothed is the mede,
With new grene, of lustie veer the prime,
And with sweet smeliing floures white and rede
In sundrie wise shewed, as I rede,
The folke of Troie, their observances old,
Palladiones feast went for to hold.

Unto the temple in all their best wise,
Generally there went many a wight,
To hearken of Pal'adions servise,
And namely many a lustie knight,
And many a ladie fresh, and maiden bright,
Full well arraied bothe most and least,
Both for the season and the high feast.

Among these other folke was Creseida,
In widdowes habite blacke: but natheles
Right as our first letter is now an a,
In beautie first so stood she makeles,
Her goodly looking gladed all the prees,
Nas neuer seene thing to be praised so derre,
Nor under cloude blacke so bright a sterre,

As was Creseide, they sayden everichone,
That her beheldeu in her blacke wede,
And yet she stood full lowe and still alone
Behinde other folke in little bread,
And nie the dore under shamefastnesse,
Simple of attire, and debonaire of chere,
With full assured looking and manere.

This Troilus, as he was wont to guide
His yonge knightes, led hem up and doune,
In thilke large temple on every side,
Beholding aie the ladies of the toune,
Now here now there, for no devotioune
Had he to none, to reven him his rest,
But gan to praise and lacke whome he lest.

And in his walk full fast he gan to waiten,
If knight or squier of his campanie,
Gan for to sike, or let his eyen baiten
On any woman, that he could espie,
He would smile, and hold it a follie,
And say hem thus: "O Lord she sleepeth soft
For love of thee, whan thou turnest full oft.

"I have heard tell pardieux of your living,
Ye lovers, and eke your lewed observances,
And which a labour folke have in winning
Of love, and in keeping such doutaunces,
And whan your pray is lost, wo and penaunces:
O, very fooles, blinde and nice be ye,
There is not one can ware by another be."

And with that word he gan cast up the brow,
Ascaunces, lo, is this not well ispoken,
At which the god of love gan looken low,
Right for dispite, and shope him to be wroken,
He kidde anone his bowe was not broken:
For sodainly he hitte him at the full,
And yet as proude a peacocke gan he pull.

O blinde world, o blird entention,
How often falleth all the effect contraire
Of sequedrie and foule presumption,
For caught is proud, and caught is debonaire:
This Troilus is clomben on the staire,
And little weneth that he *mote* descenden,
But all day it faileth that fooles wenden.

As proud Bayard begynneth for to skippe
Out of the way, so pricketh him his corne,
Till he a lash have of the longe whippe,
Than thinketh he, "Tho I prannce all before
First in the traise, full fat and new ishorne,
Yet am I but an horse, and horses law
I must endure, and with my feeres draw."

So fared it by this fiers and proud knight,
Though he a worthy kinges sonne were,
And wende nothing had had suche might,
Ayenst his will, that should his herte stere,
Yet with a looke his herte woxe on fire,
That he that now was most in pride above,
Woxe sodainly most subject unto love.

Forthy ensample taketh of this man,
Ye wise, proud, and worthy folkes all,
To scornen Love, which that so soone can
The freedome of your hertes to him thrall,
For ever it was, and ever it be shall,
That Love is he that all thinges may bind,
For no man may fordo the law of kind.

That this be sooth hath preved and doth yet,
For this (I trowe) ye know all and some,
Men reden not that folke han greater wit
Than they that han ben most with love inome,
And strengest folk been therewith overcome,
The worthyest and greatest of degree,
This was and is, and yet man shall it see.

And trueliche that sitte well to be so,
For alderwisest han therewith ben pleased,
And they that han ben aldermost in wo,
With love han ben comforted and most eased,
And oft it hath the cruell herte appeased,
And worthy folke made worthier of name,
And causeth most to dreden vice and shame.

Now sith it may nat goodly be withstond,
And is a thing so vertuous and kind,
Refuseth nought to Love for to ben bond,
Sith as him selven list he may you bind;
The yerde is bette that bowen woll and wind
Than that that brest, and therefore I you rede,
Now followeth him, that so well can you lede.

But for to tellen forth in speciall,
As of this kinges sonne, of which I told,
And leven other thing collaterall,
Of him thinke I my tale forth to hold,
Both of his joy, and of his cares cold,
And his werke, as touching this matere,
For I it gan, I woll thereto refere.

Within the temple he went him forth playing
This Troilus, of every wight about,
Now on this lady, and now on that looking,
Where so she were of toune, or of without:
And upon case befell, that through a rout
His eye peirced, and so deepe it went
Till on Creseide it smote, and there it stent.

And sodainely for wonder wext astoned,
And gan her bet behold in thrifty wise:
"O very God," thought he, "wher hast thou woned,
That art so faire and goodly to devise?"
Therewith his herte gan to spread and rise,
And softe sighed, least men might him here,
And caught ayen his firste playing chere.

She nas nat with the most of her stature,
But all her limmes so well answearing
Weren to womanhood, that creature
Was never lasse mannish in seeming.
And eke the pure wise of her meaning
Shewed well, that men might in her gesse
Honour, estate, and womanly noblesse.

Tho Troilus, right wonder well withall,
Gan for to like her meaning and her chere,
Which somdele deignous was, for she let fall
Her looke a little aside, in such manere
Ascaunces, what may I not stonden here,
And after that her looking gan she light,
That never thought him seen so good a sight.

And of her looke in him there gan to quicken
So great desire, and such affection,
That in his hertes bottome gan to sticken
Of her his fixe, and deepe impression:
And though he earst had pored vp and doun,
Than was he glad his hornes in to shrinke,
Unnethes wist he how to looke or winke.

Lo, he that lete him selven so cunning,
And scorned hem that loves paines drien,
Was full vnware that Love had his dwelling
Within the subtill streames of her eyen,
That sodainely him thought he felte dyen,
Right with her looke, the spirite in his herte,
Blessed be Love, that thus can folke convert.

She thus in blacke, liking to Troilus,
Over all thing he stood for to behold:
But his desire, ne wherefore he stood thus,
He neither chere made, ne word thereof told,
But from a ferre, his manner for to hold,
On other thing sometime his looke he cast,
And eft on her, while that the service last:

And after this, nat fullish all awhaped,
Out of the temple eselich he went,
Repenting him that ever he had iaped
Of Loves folke, least fully the discent
Of scorne fill on himselfe, but what he ment,
Least it were wist on any manner side,
His woe he gan dissimulen and hide.

Whan he was fro the temple thus departed,
He straight anone unto his pallaice turneth,
Right with her loke through shotten and darted,
All faineth he in lust that he soiourneth,
And all his chere and speech also he burneth,
And aie of Loves servaunts every while
Him selfe to wrie, at hem he gan to smile,

And saied, "Lord, so they live all in lust
Ye lovers, for the cunningest of you,
That servest most ententifelich and best
Him tite as often harme thereof as prow,
Your hire is quit ayen, ye, God wote how,
Not well for well, but scorne for good servise,
In faith your order is ruled in good wise.

"In no certaine been your observaunces,
But it onely a sely few points be,
Ne nothing asketh so great attendaunces,
As doth your laie, and that know all ye:
But that is not the worst, as mote I the,
But told I you the worst point, I leve,
All sayd I sooth, ye woulden at me greve.

" But take this: that ye lovers oft eschew,
Or else done of good entention,
Full oft thy ladie woll it misse constrew,
And deeme it harme in her opinion,
And yet if she for other encheson
Be wroth, than shalt thou have a groin anon:
Lord, well is him that may been of you one."

But for all this, whan that he seeth his time
He held his peace, none other bote him gained,
For Love began his feathers so to lime,
That well vneth vnto his folke he fained,
That other busie needes him distrained,
So woe was him, that what to done he nist,
But bad his folke to gon where as hem list.

And whan that he in chamber was alone,
He doune vpon his beddes feet him set,
And first he gan to sike, and eft to grone,
And thought aie on her so withouten let,
That as he sate and woke, his spirit met
That he her saw and temple, and all the wise
Right of her looke, and gan it new avise.

Thus gan he make a mirrour of his mind,
In which he saw all wholy her figure,
And that he well coud in his herte find
It was to him a right good aventure
To love such one, and if he did his cure
To serven her, yet might he fall in grace,
Or else, for one of her servantes pace.

Imagining, that travaile nor grame
Ne might for so goodly one be lorne
As she, ne him for his desire no shame
All were it wist, but in prise and vp borne
Of all lovers, well more than beforne.
Thus argumented he, in his ginning,
Full vnavised of his wo comming.

Thus took he purpose Loves craft to sewe
And thought he would worken privily
First for to hide his desire in mewe
From everie wight iborne, all overly,
But he might ought recovered been thereby,
Remembring him, that love too wide iblowe
Yelt bitter fruite, though sweet seed he sowe.

And over all this, full mokell more he thought
What for to speake, and what to holden inne
And what to arten, er to love he sought,
And on a song anone right to beginne,
And gan loude on his sorrow for to winne:
For with good hope he gan fully assent,
Creseide for to love, and nought repent.

And of his song not onely his sentence,
As write mine authour called Lolius,
But plainely save our tongues difference,
I dare well say, in all that Troilus
Sayed in his song, lo every word right thus,
As I shall saine, and who so list it heare
Lo this next verse, he may it finde there.

THE SONG OF TROILUS.

" If no love is, O God, what feele I so?
And if love is, what thing and which is he?
If love be good, from whence cometh my wo?
If it be wicke, a wonder thinketh me,
Whan every torment and adversite
That cometh of him, may to me savery think:
For aie thurst I the more that iche it drinke.

" And if that at mine owne lust I brenne,
From whence cometh my wailing and my plaint:
If harme agree me, whereto plaine I thenne,
I not, ne why unwery that I feint.
O quicke death, o sweete harme so queint,
How may of thee in me be such quantite,
But if that I consent that it so be?

" And if that I consent, I wrongfully
Complaine iwis: thus possed to and fro,
All sterelesse within a bote am I
Amidde the sea, atwixen windes two,
That in contrary stonden ever mo.
Alas, what is this wonder maladie?
For heat of cold, for cold of heat I die."

And to the god of love thus sayed he
With pitous voice, " O lord, now yours is
My spirite, which that oughten yours to be,
You thank I, lord, that han me brought to this:
But whether goddesse or woman iwis
She be, I not, which that ye do me serve,
But as her man I woll aie live and sterve.

" Ye stonden in her eyen mightily,
As in a place to your vertue digne:
Wherefore, lord, if my servise or I
May liken you, so beth to me benigne,
For mine estate royall here I resigne
Into her honde, and with full humble cheer,
Become her man, as to my lady dere."

In him ne deigned to sparen blood royall
The fire of love, where fro God me blesse,
Ne him forbare in no degree, for all
His vertue, or his excellent prowesse,
But held him as his thrall love in distresse,
And brend him so in sundry wise aie newe,
That sixty times a day he lost his hewe.

So muchell day fro day his owne thought
For lust to her gan quicken and encrease,
That everiche other charge he set at nought,
For thy full oft, his hot fire to cease,
To seen her goodly looke he gan to prease,
For thereby to ben eased well he wend,
And aie the nere he was, the more he brend.

For aie the nere the fire the hotter is,
This (trow I) knoweth all this companie:
But were he ferre or nere, I dare say this,
By night or day, for wisedome or folie,
His herte, which that is his brestes eie,
Was aie on her, that fairer was to seene
Than ever was Helein, or Polixene.

Eke of the day there passed not an hour,
That to himselfe a thousand times he sayd,
" God goodly, to whome I serve and labour
As I best can, now would to God Creseide
Ye woulden on me rue, er that I deide:
My dere herte alas, mine hele and my hew,
And life is lost, but ye woll on me rew."

All other dredes weren from him fled,
Both of thassiege, and his salvation,
Ne in desire none other founes bred,
But arguments to his conclusion,
That she on him would have compassion
And he to ben her man, while he may dure,
Lo here his life, and from his death his cure.

The sharpe showers fell of armes preve
That Hector or his other brethren didden,
Ne made him onely therefore ones meve,
And yet was he, where so men went or ridden,
Found one the best, and lengest time abiden
There perill was, and eke did such travaile
In armes, that to thinke it was a marvaile.

But for none hate he to the Greekes had,
Ne also for the rescous of the toun,
Ne made him thus in armes for to mad,
But onely lo, for this conclusioun,
To liken her the bet for his renoun:
Fro day to day in armes so he sped,
That all the Greekes as the death him dred.

And fro this forth tho reft him love his slepe
And made his meate his foe, and eke his sorrow
Gan multiply, that who so tooke keepe,
It shewed in his hew both even and morow:
Therefore a title he gan him for to borow
Of other sickenesse, least men of him wend
That the hot fire of love him brend.

And sayd he had a fever, and fared amis,
But were it certaine I cannot sey
If that his lady understood not this
Or fained her she nist, one of the twey:
But well rede I, that by no manner wey
Ne seemed it that she on him rought,
Or of his paine, what so ever he thought.

But than felt this Troilus suche wo
That he was welnigh wood, for aie his drede
Was this, that she some wight loved so,
That never of him she would han take heed:
For which him thought he felt his herte bleed,
Ne of his woe ne durst he nought begin
To tellen her, for all this world to win.

But whan he had a space left from his care,
Thus to himselfe full oft he gan to plaine:
He sayd, "O foole, now art thou in the snare,
That whilom yapedest at lovers paine:
Now art thou hent, now gnaw thine owne chain;
Thou wert aie woned ech lover reprehend
Of thing fro which thou canst not thee defend.

"What woll now every lover saine of thee,
If this be wist? But ever in thine absence
Laughen in scorn, and saine, lo there goeth he
That is the man of greate sapience,
That held us lovers least in reverence:
Now thanked be God, he may gon on that daunce
Of hem that Love list feebly avaunce.

"But o, thou wofull Troilus, God would,
(Sith thou must loven, through thy destine)
That thou beset wer of soch one, that should
Know all thy wo, all lacked her pitee:
But all too cold in love towards thee
Thy ladie is, as frost in winter Moone,
And thou fordo, as snow in fire is soone.

"God would I were arrived in the port
Of death, to which my sorow woll me lede:
Ah lord, to me it were a great comfort,
Than were I quite of languishing in drede:
For by my hidde sorrow iblowe in brede,
I shall beiaped been a thousand time,
More than that foole, of whose folly men rime.

"But now help God, and ye my sweet, for whom
I plaine, icought ye never wight so fast:
O mercie, deare herte, and helpe me from
The death, for I, while that my life may last,
More than my selfe woll love you to my last,
And with some frendly look gladeth me swete,
Though never more thing ye to me behete."

These wordes, and full many another mo
He spake, and called ever in his compleint
Her name, for to tellen her his wo,
Till nigh that he in salte teares was dreint,
All was for nought, she heard nat his pleint:
And whan that he bethought on that follie,
A thousand fold his woe gan multiplie.

Bewailing in his chamber thus alone,
A friend of his, that called was Pandare,
Came ones in unware, and heard him grone,
And saw his friend in such distresse and care:
"Alas," (quod he) "who causeth all this fare?
O mercy God, what unhappe may this mene?
Han now thus sone the Greeks made you lene?

"Or hast thou some remorse of conscience?
And art now fall in some devotion,
And wailest for thy sinne and thine offence,
And hast for ferde cought contrition?
God save hem, that besieged han our toun,
That so can laie our iollitie on presse,
And bring our lustie folke to holynesse."

These wordes said he for the nones all, [maken,
That with such thing he might him angry
And with his anger done his sorrow fall,
As for a time, and his courage awaken:
But well wist he, as far as tongues speaken,
There nas a man of greater hardinesse
Than he, ne more desired worthinesse.

"What cas," (quod Troilus) "or what aventure
Hath guided thee to seen me languishing,
That am refuse of everie creature?
But for the love of God, at me praying
Goe hence away, for certes my dying
Woll thee disease, and I mote nedes deie,
Therefore goe way, there nis no more to seie."

"But if thou wene, I be thus sick for drede,
It is not so, and therefore scorne nought:
There is an other thing I take of hede,
Welmore than ought the Grekes han yet wrought,
Which cause is of my deth for sorow and thought:
But though that I now tell it thee ne lest,
Be thou not wroth, I hide it for the best."

This Pandare, that nigh malt for wo and routh,
Full often sayed, "Alas, what may this be?
"Now friend," (quod he) "if ever love or trouth
Hath been er this betwixen thee and me,
Ne doe thou never such a cruelte,
To hiden fro thy friend so great a care,
Wost thou not well that I am Pandare?

"I woll parten with thee all thy paine,
If it so be I doe thee no comfort,
As it is friendes right, sooth for to saine,
To enterparten woe, as glad disport
I have and shall, for true or false report,
In wrong and right iloved thee all my live,
Hide not thy woe fro me, but tell it blive."

Than gan this sorrowfull Troilus to sike,
And sayd him thus, "God leve it be my best
To tellen thee, for sith it may thee like,
Yet wot I tell it, though my herte brest,
And well wote I, thou maiest do me no rest,
But least thou deeme I trust not to thee
Now hearke friend, for thus it stant with me.

"Love, ayenst the which who so defendeth
Him selven most, him alderlest availeth,
With dispaire so sorrowfully me offendeth
That straight vnto the death my herte faileth:
Thereto desire, so brenningly me assaileth,
That to been slaine, it were a greater ioy
To me, than king of Grece be and of Troy.

"Suffiseth this, my full friende Pandare,
That I have said, for now wotest thou my wo:
And for the love of God my colde eare
So hide it well, I told it never to mo:
For harmes mighten followen mo than two
If it were wist, but be thou in gladnesse,
And let me sterve unknowne of my distresse."

"How hast thou thus unkindly and long
Hid this fro me, thou fool?" (quod Pandarus)
"Peraventure thou maist after such one long,
That mine avise anone may helpen vs:"
"This were a wonder thing," (quod Troilus)
"Thou couldest never in love thy selfen wisse,
How divell maiest thou bringen me to blisse."

"Ye Troilus, now hearken," (quod Pandare)
"Though I be niece, it happeth often so,
That one that of axes doeth full evil fare,
By good counsail can keep his frend ther fro:
I have my selfe seen a blinde man go
There as he fell, that could looken wide,
A foole may eke a wise man oft guide.

"A whetstone is no carving instrument,
But yet it maketh sharpe kerving tolis,
And after thou wost that I have aught miswent,
Eschue thou that, for such thing to schole is,
Thus often wise men bewaren by foolis:
If thou so doe, thy wit is well bewared,
By his contrarie is everie thing declared.

"For how might ever sweetnesse have be know
To him, that never tasted bitternesse?
No manne wot what gladnesse is I trow,
That never was in sorrow, or some distresse:
Eke white by blacke, by shame eke worthines,
Each set by other, more for other seemeth,
As men may seen, and so the wise it deemeth.

"Sith thus of two contraries is o lore,
I that have in love so oft assayed
Greuaunces, ought connen well the more
Counsailen thee of that thou art dismayed,
And eke the ne ought not been euill apaied,
Though I desire with thee for to beare
Thine heauie charge, it shall thee lasse deare.

"I wote well that it fared thus by me,
As to thy brother Paris, an hierdesse,
Which that icleped was Denone,
Wrote in a complaint of her heauinesse:
Ye saw the letter that she wrote I gesse."
"Nay never yet iwis," (quod Troilus.)
"Now" (quod Pandare) "hearkeneth, it was thus:

"'Phebus, that first found art of medicine,'
(Quod she) 'and coud in euerie wightes eare
Remedie and rede, by herbes he knew fine,
Yet to himselfe his cunning was full bare,
For love had him so bounden in a snare,
All for the daughter of king Admete,
That all his craft ne coud his sorrow bete.'

"Right so fare I, unhappie for me,
I love one best, and that me smerteth sore:
And yet peradventure I can reden thee
And nat my selfe: repreue me no more,
I have no cause I wote well for to sore,
As doeth an bauke, that listeth for to play,
But to thine helpe, yet somewhat can I say.

"And of o thing, right siker mayest thou be,
That certaine for to dyen in the paine
That I shall never mo discover thee,
Ne by my trouth, I keepe nat to restraine
Thee fro thy love, although it were Helleine,
That is thy brothers wife, if iche it wist,
Be what she be, and love her as thee list.

"Therefore as friendfullich in me assure,
And tell me platte, what is thine encheson,
And finall cause of woe, that ye endure:
For doubteth nothing, mine entention
Nas not to you of reprehension,
To speake, as now, for no wight may bereue
A man to love, till that him list to leue.

"And weteth well, that both two been vicis,
Mistrusten all, or else all beleue:
But well I wote, the meane of it no vice is,
As for to trusten some wight is a preue
Of trouth, and forthy would I faine remeue
Thy wrong conceit, and do the some wight trust
Thy woe to tell: and tell me if thou lust.

"The wise eke sayth, woe him that is alone,
For and he fall, he hath none helpe to rise:
And sith thou hast a fellow, tell thy mone,
For this nis nought certaine the next wise
To winnen love, as teachen vs the wise,
To wallow and weep, as Niobe the queene,
Whose teares yet in marble been iseene.

"Let be thy weeping, and thy drerinesse,
And let vs lesen woe with other speech,
So may thy wofull time seeme the lesse;
Delighte nought in woe, thy woe to seech,
As doen these fooles, that hir sorrowes eche
With sorrowe, whan they han misaventure,
And lusten nought to sechen other cure.

"Men saine, to wretch is consolation
To have another fellow in his paine?
That ought well been our opinion,
For bothe thou and I of love doe plaine,
So full of sorrow am I, sooth to saine,
That certainly, as now no more hard grace
May sit on me, for why, there is no space.

"If God will, thou art nought agast of me,
Least I would of thy ladie thee beguile:
Thou wost thy selfe, whom that I love parde
As I best can, gone sithen longe while,
And sithen thou wost, I doe it for no wile,
And sith I am he, that thou trusteth most,
Tell me somwhat, since all my woe thou wost."

Yet Troilus, for all this no word said,
But long he laie still, as he dead were,
And after this, with siking he abraid,
And to Pandarus voice he lent his eare,
And vp his eyen cast he: and than in feare
Was Pandarus least that in frenseye,
He should either fall or else soone deye.

And sayd, "Awake," full wonderlich and sharpe.
"What slumbrest thou, as in a litergie?
Or art thou like an asse to the harpe,
That heareth sound, whan men the stringes ply,
But in his mind, of that no melodie
May sinke him to gladen, for that he
So dull is, in his beastialite?"

And with this Pandare of his wordes stent:
But Troilus to him nothing answerde,
For why, to tell was nought his entent
Never to no man, for whome that he so ferde:
For it is sayd, men maken oft a yerde
With which the maker is himselfe ibeten
In sundrie manner, as these wise men treten.

And nameliche in his counsaile telling,
That toucheth love, that ought been secre:
For of himselfe it woll inough out spring
But if that it the bet gouerned be.
Eke sometime it is craft to seeme flee
Fro thing which in effect men hunten fast:
All this gan Troilus in his herte cast.

But natheles, whan he had heard him crie,
Awake he gan, and sike wonder sore:
And sayd, "My friende, though that I still lie,
I am not deefe, now peace and crie no more:
For I have heard thy wordes and thy lore,
But suffer me my fortune to bewailen,
For thy proverbes may nought me availen.

"Nor other cure canst thou none for me,
Eke I nill not been cured, I woll die:
What know I of the queene Niobe?
Let be thine old ensamples, I thee prey."
"No friend," (quod Pandarus) "therfore I sey,
Such is delight of fooles to beweepe
Hir woe, but to seeken bote they ne keepe.

"Now know I that reason in thee faileth:
But tell me, if I wiste what she were
For whome that thee all misaventure aileth,
Durste thou that I told it in her eare
Thy woe, sith thou darst not thy self for fear,
And her besought on thee to han some routh?"
"Why, nay," (quod he) "by God and by my trouth."

"What, not as busily" (quod Pandarus)
"As though mine owne life lay in this need?"
"Why, no parde, sir," (quod this Troilus.) [speed."
"And why?"—"For that thou shouldest never
"Wost thou that well?"—"Ye, that is out of dreed,"
(Quod Troilus) "for all that ever ye conne,
She woll to no such wretch as I be wonne."

(Quod Pandarus) "Alas what may this be,
That thou dispaired art, thus causelesse?
What, liveth nat thy ladie, benedicite?
How wost thou so, that thou art gracelesse?
Such evill is not alway botelesse:
Why, put not thus impossible thy cure,
Sith thing to com is oft in aventure.

"I graunt weil that thou endurest wo,
As sharpe as doth he Tesiphus in Hell,
Whose stomacke foules tiren evermo,
That highten vultures, as bookes tell:
But I may not endure that thou dwell
In so unskilfull an opinion,
That of thy woe nis no curation.

"But ones nill thou, for thy coward herte,
And for thine yre, and foolish wilfulnesse,
For wantrust tellen of thy sorrowes smert,
Ne to thine owne helpe do businesse,
As much as speake a word, yea more or lesse,
But lyest as he that of life nothing retch,
What woman living coud love such a wretch?

"What may she demen other of thy death,
If thou thus die, and she not why it is,
But that for feare, is yolden vp thy breath,
For Greekes han besieged vs iwis?
Lord, which a thank shalt thou have than of this
Thus woll she saine, and all the toun atones,
The wretch is deed, the divel have his bones.

"Thou mayest alone here weepe, cry, and knele,
And love a woman that she wote it nought,
And she will quite it that thou shalt not feel:
Unknow vnkist, and lost that is vnsought.
What, many a man hath love full dere ibought
Twentie winter that his ladie ne wist,
That never yet his ladies mouth he kist.

"What, should he therfore fallen in dispair?
Or be receaunt for his owne tene,
Or slaine himselfe, all be his ladie faire?
Nay, nay: but ever in one be fresh and green,
To serve and love his dere hertes queen,
And thinke it is a guerdone her to serve
A thousand part more than he can deserve."

And of that worde tooke heede Troilus,
And thought anon, what folly he was in,
And how that sooth him sayed Pandarus,
That for to slaien himselfe, might he not win,
But both doen vnmanhood and a sinne
And of his death his ladie nought to wite,
For of his woe, God wote she knew full lite.

And with that thought, he gan full sore sike,
And sayd, "Alas, what is me best to doe?"
To whome Pandare sayed, "If thee it like,
The best is, that thou telle me thy woe,
And have my trouth, but if thou finde it so
I be thy boote, or it been full long,
To peeces doe me drawe, and sithen hong."

"Yea, so sayest thou," (quod Troilus) "alas,
But God wote it is nought the rather so:
Full hard it were to helpen in this caas,
For well finde I, that Fortune is my fo:
Ne all the men that ride con or go,
May of her cruell whele the harme withstond,
For as her list, she playeth with free and bond."

(Quod Pandarus) "Than blamest thou Fortune,
For thou art wroth, ye now at earst I see,
Wost thou not well that Fortune is commune
To everie manner wight, in some degree?
And yet thow hast this comfort, lo parde,
That as her ioyes moten overgone,
So mote her sorrowes passen everichone.

" For if her whele stint any thing to tourne,
Than cesseth she Fortune anone to be:
Now sith her whele by no way may soiourn,
What wost thou of her mutabilitie?
Whether as thy self lust she woll don by thee,
Or that she be nought ferre fro thine helping,
Peraventure thou hast cause for to sing.

" And therfore wost thou what I thee beseech?
Let be thy woe, and tourning to the ground:
For who so list have healing of his leech,
To him behooveth first vnwrie his wound:
To Cerberus in Hell aie be I bound,
Wer it for my suster all thy sorrow,
By my will she should be thine to morrow.

" Looke vp, I say, and tell me what she is
Anone, that I may gone about thy need:
Know ich her aught, for my love tell me this;
Than would I hope rather for to speed."
Tho gan the veine of Troilus to bleed,
For he was hit, and woxe all redde for shame,
" Aha," (quod Pandare) " here beginneth game."

And with that word, he gan him for to shake,
And sayd him thus, " Thou shalt her name telle:"
But tho gan sely Troilus for to quake,
As though men should han had him into Hell,
And sayed, " Alas, of all my woe the well,
Than is my sweete foe called Creseide,"
And well nigh with that word for feare he deide.

And whan that Pandare herd her name neven,
Lord, he was glad, and saied, " Friend so deere,
Now fare a right, for Joves name in Heaven,
Love hath beset thee well, be of good cheere,
For of good name, and wisdom, and manere
She hath inough, and eke of gentlenesse:
If she be faire, thou wost thy selfe, I gesse.

" Ne never seie I a more bounteous
Of her estate, ne a gladder: ne of speech
A friendlyer, ne more gracious
For to doe well, ne lasse had ned to seech
What for to doen, and all this bet to ech
In honour to as farre as she may stretch:
A kinges herte seemeth by hers a wretch.

" And forthy, look of good comfort thou be:
For certainely the first point is this
Of noble courage, and well ordaine the
A man to have peace with himselfe iwis:
So oughtest thou, for nought but good it is,
To loven well, and in a worthy place,
Thee ought not clepe it happe, but grace.

" And also thinke, and therewith glad thee,
That sith the ladie vertuous is all,
So followeth it, that there is some pitee
Amonges all these other in generall,
And for they see that thou in speciall
Require nought, that is ayen her name,
For vertue stretcheth not himself to shame.

" But well is me, that ever I was born,
That thou beset art in so good a place:
For by my trouth in love I durst have sworn,
Thee should never have tidde so fair a grace,
And wost thou why? for thou were wont to chace
At Love in scorne, and for dispite him call
Saint Idiote, lord of these fooles all.

" How often hast thou made thy nice yapes,
And saied, that Loves servaunts overichone
Of nicete ben verie goddes apes,
And some would monche hir meat all alone,
Ligging a bed, and make hem for to grone,
And some thou saidest had a blaunch fevere,
And praidest God, they should never kevere.

" And some of hem took on hem for the cold,
More than inough, so saydest thou full oft:
And some han fained oft time and told,
How that they waken, whan they sleepe soft,
And thus they would have set hem self a loft,
And nathelesse were vnder at the last,
Thus saydest thou, and yapedest full fast.

" Yet saydest thou, that for the more part
These lovers would speake in generall,
And thoughten it was a siker art,
For failing, for to assayen over all:
Now may I yape of thee, if that I shall;
But nathelesse, though that I should deie,
Thou art none of tho, I dare well seie.

" Now bete thy brest, and say to god of love,
'Thy grace, lord, for now I me repent
If I misspake, for now my selfe, I love:'
Thus say with all thine herte, in good entent."
(Quod Troilus) "'Ah lord, I me consent,
And pray to thee, my yapes thou foryeve,
And I shall never more while I live."

"Thou sayst wel," (quod Pandare) "and now I hope
That thou the goddes wrath hast all appeased:
And sith thou hast wepten many a drop,
And saied such thing wherwith thy god is plesed,
Now would never god, but thou were eased:
And think well she, of whom rest all thy wo,
Here after may thy comfort been also.

" For thilke ground, that beareth the wedes wicke,
Beareth eke these holsome herbes, as full oft
Next the foule nettle, rough and thick,
The rose wexeth, soote, smooth, and soft,
And next the valey is the hill a loft,
And next the derke night the glad morowe,
And also ioy is next the fine of sorrow.

" Now looke that attempre be thy bridell,
And for the best aie suffer to the tide,
Or else all our labour is on idell,
He hasteth well, that wisely can abide:
Be diligent and true, and aie well hide,
Be lustie, free, persever in thy servise,
And all is well, if thou worke in this wise.

" But he that departed is in everie place
Is no where hole, as writen clerkes wise:
What wonder is, if such one have no grace?
Eke wost thou how it fareth of some service,
As plant a tree or herbe, in sondrie wise,
And on the morrow pull it vp as blive,
No wonder is, though it may never thrive.

" And sith the god of love hath thee bestowed
In place digne vnto thy worthinesse,
Stonde fast, for to good port hast thou rowed,
And of thy selfe, for any heavinesse,
Hope alwaie well, for but if drerinesse
Or over hast both our labour shend,
I hope of this to maken a good end.

" And wost thou why, I am the lasse afered
Of this matter with my nece to trete?
For this have I heard say of wise lered,
Was never man or woman yet beyete,
That was vnapt to suffer loves hete
Celestiall, or eles love of kind:
Forthy, some grace I hope in her to find.

" And for to speake of her in speciall,
Her beautie to bethinken, and her youth,
It sit her nought, to been celestiall
As yet, though that her list bothe and kouth:
And truely it sit her well right nouth
A worthy knight to loven and cherice,
And but she doe, I hold it for a vice.

" Wherefore I am, and wolt be aye ready
To paine me to doe you this service,
For both you to please, this hope I
Here after, for that ye been both wise,
And con counsaile keepe in such a wise,
That no man shall the wiser of it bee,
And so we maie ben gladded all three,

" And by my trouth I have right now of thee
A good conceit, in my wit as I gesse:
And what it is, I woll now that thou see,
I thinke that sith Love of his goodnesse
Hath thee conuerted out of wickednesse,
That thou shalt been the beste post, I leue,
Of all his lay, and most his foes greue.

" Ensample why, see now these great clerkes,
That erren aldermost ayen a law,
And ben conuerted from hir wicked werkes
Throgh grace of God, that lest hem to withdraw:
They arne the folke that han God most in aw,
And strengest faithed been, I vnderstond,
And con an errour alder best withstond."

Whan Troilus had herd Pandare assented
To ben his helpe in loving of Creseide,
He wext of his wo, as who saith vnturmented,
But hotter wext his love, and than he said
With sober chere, as though his herte plaid:
" Now blisfull Uenus helpe, ere that I sterue,
Of thee Pandare I mow some thank deserue.

" But dere friend, how shall my wo be lesse,
Till this be done? and good eke tell me this,
How wilt thou saine of me and my distresse,
Least she be wroth, this drede I most iwis,
Or woll not heren all, how it is,
All this drede I, and eke for the manere
Of thee her Eme, she nill no such thing here."

(Quod Pandarus) " Thou hast a full great care,
Lest the chorle may fall out of the Moone:
Why, lord! I hate of thee the nice fare.
Why entremete of that thou hast to doone?
For Godes love, I bid thee a boone:
So let me alone, and it shall be thy best." [lest.
" Why frend" (quod he) " than done right as thee

" But herke Pandare o word, for I nolde,
That thou in me wendest so great follie,
That to my lady I desiren should,
That toucheth harme, or any villanie:
For dredelesse me were leuer to die,
Than she of me ought eles vnderstood,
But that, that might sownen into good."

Tho lough this Pandarus, and anon answerd:
" And I thy borow, fie no wight doth but so,
I raught not though she stoode and herd,
How that thou saiest, but farwell, I woll go:
Adieu, be glad, God speed vs bothe two,
Yeue me this labour and this businesse,
And of my speed be thine all the sweetnesse."

Tho Troilus gan doune on knees to fall,
And Pandare in his armes hent him fast,
And saide, " Now fie on the Greekes all:
Yet parde, God shall helpen at the last,
And dredelesse, if that my life may last,
And God toforne, lo some of hem shall smerte,
And yet me a thinketh that this auaunt masterte."

" And now Pandare, I can no more say,
Thou wise, thou wost, thou maist, thou art all:
My life, my death, hole in thine hond I lay,"
" Helpe me now," (quod he.) " Yes by my trouth I shal."
" God yeeld thee friend, and this in speciall"
(Quod Troilus) " that thou me recommaund
To her that may me to the death commaund."

This Pandarus tho, desirous to serve
His full frende, he said in this manere:
" Farewell, and thinke I woll thy thanke deserue,
Have here my trouth, and that thou shalt here,"
And went his way, thinking on this matere,
And how he best might beseechen her of grace,
And find a time thereto and a place.

For every wight that hath a house to found,
He renneth nat the werke for to begin,
With rakel hond, but he woll biden stound,
And send his hertes line out fro within,
Alderfirst his purpose for to win:
All thus Pandare in his herte thought,
And cast his werke full wisely ere he wrought.

But Troilus lay tho no lenger doun,
But anone gat vpon his stede baie,
And in the field he played the loun,
Wo was the Greek, that with him met that daye:
And in the toune, his manner the forth aye
So goodly was, and gat him so in grace,
That eche him loved that looked in his face.

For he became the friendliest wight,
The gentilest, and eke the most free,
The thriftiest, and one the best knight
That in his time was, or els might be:
Dead were his yapes and his crueltie,
His high port and his manner straunge,
And each of hem gan for a vertue chaunge.

Now let vs stint of Troilus a stound,
That fareth like a man that hurt is sore,
And is somedele of aking of his wound
Yleased well, but healed no dele more:
And as an easie patient the lore
Abite of him that goeth about his cure,
And thus he drieth forth his aventure.

EXPLICIT LIBER SECUNDUS.

Out of these black wawes let vs for to seil,
O winde, now the weather ginneth clere:
For in the sea the boate hath such trauaile
Of my conning, that vneth I it stere:
This sea clepe I the tempestous matere
Of deepe dispaire, that Troilus was in:
But now of hope the kalendes begin.

O lady mine, that called art Cleo,
Thou be my spede fro this forth, and my Muse,
To rime well this booke till I have do,
Me needeth here none other art to vse:
For why, to every lover I me excuse,
That of no sentement I this endite,
But out of Latine in my tongue it write.

Wherefore I nil have neither thank ne blame
Of all this worke: but pray you mekely,
Disblameth me, if any word be lame,
For as mine authour said, so say I:
Eke though I speake of love vnfeelingly,
No wonder is, for it nothing of new is,
A blind man cannot judgen well in hewis.

I know, that in forme of speech is change
Within a thousand yere, and wordes tho
That hadden prise, now wonder nice and strange
Thinketh hem, and yet they spake hem so,
And spedde as well in love, as men now do:
Eke for to winnen love, in sundry ages,
In sundry londes sundry ben vsages.

And forthy, if it happe in any wise,
That here be any lover in this place,
That herkeneth, as the story woll devise,
How Troilus came to his ladies grace,
And thinketh, so nolde I not love purchase,
Or wondreth on his speech or his doing,
I not, but it is to me no wondring:

For every wight, which that to Rome went,
Halt nat o pathe, ne alway o manere:
Eke in some lond were all the gamen shent,
If that men farde in love, as men done here,
As thus, in open doing or in chere,
In visiting, in forme, or said our saws,
Forthy men sain, ech country hath his laws.

Eke scarsely ben there in this place three,
That have in love said like, and done in all:
For to this purpose this may liken thee,
And thee right nought, yet all is done or shall:
Eke some men graue in tre, som in stone wall,
As it betide, but sith I have begonne,
Mine authour shall I follow, as I konne.

INCIPIT LIBER SECUNDUS.

In May, that mother is of moneths glade,
That the fresh floures, both blew, white, and rede,
Ben quick ayen, that winter dead made,
And full of baume is fleting every mede,
Whan Phebus doth his brighte beames spred,
Right in the white Bole, it so betidde,
As I shall sing, on Maies day the thridde,

That Pandarus, for all his wise speach,
Felt eke his part of Loves shottes kene,
That coud he never so well of loving preach,
It made his hew a day full ofte grene:
So shope it, that him fill that day a tene
In love, for which in wo to bed he went,
And made ere it were day full many a went.

The swallow Progne, with a sorrowfull lay,
Whan morrow come, gan make her waimenting
Why she forshapen was: and ever lay
Pandare a bed, halfe in a slombring,
Till she so nigh him made her waimenting,
How Tereus gan forth her suster take,
That with the noise of her he gan awake,

And to call, and dresse him vp to rise,
Remembring him his arrand was to done
From Troilus, and eke his great emprise,
And cast, and knew in good plite was the Moone
To done voiage, and tooke his way full soone
Unto his neces paleis there beside:
Now Ianus god of entre, thou him guide.

When he was come vnto his neces place,
"Where is my lady," to her folke (quod he)
And they him told, and he forth in gan pace,
And found two other ladies sit and shee,
Within a paued parlour, and they three
Herden a maiden hem reden the geste
Of the seige of Thebes, while hem leste:

(Quod Pandarus) "Madame, God you see,
With your booke, and all the companie:"
"Eigh, vncle mine, welcome iwis," (quod shee)
And vp she rose, and by the hond in hie
She tooke him fast, and said, "This night thrie,
To good mote it turne, of you I met:"
And with that word, she downe on bench him set.

"Yea, nece, ye shull faren well the bet,
If God woll, all this yeare," (quod Pandarus)
"But I am sorry that I have you let
To hearken of your booke, ye praisen thus:
For Godes love what saith it, tell it vs,
Is it of love, or some good ye me lere?"
"Uncle" (quod she) "your maistresse is nat here."

With that they gonnen laugh, and tho she seide,
"This romaunce is of Thebes, that we rede,
And we have heard how that king Laius deide
Through Edippus his sonne, and al the dede:
And here we stinten, at these letters rede,
How the bishop, as the booke can tell,
Amphiorax, fell through the ground to Hell."

(Quod Pandarus) "All this know I my selue,
And all thassiege of Thebes, and the care,
For hereof ben there maked bookes twelue:
But let be this, and tell me how ye fare,
Do way your barbe, and shew your face bare,
Do way your book, rise vp and let vs daunce,
And let vs done to May some obseruaunce."

"Eighe, God forbid:" (quod she) "be ye mad?
Is that a widdowes life, so God you save?
By God ye maken me right sore adrad,
Ye ben so wild, it seemeth as ye raue,
It sat me well bet aye in a caue
To bide, and rede on holy saintes liues:
Let maidens gon to daunce, and yonge wiues."

" As ever thriue I," (quod this Padarus)
" Yet could I tell o thing, to done you play:"
" Now vncle dere," (quod she) " tell it vs
For Godes love, is than thassiege awey?
I am of Greekes ferde, so that I dey:"
" Nay, nay," (quod he) " as ever mote I thriue,
It is a thing well bet than suche fiue."

" Ye holy God," (quod she) " what thing is that,
What, bet than suche five? eighe nay iwis,
For all this world ne can I reden what
It shoulde ben; some iape I trow it is,
And but your selven tell us what it is,
My wit is for to arede it all to leane:
As helpe me God, I not what that ye meane."

" And I your borow, ne never shall," (quod he)
" This thing be told to you, as mote I thrive:"
" And why, uncle mine, why so?" (quod she)
" By God," (quod he) " that woll I tell as blive,
For prouder woman is there none on live,
And ye it wist, in all the toune of Troy:
I iape nat, so ever have I joy."

Tho gan she wondren more than before,
A thousand fold, and downe her eyen cast:
For never sith the time that she was bore,
To knowen thing desired she so fast,
And with a sike, she said him at the last,
" Now uncle mine, I nill you not displease,
Nor asken more, that may do you disease."

So after this, with many wordes glade,
And friendly tales, and with merry chere,
Of this and that they speake, and gonnen wade
In many an unkouth glad and deepe matere,
As friendes done, whan they bethe ifere,
Till she gan asken him how Hector ferde,
That was the tounes wall, and Greekes yerde.

" Full wel I thanke it God," said Pandarus,
" Save in his arme he hath a little wound,
And eke his fresh brother Troilus,
The wise worthy Hector the secound,
In whom that every vertue list habound,
And first all trouthe, and all gentlenesse,
Wisedom, honour, freedom, and worthinesse."

" In good faitt., eme," (quod she) " that liketh me,
They faren well, God save hem both two:
For trewliche, I hold it great deintie,
A kinges sonne in armes well to do,
And be of good conditions thereto:
For great power, and morall vertue here
Is selde iseene in one persone ifere."

" In good faith, that is sooth" (quod Pandarus)
" But by my trouth the king hath sonnes twey,
That is to meane, Hector and Troilus,
That certainly though that I should dey,
They ben as void of vices, dare I sey,
As any men that liven under Sunne,
Hir might is wide iknow, and what they conne.

" Of Hector needeth it no more for to tell,
In all this world there nis a better knight
Than he, that is of worthinesse the well,
And he well more vertue hath than might,
This knoweth many a wise and worthy knight:
And the same prise of Troilus I sey,
God helpe me so, I know not suche twey."

" By God," (quod she) " of Hector that is sooth,
And of Troilus the same thing thing trow I:
For dredelesse, men telleth that he dopth
In armes day by day so worthely,
And beareth him here at home so gently
To every wight, that all prise hath he
Of hem that me were levest praised be."

" Ye say right sooth iwis," (quod Pandarus)
" For yesterday, who so had with him been,
Mighten have wondred upon Troilus,
For never yet so thicke a swarme of been
Ne flew, as Greekes from him gan fleen,
And through the field in every wightes eare,
There was no crie, but Troilus is there.

" Now here, now there, he hunted hem so fast,
There nas but Greekes blood, and Troilus,
Now him he hurt, and him all doun he cast,
Aye where he went it was arraied thus:
He was hir death, and shield and life for us,
That as the day ther durst him none withstond,
While that he held his bloody swerd in hond.

" Thereto he is the friendliest man
Of great estate, that ever I saw my live:
And where him list, best fellowship can
To such as him thinketh able for to thrive."
And with that word, tho Pandarus as blive
He tooke his leave, and said, " I woll gon hen:"
" Nay, blame have I, uncle," (quod she then.)

" What eileth you to be weary thus soone,
And namelieke of women, woll ye so?
Nay sitteth doune, by God I haue to done
With you, to speake of wisedome er ye go:"
And every wight that was about hem tho,
That heard that, gan ferre away to stond,
While they two had all that hem list in hond.

Whan that her tale all brought was to an end
Of her estate, and of her governaunce,
(Quod Pandarus) " Now time is that I wend,
But yet I say, ariseth, let us daunce,
And cast your widdows habit to mischaunce:
What list you thus your selfe to disfigure,
Sith you is tidde so glad an aventure?"

" But well bethought: for love of God," (quod she)
Shall I not weten what ye meane of this?"
No, this thing asketh leaser tho," (quod he)
" And eke me would full much greve iwis.
If I it told, and ye it tooke amis:
Yet were it bette my tongue to hold still,
Than say a sooth, that were ayenst your will."

" For nece mine, by the goddesse Minerve,
And Jupiter, that maketh the thunderring,
And the blisfull Uenus, that I serve,
Ye ben the woman in this world living
Withouten paramours, to my weting,
That I best love, and lothest am to greve,
And that ye weten well your selfe, I leve."

" Iwis mine uncle," (quod she) " graunt mercy,
Your friendship have I founden ever yet,
I am to no man beholden truely
So much as you, and have so little quit:
And with the grace of God, emforth my wit,
As in my guilt, I shall you never offend,
And if I have ere this, I woll amend.

" But for the love of God I you beseech
As ye be he that I love most and trist,
Let be to me your fremed manner speech,
And say to me your nece what you list:"
And with that word her uncle anon her kist,
And said, " Gladly my leve nece so dere,
Take it for good that I shall say you here."

With that she gan her eien doune to cast,
And Pandarus to coughe gan a lite,
And said: " Nece, alway lo, to the last,
How so it be, that some men hem delite
With subtle art hir tales for tendite,
Yet for all that in hir entention,
Hir tale is all for some conclusion.

" And sith the end is every tales strength,
And this matter is so behovedly,
What should I paint it or drawen it on length
To you, that ben my friend so faithfully?"
And with that word he gan right inwardly
Beholden her, and looken in her face,
And said, " On such a mirrour much good grace."

Than thought he thus, " If I my tale endite
Ought hard, or make a processe any while,
She shall no savour have therein but lite,
And trow I would her in my will beguile:
For tender wittes wenen all be wile,
Whereas they con nat plain liche understond:
Forthy her wit to serven woll I fond."

And looked on her in busie wise,
And she was ware that he beheld her so:
" Ah lord," (quod she) " so fast ye me avise,
Saw ye me never ere now, what say ye no?"
" Yes, yes," (quod he) " and bet woll ere I go:
But by my trouth I thought nowe, if ye
Be fortunate: for now men shall it see.

" For every wight some goodly aventure,
Sometime is shape, if he it can receiven:
But if he nill take of it no cure
Whan that it cometh, but wilfully it weiven:
Lo, neither case nor fortune him deceiven,
But right his own slouth and wretchednesse:
And such a wight is for to blame, I gesse.

" Good aventure, O belle nece, have ye
Full lightly founden, and ye conne it take:
And for the love of God, and eke of me,
Catch it anone, least aventure slake:
What should I lenger processe of it make,
Yeve me your hond, for in this world is non,
If that you list, a wight so well begon.

" And sith I speake of good ententioun,
As I to you have told well here beforne,
And love as well your honour and renoun,
As any creature in all the world iborne:
By all the othes that I have you sworne,
And ye be wroth therefore or wene I lie,
Ne shall I never scene you eft with eie.

" Beth nat agast, ne quaketh nat, whereto?
Ne chaunge nat for fere so your hew,
For hardely the worst of this is do:
And though my tale as now be to you new,
Yet trust alway: ye shall me finde true,
And were it thing that me thought unfitting,
To you ne would I no such tales bring."

" Now, my good eme, for Godes love I prey,"
(Quod she) " come off tell me what it is:
For both I am agast what ye woll say,
And eke me longeth it to wit iwis:
For whether it be well, or be amis,
Say on, let me not in this feare dwell."
" So woll I done, now hearkeneth I shall tell:

" Now, nece mine, the kinges own dere sonne,
The good, wise, worthy, fresh, and free,
Which alway for to done well is his wonne,
The noble Troilus so loveth thee,
That but ye helpe, it woll his bane be,
Lo here is all, what should I more sey?
Doth what you list, to make him live or dey.

" But if ye let him die, I woll sterven,
Have here my trouthe, nece, I nill not lien,
All should I with this knife my throte kerven:"
With that the teares burst out of his eien,
And said, " If that ye done us both dien
Thus guiltlesse, than have ye fished faire:
What mend ye, though that we both apaire?

" Alas, he which that is my lord so dere,
That trewe man, that noble gentle knight,
That nought desireth but your friendly chere,
I see him dien, there he goeth upright:
And hasteth him with all his fulle might
For to ben slaine, if his fortune assent,
Alas that God you such a beautie sent.

" If it be so that ye so cruell be,
That of his death you listeth nought to retch,
That is so trew and worthy as we see,
No more than of a yaper or a wretch,
If ye be such, your beaute may nat stretch,
To make amendes of so cruell a dede:
Avisement is good before the nede.

" Wo worth the faire gemme vertulesse,
Wo worth that hearbe also that doth no bote,
Wo worth the beauty that is routhlesse,
Wo worth that wight that trede eth under fote:
And ye that ben of beautie croppe and rote,
If therewithall in you ne be no routh,
Than is it harme ye liven by my trouth.

" And also thinke well, that this is no gaud,
For me were lever, thou, I, and he
Were honged, than I should ben his baud,
As high as men might on us all isee:
I am thine eme, the shame were to mee,
As well as thee, if that I should assent
Through mine abet, that he thine honour shent.

" Now understond, for I you nought requere
To bind you to him, through no behest,
Saue onely that ye make him better cheere
Than ye han don or this, and more feste,
So that his life be saued at the leste:
This al and some, and plainly our entente,
God helpe me so, I neuer other mente.

" Lo, this request is nought but skill iwis,
Ne doubt of reason parde is there none:
I set the worst, that ye dreden this,
Men would wonder to seen him come and gone:
There ayenst answere I thus anone,
That every wight, but he be foole of kind,
Woll deeme it love of frendship in his mind.

" What, who woll demen tho he see a man
To temple gone, that he the images eateth ?
Thinke eke, how well and wisely that he can
Govern himselfe, that he nothing foryetteth,
That wher he cometh, he pris and thonk him getteth ;
And eke thereto he shal come here so seld,
What force were it, thogh all the toun beheld.

" Such love of friends reigneth thorow al this toun:
And wrie you in that mantle evermo,
And God so wis be my salvatioun
As I have sayd, your best is to do so:
But, good nece, alway to stint his wo,
So let your daunger sugred ben alite,
That of his death ye be not all to wite."

Creseide, which that herd him in this wise,
Thought, " I shall felen what he meaneth iwis:
" Now eme," (quod she) " what would ye devise ?
What is your rede, I should done of this ?"
" That is well said," (quod he) " certaine best is,
That ye him love ayen for his loving,
As love for love is skilfull guerdoning.

" Thinke eke how elde wasteth every hour
In each of you a part of beaute,
And therefore, ere that age the devour,
Go love, for old there woll no wight of thee:
Let this proverbe, a lore unto you bee,
' Too late iware' (quod beaute) ' whan it past,
And elde daunteth daunger, at the last.'

" The kinges foole is wont to crie aloud,
Whan that he thinketh a woman bereth her hie,
' So longe mote ye liven, and all proud,
Till crowes feet growen under your eie,
And send you than a mirrour in to prie,
In which that ye may see your face a morow,'
Nece, I bid him wish you no more sorow."

With this he stint, and caste down the head,
And she began to brest and wepe anone,
And said, " Alas for wo, why nere I dead,
For of this world the faith is all agone:
Alas, what shoulden straunge unto me done,
Whan he that for my best frende I wend,
Rate me to love, and should it me defend.

" Alas, I would have trusted doubteles,
That if that I, through my disaventure,
Had loved either him or Achilles,
Hector, any other creature,
Ye nolde have had mercy ne measure
On me, but alway had me in repreve:
This false world alas, who may it leve ?

" What? is this all the joy and all the feast?
Is this your rede ? is this my blisfull caas ?
Is this the very mede of your behest ?
Is all this painted processe said (alas)
Right for this fine ? O lady mine Pallas,
Thou in this dredefull case for me purvey,
For so astonied am I, that I dey."

With that she gan full sorrowfully to sike,
" Ne may it be no bet," (quod Pandarus)
" By God I shall no more come here this weke,
And God toforne, that am mistrusted thus:
I see well now ye setten light of us,
Or of our death, alas, I wofull wretch,
Might he yet live, of me were nought to retch.

" O cruell god, O dispitous Marte,
O furies three of Hell, on you I crie,
So let me never out of this house depart,
If that I meant harme or villanie:
But sith I see my lord mote needes die,
And I with him, here I me shrive and sey,
That wickedly ye done us both to dey.

" But sith it liketh you, that I be dead,
By Neptunus, that god is of the see,
Fro this forth shall I never eaten bread,
Till that I mine owne herte blood may see:
For certaine I woll die as soone as hee."
And up he stert, and on his way he raught,
Till she againe him by the lappe caught.

Creseide, which that well nigh starf for feare,
So as she was the fearfullest wight
That might be, and heard eke with her eare,
And saw the sorrowfull earnest of the knight,
And in his praier saw eke none unright,
And for the harme eke that might fall more,
She gan to rew and dread her wonder sore.

And thought thus, " Unhapes do fallen thicke
Alday for love, and in such manner caas,
As men ben cruell in themselfe and wicke:
And if this man slee here himselfe, alas,
In my presence, it nill be no solas,
What men would of it deme I can nat say,
It needeth me full slighly for to play."

And with a sorowfull sigh, she said thrie,
" Ah, Lord, what me is tidde a sorry chaunce,
For mine estate lieth in jeopardie,
And eke mine emes life lieth in ballaunce:
But nathelesse, with Godes governaunce
I shall so done, mine honour shall I keepe,
And eke his life, and stinte for to weepe.

" Of harmes two, the lesse is for to chese,
Yet had I lever maken him good chere
In honour, than my emes life to lese.
Ye sain, ye nothing eles me requere."
" No wis," (quod he) " mine owne nece so dere."
" Now well" (quod she) " and I woll done my paine,
I shall mine herte ayen my lust constraine.

" But that I nill nat holden him in hond,
Ne love a man, that can I naught ne may,
Ayenst my will, but eles woll I fonde,
Mine honour save, plesen him fro day to day,
Thereto nolde I not ones have said nay,
But that I dredde, as in my fantasie:
But cesse cause, aie cesseth maladie.

" But here I make a protestacion,
That in this processe if ye deper go,
That certainly, for no salvation
Of you, though that ye sterven bothe two,
Though all the world on o day be my fo,
Ne shall I never on him have other routhe :"
" I graunt wel," (quod Pandare) by my trouthe.

" But maie I trust well to you," (quod he)
" That of this thing that ye han hight me here
Ye woll it holde truely unto me ?"
" Ye doubtlesse," (quod she) " mine uncle dere."
" Ne that I shall have cause in this matere"
(Quod he) " to plain, or ofter you to preach ?"
" Why no parde, what nedeth more speach."

Tho fill they in other tales glade
Till at the last, "O good Eme," (quod she tho)
"For love of God which that us bothe made,
Tell me how first ye wisten of his wo:
Wot none of it but ye?" he said "No:"
"Can he well speake of love," (quod she) "I preie?
Tell me, for I the bet shall me purveie."

Tho Pandarus a litel gan to smile,
And saied: "By my trouth I shall now tell,
This other daie, nat gon full long while,
Within the paleis gardin by a well
Gan he and I, well halfe a day to dwell,
Right for to speaken of an ordinaunce,
How we the Grekes mighten disavaunce.

"Sone after that we gone for to lepe,
And casten with our dartes to and fro:
Till at the last, he saied, he would slepe,
And on the grasse adoune he laied him tho,
And I after gan to romen to and fro,
Till that I heard, as I walked alone,
How he began full wofully to grone.

"Tho gan I stalke him softly behind,
And sikerly the sothe for to saine,
As I can clepe ayen now to my mind,
Right thus to love he gan him for to plain,
He saied: 'Lorde, have routh vpon my pain,
All have I been rebell in mine entent,
Now (mea culpa) lord I me repent.

"'O God, that at thy disposicion
Ledest the fine, by just purveiaunce
Of every wight, my lowe confession
Accept in gree, and sende me soche penaunce
As liketh thee, but from me disesperaunce,
That may my ghost departe alway fro the,
Thou be my shilde, for thy benignite.

"'For certes, lorde, so sore hath she me wounded
That stode in blacke, with loking of hir iyen,
That to mine hertes botome it is ifounded
Through which I wot, that I must nedes dien;
This is the worst, I dare me nought bewrien,
And well the hoter been the gledes rede
That men hem wren with ashen pale and dede.'

"With that he smote his hedde adoune anone
And gan to muttre, I nat what truely,
And I with that gan still awaie to gone
And lete thereof, as nothing wist had I,
And come again anon and stode him by
And saied, 'Awake, ye slepen all to long:
It semeth nought that love doth you wrong.

"'That slepen so that no man maie you wake;
Who seie euer er this so dull a man?'
'Ye, frende,' (quod he) 'doe ye your heddes ake
For love, and let me liuen as I can.'
But lorde though he for wo was pale and wan;
Yet made he tho as fresh a countenaunce,
As though he should haue led the newe daunce

"This passed forth, till now this other daie
It fell that I come roming all alone
Into his chambre, and founde how that he laie
Upon his bedde: but man so sore grone
Ne heard I neuer, and what was his mone
Ne wist I nought, for as I was comming
All sodainly he left his complaining.

"Of whiche I toke somwhat suspection,
And nere I come, and found him wepe sore;
And God so wise be my saluacion,
As never of thing had I no routh more:
For neither with engine, ne with no lore,
Unnethes might I fro the death him kepe,
That yet fele I mine herte for him wepe.

"And God wot neuer sith that I was borne
Was I so busie no man for to preache,
Ne never was to wight so depe sworne,
Er he me told, who might been his leache;
But not to you rehearsen all his speach,
Or all his wofull wordes for to sowne,
Ne bid me nought, but ye woll se me swone.

"But for to saue his life, and eles nought,
And to none harme of you, thus am I driuen,
And for the loue of God that us hath wrought
Soche chere him doth, that he and I maie liuen
Now haue I plat to you mine herte shriuen,
And sith ye wote that mine entent is cleane
Take hede thereof, for none euill I meane.

"And right good thrift, I pray to God haue ye,
That han soche one icaught withouten net,
And be ye wise, as ye be faire to se,
Well in the ring, than is the rubie set;
There were neuer two so well imet
Whan ye been his all hole, as he is your:
There mightie God yet graunt vs to se the hour."

"Naie thereof spake I nat: A ha!" (quod she)
"As helpe me God, ye shenden euery dele:"
"A mercie, dere nece, anon" (quod he)
"What so I spake, I ment nought but wele,
By Mars the god, that helmed is of stele:
Now beth not wroth, my blood, my nece dere."
"Now well," (quod she) "foryeuen be it here."

With this he toke his leave, and home he went,
Ye, Lord, how he was glad, and well bigon:
Creseide arose, no lenger she ne shent,
But streight into her closet went anon,
And set her doune, as still as any stone,
And every word gan vp and doune to wind,
That he had said as it came her to mind.

And woxe somdele astonied in her thought,
Right for the newe case, but whan that she
Was full avised, tho found she right nought,
Of perill, why that she ought aferde be:
For man may love of possibilite
A woman so, his herte may to brest,
And she nat love ayen, but if her lest.

But as she sat alone, and thought thus,
Thascrie arose at skarmoch all without,
And men cried in the strete, "Se Troilus
Hath right now put to flight the Grekes rout."
With that gonne all her meine for to shout:
"A, go we se, cast up the gates wide,
For through this strete he mote to paleis ride."

For other waie is fro the yates none,
Of Dardanus, there open is the cheine:
With that come he, and all his folke anone
An easie pace riding, in routes tweine,
Right as his happy day was, soth to seine:
For which men saith, may not distourbed be
That shall betide of necessite.

This Troilus sat on his baie stede
All armed save his head full richely,
And wounded was his horse, and gan to blede,
On which he rode a pace full softely:
But such a knightly sight truely
As was on him, was nat withouten faile
To loke on Mars, that god is of battaile.

So like a man of armes, and a knight
He was to seen, fulfilled of high prowesse,
For both he had a body, and might
To doen that thing, as well as hardinesse,
And eke to seen him in his geare dresse
So freshe, so yong, so weldy semed he,
It was an heaven vpon him for to se.

His helme to hewen was in twenty places,
That by a tissue hong, his backe behind,
His shelde to dashed with swerds and with maces,
In which men might many an arowe find,
That thirled had both horn, nerfe, and rind:
And aie the people cried, "Here cometh our ioie,
And next his brother, holder vp of Troie."

For which he wext a little redde for shame
Whan he so heard the people vpon him crien,
That to behold it was a noble game,
How soberliche he cast adoune his iyen:
Creseide anon gan all his chere espien,
And let it so soft in hir herte sinke,
That to her self she said, "Who yave me drinke?"

For all her own thought, she woxe all redde,
Remembring her right thus, "Lo this is he,
Which that mine vncle swereth he mote dedde,
But I on him have mercie and pite:"
And with that thought, for pure ashamed she,
Gan in her hedde to pull, and that as fast,
While he and all the people forth by past.

And gan to cast, and rollen vp and doun
Within her thought his excellent prowesse,
And his estate, and also his renoun,
His witte, his shape, and eke his gentilnesse,
But most her favour was, for his distresse
Was all for her, and thought it were a routh,
To slaen soche one, if that he ment trouth.

Now might some envious iangle thus,
"This was a sodain love, how might it be,
That she so lightly loved Troilus?
Right for the first sight: ye, parde?"
Now whoso saied so, mote he never the:
For every thing a ginning hath it nede
Er all be wrought, withouten any drede.

For I saie nat that she so sodainly
Yafe him her love, but that she gan encline
To liken him tho, and I have told you why:
And after that, his manhode, and his pine,
Made that love within her gan to mine:
For which by processe, and by good service
He warine her love, and in no sodain wise.

And all so blisfull Uenus wele araied
Satte in her seventh house of Heven tho,
Disposed wele, and with aspectes payed,
To helpe sely Troilus of his wo:
And sothe to sayne, she nas nat all a foe
To Troilus, in his natyuyte,
God wote that wele the sooner spede he.

Now let vs stente of Troilus a throw,
That rideth forth, and let vs tourne fast
Unto Creseide, that hong her hedde full low,
There as she satte alone, and gan to cast
Whereon she would appoint her at the last,
If it so were her eme ne would cesse,
For Troilus vpon her for to presse.

And lorde so she gan in her thought argue
In this matter, of which I have you told,
And what to doen best were, and what eschue,
That plited she full oft in many fold:
Now was hir herte warme, now was it cold.
And what she thought, somwhat shall I write,
As mine authour listeth for tendite.

She thought first, that Troilus person
She knew by sight and eke his gentelnesse:
And thus she said, "All were it nought to doen
To grant him love, yet for his worthinesse,
It were honor with plaie, and with gladnesse,
In honeste with soch a lorde to deale,
For mine estate, and also for his heale.

"Eke well wote I, my kinges sonne is he,
And sith he hath to see me soch delite,
If I would vtterliche his sight flie,
Paraventure he might have me in dispite,
Through which I might stond in wors plite:
Now were I wise, me hate to purchase
Without nede, there I may stande in grace?

"In every thing, I wot there lieth measure:
For though a man forbid dronkennesse,
He nought forbiddeth that every creature
Be drinkelesse for alway, as I gesse:
Eke, sithe I wot for me is his distresse,
I ne ought not for that thing him dispise,
Sith it is so, he meaneth in good wise.

"And eke I know, of long time agone
His thewes good, and that he nis not nice,
No vauntour saine men, certain he is none,
To wise is he to doen so great a vice:
Ne als I nill him never so cherice,
That he shall make avaunt by iust cause:
He shall me never binde in soche a clause.

"Now set a case, the hardest is iwis,
Men might demen that he loveth me:
What dishonour were it vnto me this?
Maie iche hem let of that? why naie parde:
I know also, and alway heare and se,
Men loven women all this toune about,
Be they the wers? Why naie withouten dout?

"I thinke eke how, he worthie is to have
Of all this noble toune the thriftiest,
That woman is, if she her honour save:
For out and out he is the worthiest,
Save only Hector, which that is the best,
And yet his life lieth all now in my cure,
But soche is love, and eke mine aventure.

"Ne me to love, a wonder is it nought:
For well wote I my self, so God me spede,
All woll I that no man wist of this thought,
I am one the fairest out of drede
And goodliest, who so that taketh hede:
And so men saine in all the toune of Troie,
What wonder is though he of me have ioie?

" I am mine owne woman well at ease,
I thanke it God, as after mine estate,
Right yong, and stond vntied in lustie lease,
Withouten ielousie, and such debate:
Shall no husbonde saine to me checke mate,
For either they be full of ielousie,
Or maisterfull, or loven novelrie.

" What shall I doen? to what fine live I thus?
Shall I not love, in case if that me lest?
What pardieux I am not religious:
And though that I mine herte set at rest
Upon this knight, that is the worthiest,
And kepe alway mine honor, and my name,
By all right it may doe me no shame."

But right as whan the Sunne shineth bright
In March, that chaungeth oft time his face,
And that a cloud is put with winde to flight,
Which oversprat the Sunne, as for a space,
A cloudy thought gan through her soul pace,
That overspradde her bright thoughtes all,
So that for feare almost she gan to fall.

That thought was this: " Alas sith I am free,
Should I now love, and put in ieopardie
My sikernesse, and thrallen libertie?
Alas, how durst I thinken that folie?
May I not well in other folke aspie
Hir dredfull ioie, hir constreint, and hir pain:
Ther loveth none, that she ne hath why to plain.

" For love is yet the moste stormie life,
Right of himself, that ever was begonne:
For ever some mistrust, or nice strife,
There is in love, some cloud over the Sunne:
Thereto we wretched women nothing conne
Whan vs is wo, but wepe and sit and thinke,
Our wretch is this, our owne wo to drinke.

Also wicked tongues been ay so prest
To speake vs harme: eke men ben so vntrue,
That right anon as cessed is hir lest,
So cesseth love, and forth to love a newe:
But harm idoe is doen, who so it rue:
For though these men for love hem first to rende,
Full sharp beginning breaketh oft at ende.

" How oft time may men both rede and seen,
The treason, that to woman hath be doe?
To what fine is soche love, I can not seen,
Or where becometh it, whan it is go,
There is no wight that wote, I trowe so,
Wher it becometh, lo, no wight on it sporneth;
That erst was nothing, into naught turneth.

" How busie (if I love) eke must I be
To pleasen hem, that iangle of love, and demen,
And coyen hem, that thei saie no harm of me:
For though there be no cause, yet hem semen
Al be for harme, that folke hir frendes quemen:
And who maie stoppen every wicked tong?
Or soune of belles, while that they been rong?"

And after that her thought gan for to clere
And saied, " He which that nothing vndertaketh
Nothing acheveth, be him loth or dere;"
And with another thought her herte quaketh
Than slepeth hope, and after drede awaketh.
Now hote, now cold, but thus bitwixen twey
She rist her vp, and went hir for to pley.

Adoune the staire anon right tho she went
Into her gardine, with her neces three,
And vp and doun, they maden many a went
Flexippe and she, Tarbe, and Antigone,
To plaien, that to ioie was to see,
And other of her women a great rout
Her followeth in the gardaine all about.

This yerde was large, and railed al the alies
And shadowed wel, with blosomy bowes grene,
And benched newe, and sonded all the waies
In which she walketh arme in arme betwene,
Till at the last Antigone the shene
Gan on a Troian song to singen clere,
That it an Heven was her voice to here.

She saied, " O Love, to whom I have, and shall
Been humble subiect, true in mine entent
As I best can, to you, lorde, yeve iche all
For euermore mine hertes lust to rent:
For never yet thy grace to no wight sent
So blisfull cause as me, my life to lede
In all ioie and saretie, out of drede.

" The blisfull god, hath me so well beset
In love iwis, that all that beareth life
Imaginen ne could how to be bet,
For, lorde, withouten ielousie or strife
I love one, which that moste is ententife
To serven well, vnweriły or vnfained,
That ever was, and lest with harme distained;

" As he that is the well of worthinesse,
Of trouth ground, mirrour of goodlihedde,
Of wit Apollo, stone of sikernesse,
Of vertue roote, of luste finder and hedde,
Through whiche is all sorrowe fro me dedde:
Iwis I love him best, so doeth he me,
Now good thrift have he, where so ever he be.

" Whom should I thanken but you, god of love,
Of all this blisse, in which to bath I ginne.
And thanked be ye, lorde, for that I love,
This is the right life that I am inne,
To flemen all maner vice and sinne:
This doeth me so to vertue for to entende
That daie by daie I in my will amende.

" And who that saieth that for to love is vice,
Or thraldome, though he fele it in distresse,
He either is enuious, or right nice,
Or is vnmightie for his shreudnesse,
To loven, for soch maner folke I gesse
Diffamen Love, as nothing of him know
They speaken, but they bent never his bowe.

" What is the Sunne worse of his kind right,
Though that a man, for feblenesse of his iyen
Maie not endure on it to se for bright?
Or love the worst, that wretches on it crien?
No wele is worth, that may no sorowe drien:
And forthy, who that hath an hedde of yerre
Fro cast of stones ware him in the werre.

" But I with all mine herte and all my might,
As I have saied, woll love vnto my last
My owne dere herte and all mine owne knight,
In whiche mine herte growen is so fast
And his in me, that it shall ever last:
All dredde I first love him to begin,
Now wote I well there is no perill in."

And of her song right with that word she stent,
And therewithall, "Now nece" (quod Creseide)
"Who made this song now with so good entent?"
Antigone answerde anon and saide,
"Madame iwis the goodliest maide
Of great estate in all the toune of Troie
And led her life in most honour and ioie."

"Forsothe so semeth it by her song,"
Quod tho Creseide, and gan therewith to sike,
And saied: "Lorde, is there soche blisse emong
These lovers, as they can faire endite:"
"Ye, wisse," quod fresh Antigone the white,
"For all the folke that have or been on live
Ne con well the blisse of love discrive.

"But wene ye that every wretche wote
The parfite blisse of love? why naie iwis:
They wenen all be love, if one be hote:
Do waie do waie, they wote nothing of this.
Men mote asken of sainctes, if it is
Ought faire in Heven, and why? for they can tell,
And aske fendes, if it be foule in Hell."

Creseide vnto the purpose naught answerde,
But saied, "Iwis it woll be night as fast,"
But every worde, which that she of her herde,
She gan to printen in her herte fast,
And aie gan love her lasse for to agast
Than it did erst, and sinken in her herte,
That she waxe somewhat able to conuarte.

The daies honour, and the Heavens iye,
The nightes foe, all this clepe I thee Sonne,
Gan westren fast, and dounward for to wrie,
As he that had his daies course ironne,
And white thinges woxen al dimme and donne
For lacke of light, and sterres for to apere,
That she and all her folke in went ifere.

So whan it liked her to gon to rest,
And voided weren they that voiden ought,
She saied, that to slepen well her leste:
Her women sone till her bedde her brought:
Whan al was hust, than lay she still and thought
Of all this thing the maner and the wise,
Rehearce it needeth not, for ye been wise.

A nightingale vpon a cedre grene
Under the chamber wall, there as she laie,
Full loude song ayen the Mone shene
Paraventure in his birdes wise a laie
Of love, that made her herte freshe and gaie,
That herkened she so long in good entent,
Till at the last the dedde sleepe her hent.

And as she slept, anon right tho her met,
How that an egle fethered white as bone,
Under her brest his longe clawes iset,
And out her herte he rent, and that anon,
And did his herte into her brest to gon,
Of which she nought agrose, ne nothing smart,
And forth he flieth, with herte left for herte.

Now let her slepe, and we our tales holde
Of Troilus, that is to paleis ridden,
Fro the scarmishe of which I you tolde,
And in his chamber sate, and hath abidden,
Till two or three of his messengers yeden
For Pandarus, and soughten him full fast,
Till they him found, and brought him at the last.

This Pandarus came leaping in at ones,
And saied thus, "Who hath been well ibete
To day with swerdes, and slong stones,
But Troilus, that hath caught him an hete?"
And gan to yape, and saied, "Lord ye swete,
But rise and let vs soupe, and go to reste,"
And he answerde him, "Do we as thee leste."

With all the hast goodly as they might,
They sped hem fro the souper, and to bedde,
And every wight out at the doore him dight,
And whider him list, vpon his waie him sped:
But Troilus thought that his herte bledde
For wo, till that he heard some tiding,
And saied, "Frende, shall I now wepe or sing?"

(Quod Pandarus) "Be still and let me slepe,
And doe on thy hoode, thine nedes spedde be,
And chose if thou wolt sing, daunce, or lepe,
At short wordes thou shalt trowe all by me,
Sir, my nece woll doen well by thee,
And love thee best, by God and by trothe,
But lacke of pursute marre it in thy slothe.

"For thus ferforth I have thy werk begon,
Fro daie to daie, till this daie by the morow,
Hir love of frendship have I to thee won,
And therfore hath she laid her faith to borow,
Algate a foote is hameled of thy sorow:"
What should I lenger sermon of it holde,
As ye have heard before, all he him tolde.

But right as floures through the cold of night
I closed, stoupen in hir stalkes lowe,
Redressen hem ayen the Sunne bright,
And spreaden in hir kinde course by rowe,
Right so gan tho his iyen vp to throwe
This Troilus, and saied: "O Uenus dere,
Thy might, thy grace, iheried be it here."

And to Pandarus he held vp both his honds,
And saied, "Lorde all thine be that I have,
For I am hole, and broken been my bonds,
A thousand Troies, who so that me yave
Eche after other, God so wis me save,
Ne might me so gladen, lo mine herte
It spredeth so for ioye it woll to starte.

"But lorde how shall I doen? how shal I liven,
Whan shall I next my dere herte se?
How shall this longe time away be driven?
Till that thou be ayen at her fro me,
Thou maist answere, abide abide: but he
That hangeth by the necke, sothe to saine,
In great disease abideth for the paine."

"All easily now, for the love of Marte,"
(Quod Pandarus) "for every thing hath time,
So long abide, till that the night departe,
For also siker as thou liest here by me,
And God toforne, I woll be there at prime,
And for thy werke somewhat, as I shall say,
Or on some other wight this charge lay.

"For parde, God wot, I have ever yet
Ben ready thee to serve, and this night
Have I not fained, but emforthe my wit
Doen all thy lust, and shal with al my might:
Doe now as I shall saine, and fare aright:
And if thou nilte, wite all thy selfe the care,
On me is nought along thine evill fare.

" I wote well, that thou wiser art than I
A thousand fold: but if I were as thou,
God helpe me so, as I would vtterly
Right of mine owne honde write her now
A letter, in which I would her tellen how
I farde amisse, and her beseech of routh:
Now help thy self, and leave it for no slouth.

" And I my selfe shall therewith to her gone,
And whan thou wost that I am with her there
Worthe thou vpon a courser right anone,
Ye hardely, and that right in thy best gere,
And ride forth by the place, as naught ne were,
And thou shalt find vs (if I may) sitting
At some window, into the street looking.

" And if thee list, then mayest thou vs salve,
And vpon me make thou thy countenaunce,
But by thy life beware, and fast eschue
To tarien ought, God shild vs fro mischaunce:
Ride forth thy way, and hold thy governaunce,
And we shall speake of thee somewhat I trow
Whan thou art gone, to doe thine eares glow.

" Touching thy letter, thou art wise inough,
I wot thou nilte it deigneliche endite,
As make it with these argumentes tough,
Ne scriveinishe or craftely thou it write,
Beblotte it with thy teares eke alite,
And if thou write a goodly word all soft,
Though it be good, rehearse it not too oft.

" For though the best harpour vpon live
Would on the best sowned iolly harpe
That ever was, with all his fingers five
Touch aye o strong, or aye o warble harpe,
Where his nailes pointed never so sharpe,
It should make every wight to dull,
To heare his glee, and of his strokes full.

" Ne iombre eke no discordaunt thing ifere,
As thus, to vsen tearmes of phisicke,
In loves tearmes hold of thy matere
The forme alway, and doe that it be like,
For if a painter would paint a pike
With asses feet, and headed as an ape,
It cordeth not, so were it but a yape."

This counsaile liked well vnto Troilus,
But as a dredefull lover he saied this:
" Alas my dere brother Pandarus,
I am ashamed for to write iwis,
Least of mine innocence I saied amis,
Or that she nolde it for dispite receive,
Than were I dead, there might it nothing weive."

To that Pandare answerde, " If thee lest,
Do that I say, and let me therewith gone,
For by that Lord that formed east and west,
I hope of it to bring answere anone
Right of her hond, and if that thou nilte none,
Let be, and sorrie mote he been his live,
Ayenst thy lust that helpeth thee to thrive."

(Quod Troilus) " Depardieux iche assent,
Sith that thee list, I woll arise and write,
And blisfull God pray iche with good entent
The voiage and the letter I shall endite,
So speed it, and thou Minerva the white,
Yeve thou me witte, my letter to devise:"
And set him doun, and wrote right in this wise.

First he gan her his right ladie call,
His hertes life, his lust, his sorowes leche,
His blisse, and eche these other tearmes all,
That in such case ye lovers all seche,
And in full humble wise, as in his speche,
He gan him recommaund vnto her grace,
To tell all how, it asketh mokell space.

And after this full lowly he her praied
To be nought wroth, though he of his follie
So hardie was to her to write, and saied
That love it made, or eles must he die,
And pitously gan mercie for to crie:
And after that he saied, and lied full loud,
Himselfe was little wroth, and lasse he coud.

And that she would have his conning excused,
That little was, and eke he dradde her so,
And his vnworthinesse aye he accused:
And after that than gan he tell his wo,
But that was endlesse withouten ho:
And said, he would in trouth alway him hold,
And redde it over, and gan the letter fold.

And with his salte teares gan he bathe
The rubie in his signet, and it sette
Upon the wexe deliverliche and rathe,
Therewith a thousand times, er he lette,
He kiste tho the letter that he shette
And sayd, " Letter, a blisfull destine
Thee shapen is, my ladie shall thee see."

This Pandare tooke the letter, and betime
A morrow to his neecis pallaice stert,
And fast he swore, that it was passed prime:
And gan to yape, and sayd, " Iwis my herte
So fresh it is, although it sore smert,
I may not sleepe never a Mayes morrow,
I have a iollie woe, a lustie sorrow."

Creseide whan that she her uncle heard,
With dreadfull herte, and desirous to heare,
The cause of his comming, thus answeard,
" Now by your faith, mine vncle" (quod she) " deare,
What manner windes guideth you now here?
Tell vs your iolly woe, and your penaunce,
How farre forth be ye put in loves daunce."

" By God" (quod he) " I hop alway behinde,"
And to laugh, it thought her herte brest,
(Quod Pandarus) " Looke alway that ye finde
Game in mine hood: but herkeneth if you lest,
There is right now come into the toun a gest,
A Greeke espie, and telleth newe thinges,
For which I come to tell you new tidinges,

" Into the garden go we, and ye shall heare
All privily of this a long sermoun:"
With that they wenten arm in arm ifere,
Into the gardin fro the chamber doun.
And whan he was so farre, that the soun
Of that he spake, no man heren might,
He sayd her thus, and out the letter plight.

" Lo, he that is all holly yours free,
Him recommaundeth lowly to your grace,
And sent you this letter here by me,
Aviseth you on it, whan ye han space,
And of some goodly answeare you purchace,
Or helpe me God so, plainely for to saine,
He may not longe liven for his paine.

Full dredefully tho gan she stonde still,
And tooke it not, but all her humble chere
Gan for to chaunge, and sayd, " Scripe nor bill,
For love of God, that toucheth such matere
Ne bring me none: and also, vncle dere,
To mine estate have more regard I pray
Than to his lust, what should I more say.

" And looketh now if this be reasonable,
And letteth not for favour ne for slouth
To sain a sooth, now is it covenable
To mine estate, by God and by my trouth
To take it, or to have of him routh,
In harming of my selfe or in repreve:
Beare it ayen, for him that ye on leve."

This Pandarus gan on her for to stare,
And sayd, " Now is this the greatest wonder
That ever I saw, let be this nice fare,
To death mote I smiten be with thunder,
If for the citie which that stondeth yonder,
Would I a letter vnto you bring or take,
To harm of you: what list you thus it make.

" But thus ye faren well nigh all and some,
That he that most desireth you to serve,
Of him ye retch least where he become,
And whether that he live, or else sterve:
But for all that, that ever I may deserve,
Refuse it not" (quod he) and hent her fast,
And in her bosome the letter doune he thrast.

And said her, " Now cast it away anon
That folk may seen, and gauren on vs twey."
(Quod she) " I can abide till they be gon"
And gan to smile, and said him, " Eme I pray
Such answere as you list your selfe purvey:
For truely I woll no letter write:"
" No, than woll I" (quod he) " so ye endite."

Therewith she lough, and said " Go we dine,"
And he gan at himselfe yapen fast,
And sayd " Nece, I have so great a pine
For love, that everich other day I fast,"
And gan his best yapes forth to cast,
And made her for to laugh at his follie,
That she for laughter wente for to die.

And whan that she was comen into the hall,
" Now eme" (quod she) " we woll go dine anon,"
And gan some of her women to her call,
And streight into her chamber gan she gone,
But of her businesse this was one,
Amonges other thinges, out of drede,
Full prively this letter for to rede.

Avised word by word in every line,
And found no lacke, she thought he coud his good,
And vp it put, and went her in to dine,
And Pandarus, that in a studie stood,
Ere he was ware, she tooke him by the hood,
And said " Ye were caught ere that ye wist,
" I vouchsafe," (quod he) " do what you list."

Tho weshen they, and set hem doun and ete,
And after noone fall slightly Pandarus
Gan draw him to the window nye the strete,
And said, " Nece, who hath araied thus
The yonder house, that stant aforeyene vs?"
" Which house?" (quod she) and gan for to behold,
And knew it well, and whose it was him told.

And fellen forth in speech of thinges smale,
And saten in the window both twey:
Whan Pandarus saw time vnto his tale,
And saw well that her folke were all awey:
" Now nece mine, tell on" (quod he) " I prey,
How liketh you the letter that ye wot,
Can he thereon, for by my trouth I not."

Therewith all rosy hewed tho woxe she,
And gan to hum, and said, " So I trow,"
" Aquite him well for Gods love" (quod he)
" My selfe to medes woll the letter sow,"
And held his hondes vp, and sat on know,
" Now good nece, be it never so lite,
Yeue me the labour, it to sow and plite."

" Ye, for I can so writen" (quod she) " tho,
And eke I not what I should to him say:"
" Nay nece" (quod Pandare) " say not so,
Yet at the least, thonketh him I pray
Of his good will: O, doth him not to dey,
Now for the love of me my nece dere,
Refuseth not at this time my praiere."

" Depardieux" (quod she) " God leve all be wele,
God helpe me so, this is the first letter
That ever I wrote, ye all or any dele,"
And into a closet for to avise her better,
She went alone, and gan her herte vnfetter
Out of disdaines prison, but a lite,
And set her doune, and gan a letter write.

Of which to tell in short is mine entent
Theffect, as ferre as I can understond:
She thonked him, of all that he well ment,
Towardes her, but holden him in hond
She nolde not, ne make her seluen bond
In love, but as his suster him to please,
She would aye faine to done his herte an ease.

She shette it, and to Pandare into gone
There as he sat, and looked into strete,
And doune she set her by him on a stone
Of iasper, vpon a quisshen of gold ibete,
And said, " As wisely helpe me God the grete,
I never did a thing with more paine,
Than write this, to which ye me restraine."

And tooke it him: he thonked hir, and seide,
" God wot of thing full often lothe begonne
Commeth end good: and nece mine Creseide,
That ye to him of hard now ben iwonne,
Ought he be glad, by God and yonder sonne:
For why, men saith impressiones light
Full lightly ben aye readie to the flight.

" But ye han plaied the tiraunt all too long,
And hard was it your herte for to grave,
Now stint, that ye no lenger on it hong,
All woulden ye the forme of daunger save,
But hasteth you to done him joye have:
For trusteth well, too long idone hardnesse
Causeth dispite full often for distresse."

And right as they declared this matere,
Lo Troilus, right at the stretes end
Came riding with his tenth somme ifere
All softely, and thiderward gan bend
There as they sate, as was his way to wend
To paleis ward, and Pandare him aspide,
And said, " Nece, isee who commeth here ride."

" O flie not in, he seeth vs I suppose,
Least he may thinken that ye him eschue."
" Nay, nay" (quod she) and woxe as red as rose,
With that he gan her humbly salue
With dredefull chere, and oft his hewes mue,
And vp his looke debonairely he cast,
And becked on Pandare, and forth by past.

God wot if he sat on his horse aright,
Or goodly was beseene that ilke day,
God wot where he were like a manly knight,
What should I dretche, or tell of his array:
Creseide, which that all those thinges sey,
To tell in short, her liked all ifere,
His person, his aray, his looke, his chere.

His goodly manner, and his gentillesse,
So well, that never sith that she was borne,
Ne had she suche routh of his distresse,
And how so, she hath hard ben here beforne,
To God hope I, she hath now caught a thorn,
She shall nat pull it out this next wike,
God send her mo such thornes on to pike.

Pandare, which that stood her faste by,
Felt iron hot, and he began to smite,
And said, " Nece, I pray you heartely,
Tell me that I shall asken you alite,
A woman that were of his death to wite
Withouten his gilt, but for her lack of routh,
Were it well done?" (quod she) " Nay by my trouth."

" God helpe me so" (quod he) " ye say me sooth,
Ye feelen well your selfe that I nought lie,
Lo, yonde he rideth:" (quod she) " Ye so he dooth:"
" Well" (quod Pandare) " as I have told you thrie,
Let be your nice shame, and your follie,
And speake with him in easing of his herte,
Let nicete nat do you bothe smert."

But ther on was to Heauen and to done,
Considering all thing, it may nat be,
And why? for shame, and it were eke too soone
To graunten him so great a liberte:
For plainly hir entent, as (said she)
Was for to love him vnwist, if she might,
And guerdon him with nothing but with sight.

But Pandare thought, it shall nat be so,
If that I may, this nice opinion
Shall nat ben holden fully yeares two.
What should I make of this a long sermon?
He must assent on that conclusion,
As for the time, and whan that it was eve,
And all was well, he rose and tooke his leve.

And on his way fast homeward he spedde,
And right for ioy he felt his herte daunce,
And Troilus he found alone abedde,
That lay, as done these lovers in a traunce,
Betwixen hope and derke desperaunce,
But Pandare, right at his in comming,
He song, as who saith, " Lo, somewhat I bring."

And said, " Who is in his bedde so soone
Yburied thus?" " It am I friend:" (quod he)
" Who, Troilus? nay, help me so the Moone"
(Quod Pandarus) " thou shalt vp rise and see
A charme that was sent right now to thee,
The which can healen thee of thine accesse,
If thou do forthwith all thy businesse."

" Ye, through the might of God:" (quod Troilus)
And Pandarus gan him the letter take,
And said, " Parde God hath holpen vs,
Have here a light, and look on all these blake."
But often gan the herte glad and quake
Of Troilus, while he it gan to rede,
So as the wordes yave him hope or drede,

But finally he tooke all for the best
That she him wrote, for somewhat he beheld,
On which he thought he might his herte rest,
All covered she the wordes vnder sheld,
Thus to the more worthy part he held,
That what for hope, and Pandarus behest,
His greate wo foryede he at the lest.

But as we may all day our seluen see,
Through wood or cole kindleth the more fire,
Right so encrease of hope, of what it be,
Therewith full oft encreaseth eke desire,
Or as an oke commeth of a litle spire,
So through this letter, which that she him sent,
Encreasen gan desire of which he brent.

Wherfore I say alway, that day and night
This Troilus gan to desiren more
Than he did erst through hope, and did his might
To presen on, as by Pandarus lore,
And writen to her of his sorowes sore
Fro day to day, he let it nought refrede,
That by Pandare he somewhat wrot or seide.

And did also his other observaunces,
That till a lover longeth in this caas,
And after as his dice turned on chaunces,
So was he either glad, or said alas,
And held after his gestes aye his paas,
And after such answeres as he had,
So were his daies sorry either glad.

But to Pandare alway was his recours,
And pitously gan aye on him to plaine,
And him besought of rede, and some socours,
And Pandarus, that saw his wood paine,
Wext well nigh dead for routh, sooth to saine,
And busily with all his herte cast,
Some of his wo to sleen, and that as fast.

And said, " Lord and friend, and brother dere,
God wot that thy disease doth me wo,
But wolt thou stinten all this wofull chere,
And by my trouth, ere it be daies two,
And God toforne, yet shall I shape it so,
That thou shalt come into a certaine place,
There as thou maist thy self praien her of grace.

" And certainly I not if thou it wost,
But they that ben expert in love, it say,
It is one of these thinges forthereth most,
A man to have a leiser for to pray,
And siker place, his wo for to bewray,
For in good herte it mote some routh impress
To heare and see the guiltless in distresse.

" Peraventure thinkest thou, though it be so,
That kind would her done for to begin,
To have a manner routh vpon my wo,
Saith daunger nay, thou shalt me never win:
So ruleth her hertes ghost within,
That though she bende, yet she stont on rote,
What in effect is this vnto my bote.

" Think here ayen, whan that the sturdy oke
On which men hacketh ofte for the nones,
Received hath the happy falling stroke,
The great swight doth it come all at ones,
As done these great rocks or these miln stones,
For swifter course cometh thing that is of wight
Whan it discendeth, than done things light.

" But rede that boweth doun for every blast,
Full lightly cesse wind, it woll arise,
But so nill not an oke, whan it is cast,
It needeth me nought longe thee forvise,
Men shall reioysen of a great emprise,
Atchieved well, and stant withouten dout,
All have men ben the lenger thereabout.

" But, Troilus, now tell me if thee lest
A thing, which that I shall asken thee,
Which is thy brother, that thou lovest best,
As in thy very hertes privite ?"
" Iwis my brother Deiphebus tho" (quod he.)
" Now" (quod Pandare) " ere houres twise twelve,
He shall the ease, vnwist of it himselve.

" Now let me alone, and worken as I may,"
(Quod he) and to Deiphebus went he tho,
Which had his lord, and great friend ben aye,
Save Troilus no man he loved so:
To tellen in short withouten words mo
(Quod Pandarus) " I pray you that ye be
Friend to a cause, which that toucheth me."

" Yes parde" (quod Deiphebus) " wel thou wetest
All that ever I may, and God tofore,
All nere it but for the man I love most,
My brother Troilus; but say wherefore
It is, for sith the day that I was bore,
I nas, ne never mo to ben I thinke,
Ayenst a thing that might thee forthinke."

Pandare gan him thank, and to him seide,
" Lo sir, I have a lady in this toun
That is my nece, and called is Creseide,
Which some men would done oppressioun,
And wrongfully have her possessioun,
Wherefore I of your lordship you beseech
To ben our friend, withouten more speech."

Deiphebus him answerd: " O, is nat this
That thou speakest of to me thus straungly,
Creseide my friend ?" He said him " Yes."
" Than needeth" (quod Deiphebus) " hardely
No more of this to speke, for trusteth well that I
Woll be her champion with spore and yerde,
I ne raught nat though all her foes it herde.

" But tel me how, for thou wost this matere,
I might best availen, now lette see ?"
(Quod Pandarus) " If ye my lord so dere
Woulden as now do this honour to me,
To praien her to morrow, lo that she
Came unto you, her plaints to devise,
Her adversaries would of it agrise.

" And if I more durst praien as now,
And chargen you to have so great travaile,
To have some of your brethren here with you,
That mighten to her cause bet availe,
Than wote I well she might never faile
For to ben holpen, what at your instaunce,
What with her other friendes governaunce."

Deiphebus, which that comen was of kind
To all honour and bounty to consent,
Answerd, " It shall be done: and I can find
Yet greater helpe to this mine entent:
What woldest thou saine, if for Heleine I sent
To speake of this ? I trow it be the best,
For she may leden Paris as her lest.

" Of Hector, which that is my lord my brother,
It needeth nat to praien him friend to be,
For I have heard him o time and eke other
Speaken of Creseide such honour, that he
May saine no bet, such hap to him hath she,
It needeth nat his helpes more to crave,
He shall be such, right as we woll him have.

" Speake thou thy selfe also to Troilus
On my behalfe, and pray him with us dine."
" Sir, all this shall be done" (quod Pandarus)
And tooke his leave, and never gan to fine,
But to his neces house as streight as line
He came, and found her fro the meat arise,
And set him doun, and spake right in this wise:

He said, " O very God, so have I ronne,
Lo nece mine, see ye nat how I swete ?
I not where ye the more thanke me conne:
Be ye not ware how false Poliphete
Is now about eftsoones for to plete,
And bring on you advocacies new ?"
" I, no" (quod she) and chaunged all her hew.

" What, is he more about me to dretche
And done me wrong, what shall I done, alas,
Yet of himselfe nothing would I retche,
Nere it for Antenor and Eneas,
That ben his friends in such manner eaas:
But for the love of God mine uncle dere,
No force of that, let him have all ifere,

" Withouten that, I have ynough for us."
" Nay" (quod Pandare) " it shall nothing be so,
For I have ben right now at Deiphebus,
At Hector, and mine other lordes mo,
And shortly maked each of hem his fo,
That by my thrift he shall it never win,
For aught he can, whan so that he begin."

And as they casten what was best to done,
Deiphebus of his owne courtesie
Came her to pray, in his proper persone,
To hold him on the morrow companie
At dinner, which she nolde not denie,
But goodly gan to his prayer obey,
He thonked her, and went upon his wey.

Whan this was done, this Pandare anone,
To tell in short, forth he gan to wend
To Troilus, as still as any stone,
And all this thing he told him word and end,
And how that he Deiphebus gan to blend,
And said him, " Now is time of that ye conne
To bere thee well to morow, and all is wonne.

" Now speke, now pray, now pitously complain,
Let nat for nice shame, for drede or slouth,
Sometime a man mote tell his owne pain,
Beleeve it, and she woll have on thee routh,
Thou shalt ben saved by thy faith in trouth,
But well wot I, thou now art in a drede,
And what it is, I lay that I can rede,

[illegible] now, ' How should I don al this,
For by my cheres mosten folke espie,
That for her love is that I fare amis,
Yet had I lever unwist for sorrow die:'
Now thinke nat so, for thou hast great follie,
For I right now have founden a manere
Of sleight, for to coveren all thy chere.

Thou shalt gone overnight, and that blive,
Unto Deiphebus house, as thee to play,
Thy maladie away the bet to drive,
For which thou seemeth sicke, sooth to say,
Soone after that, in thy bed thee lay,
And say thou maist no lenger up endure,
And lie right there, and bide thine aventure.

" Say that thy fever is wont thee for to take
The same time, and last till a morow,
And let see now how well thou canst it make:
For parde sicke is he that is in sorrow.
Go now farwell, and Venus here to borow,
I hope and thou this purpose hold ferme,
Thy grace she shall fully there conferme."

(Quod Troilus) " Iwis thou all needlesse
Counsailest me, that sickeliche I me faine,
For I am sicke in earnest doubtlesse,
So that well nigh I sterve for the paine:"
(Quod Pandarus) " Thou shalt the better plaine,
And hast the lesse need to counterfete,
For him demeth men hot, that seeth him swete.

" Lo, hold thee at thy triste close, and I
Shall well the deere vnto the bow drive:"
Therewith he tooke his leave all softly,
And Troilus to his paleis went blive,
So glad ne was he never in all his live,
And to Pandarus rede gan all assent,
And to Deiphebus hous at night he went.

What nedeth it you to tellen all the chere
That Deiphebus vnto his brother made,
Or his axis, or his sickeliche manere,
How men gone him with clothes for to lade,
Whan he was laid, and how men would him glade:
But all for nought, he held forth aye the wise,
That ye han heard Pandare ere this devise.

But certaine is, ere Troilus him leide,
Deiphebus had praied him over night
To ben a friend, and helping to Creseide:
God wot that he graunted anon right
To ben her full friend with all his might:
But such a need was it to praien him thenne,
As for to bidden a wood man to renne.

The morow came, and nighen gan the time
Of mealtide, that the faire queene Heleine
Shope her to ben an houre after the prime
With Deiphebus, to whom she nolde faine,
But as his suster, homely sooth to saine
She came to dinner in her plaine entent,
But God and Pandare wist all what this ment.

Came eke Creseide all innocent of this,
Antigone her nece, and Tarbe also,
But flie we now prolixitie best is,
For love of God, and let vs fast go
Right to theffect, withouten tales mo,
Why all this folke assembled in this place,
And let vs of all hir salvinges pace.

Great honour did hem Deiphebus certaine,
And fedde hem well, with all that might like,
But evermo alas, was his refraine:
" My good brother Troilus the sike
Lithe yet," and therewithall he gan to sike,
And after that he pained him to glade
Hem as he might, and chere good he made.

Complained eke Heleine of his sicknesse
So faithfully, that it pitie was to here,
And every wight gan wexen for axes
A leche anon, and said, " In this manere
Men curen folke, this charme I wol thee lere,"
But there sate one, all list her nat to teche,
That thought, yet best could I ben his leche.

After complaint him gonnen they to preise,
As folk don yet whan some wight hath begon
To preise a man, and with preise him reise
A thousand fold yet higher than the Sonne,
He is, he can, that few other lordes conne,
And Pandarus of that they would afferme,
He nought forgate hir praising to conferme.

Herd all this thing fair Creseide well inough,
And every word gan for to notifie,
For which with sober chere her herte lough,
For who is that ne would her glorifie,
To mowen such a knight done live or die?
But all passe I, least ye too long idwell,
But for o fine is all that ever I tell.

The time came, fro dinner for to rise,
And as hem ought, arisen everychone,
And gane a while of this and that devise,
But Pandarus brake all this speech anone,
And said to Deiphebus, " Woll ye gone,
If your will be, as erst I you preide,
To speaken of the nedes of Creseide?"

Heleine, which that by the hond her held,
Tooke first the tale, and said, " Go we blive,"
And goodly on Creseide she beheld,
And said, " Joves let him never thrive
That doth you harm, and reve him sone of live,
And yeve me sorrow, but he shall it rue,
If that I may, and all folke be true."

" Tell thou thy nices case" (quod Deiphebus
To Pandarus) " for thou canst best it tell."
" My lordes and my ladies, it stant thus,
What should I lenger" (quod he) "do you dwell?"
He rong hem out a proces like a bell
Upon her foe, that hight Poliphete,
So hainous, that men might on it spete.

Answerd of this ech worse of hem than other,
And Poliphete they gonnen thus to warien,
And honged be such one, were he my brother,
And so he shall, for it ne may nought varien,
What should I lenger in this tale tarien,
Plainelichе all at ones they her highten
To ben her friend in all that ever they mighten,

Spake then Heleine, and said, " Pandarus,
Wot aught my lord my brother of this mater,
I meane Hector, or wote it Troilus?"
He said, " Ye, but woll ye me now here,
Me thinketh thus, sith that Troilus is here,
It were good, if that ye would assent,
She told him her selfe all this ere she went.

" For he wol have the more hir grefe at herte,
Because lo, that she a lady is,
And by your will, I woll but in right start,
And do you wete, and that anone iwis,
If that he sleepe, or woll aught here of this:"
And in he lept, and said him in his ere,
" God have thy soul, for brought have I thy bere."

To smilen of this gan tho Troilus,
And Pandarus without reckoning,
Out went anon to Heleine and Deiphebus,
And said hem, " So there be no tarying
Ne more prease, he woll well that ye bring
Creseide my lady, that is now here,
And as he may enduren, he woll her here.

" But well ye wote, the chamber is but lite,
And few folke may lightly make it warme,
Now looketh ye, for I woll have no wite
To bring in prease, that might done him harme,
Or him diseasen, for my better arme:
Yet were it bette she bid till oft soonis,
Now looke ye that knowen what to donis.

" I say for me best is, as I can know,
That no wight in ne wende, but ye twey,
But it were I, for I cannot in a throw
Rehearse her case, vnlike that she can sey,
And after this she may him ones prey
To ben good lord in short, and take her leve,
This may not mokell of his ease him reve.

" And eke for she is straunge, he woll forbere
His ease, which that him dare nat for you,
Eke other thing, that toucheth nat to her,
He woll it tell, I wote it well right now,
That secret is, and for the townes prow:"
And they that knew nothing of his entent,
Without more, to Troilus in they went.

Heleine in all her goodly softe wise
Gan him salue, and womanly to play,
And saied, " Iwis, ye mote algate arise:
Now faire brother be all hole I pray,"
And gan her arme right over his shoulder lay,
And him with all her wit to recomfort,
As she best could, she gan him to disport.

So after this (quod she) " We you beseke
My dere brother Deiphebus and I,
For love of God, and so doeth Pandare eke,
To been good lord and friend right hertely
Unto Creseide, which that certainly
Received wrong, as wot well here Pandare,
That can her case well bet than I declare."

This Pandarus gan new his tong affile,
And all her case rehearse, and that anone,
Whan it was saied, soone after in a while,
(Quod Troilus) " As soone as I was gone,
I wol right faine with all my might ben one,
Have God my trouth, her cause to susteine."
" Now good thrift have ye" (quod Helein the queen.)

(Quod Pandarus) " And it your will be,
That she may take her leave ere that she go."
" O eles God forbid it tho" (quod he)
" If that she vouchsafe for to do so:"
And with that word (quod Troilus) " ye two
Deiphebus, and my suster lefe and dere,
To you have I to speake of a matere,

" To been avised by your rede the better,"
And found (as hap was) at his bedes hedde
The copie of a treatise, and a letter
That Hector had him sent, to asken rede
If such a man was worthy to ben dede,
Wote I naught who, but in a grisly wise
He prayed hem anone on it avise.

Deiphebus gan this letter for to vnfold
In earnest great, so did Heleine the queene,
And roming ontward, fast it gonne behold
Downward a steire, into an herbor greene:
This ilke thing they redden hem betwene,
And largely the mountenaunce of an houre
They gonne on it to reden and to poure.

Now let hem rede, and tourne we anone
To Pandarus, that gan full soft prie
That all was well, and out he gan to gone
Into the great chamber, and that in hie,
And saied, " God save all this companie:
Come nece mine, my lady queene Heleine
Abideth you, and eke my lordes tweine.

" Rise, take with you your nece Antigone,
Or whom you list, or no force hardely.
The lasse prease the bet, come forth with me,
And looke that ye thonked humbly
Hem all three, and whan ye may goodly
Your time isee, taketh of hem your leave,
Least we too long his restes him bireave."

All innocent of Pandarus entent
(Quod tho Creseide) " Go we vncle dere,"
And arme in arme, inward with him she went,
Avising well her wordes and her chere,
And Pandarus in earnestfull manere,
Saied, " All folke for Godes love I pray,
Stinteth right here, and softely you play.

" Aviseth you what folke ben here within,
And in what plite one is, God him amend,
And inward thus full softely begin,
Nece I coniure, and highly you defend
On his halfe, which that soule vs all send,
And in the vertue of corounes twaine
Slea nat this man, that hath for you this paine.

" Fie on the deuill, thinke which on he is,
And in what plite he lieth, come off anone,
Think all such taried tide but lost it nis,
That woll ye both saine, whan ye been one:
Secondly, there yet diuineth none
Upon you two, come off now if ye conne,
While folke is blent, lo, all the time is wonne.

In titering and pursuite, and delaies
The folke divine, at wegging of a stre,
And though ye would han after merry daies,
Than dare ye nat, and why? For she and she
Spake such a word, thus looked he and he:
Least time be lost, I dare not with you deale,
Come off therfore, and bringeth him to heale."

But now to you, ye lovers that ben here,
Was Troilus nat in a cankedort,
That lay, and might the wispring of hem here,
And thoght " O lord, right now renneth my sort
Fully to die, or have anone comforte,"
And was the first time he should her pray
Of love, O mightie God, what shall he say!

EXPLICIT LIBER TERTIUS.

O BLISFULL light, of which the bemes clere
Adorneth all the third heaven faire,
O sonnes lefe, O Joues doughter dere,
Pleasaunce of love, O goodly debonaire,
In gentle hertes aye ready to repaire,
O very cause of heale and of gladnesse,
I heried be thy might and thy goodnesse.

In Heaven and Hell, in yearth, and salt see,
Is felt thy might, if that I well discerne,
As man, and beast, fish, herbe, and grene tree,
They fele in times with vapour eterne,
God loveth, and to love woll naught werne,
And in this world no lives creature,
Withouten love is worth, or may endure.

Ye Joues first, to thilke affectes glade
Through which that thinges liven all and be,
Commenden, and amorous hem made
On mortall thing, and as you list aye ye
Yeve hem in love, ease, or aduersite:
And in a thousand formes doune hem sent
For love in yearth, and whom you list he hent.

Ye fiers Mars appeasen of his ire,
And as you list, ye maken hertes digne:
Algates hem that ye woll set a fire,
They dreden shame, and vices they resigne,
Ye doen him curteis be, fresh, and benigne,
And high or low, after a wight entendeth
The ioies that he hath, your might it sendeth.

Ye holden reigne and house in vnitie,
Ye soothfast cause of friendship ben also,
Ye knowen all thilke couered qualitie
Of thinges, which that folke wondren at so,
Whan they can nat construe how it may go,
She loveth him, or why he loveth here,
As why this fish, and nat that commeth to were.

Ye folke a law have set in vniuerse,
And this know I by hem that lovers be,
That who so striveth with you hath the werse:
Now ladie bright, for thy benignite,
At reuerence of hem that serven thee,
Whose clerke I am, so teacheth me devise,
Some ioy of that is felt in thy servise.

Yea, in my naked herte sentement
Inhilde, and do me shew of thy sweetnesse
Caliope, thy voice be now present,
For now is need, seest thou nat my distresse,
How I mote tell anon right the gladnesse
Of Troilus, to Venus herying,
To the which who nede hath, God him bring.

INCIPIT LIBER TERTIUS.

LAY all this meane while this Troilus
Recording his lesson in this manere,
"Mafey," thought he, "thus woll I say, and thus,
Thus woll I plaine vnto my lady dere,
That word is good, and this shall be my chere
This nill I nat foryetten in no wise,"
God leve him werken as he can devise.

And lord so that his herte gan to quappe,
Hearing her come, and short for to sike,
And Pandarus that ledde her by the lappe,
Came nere, and gan in at the curtein pike,
And saied, "God doe bote on all that are sike,
See who is here you comen to visite,
Lo, here is she that is your death to wite."

Therewith it seemed as he wept almost,
"A, a" (quod Troilus so routhfully)
Whether me be wo, O mighty god thou wost,
Who is all there, I see nat truely:"
"Sir" (quod Creseide) "it is Pandare and I,"
"Ye sweet herte alas, I may nat rise
To kneele, and do you honour in some wise."

And dressed him vpward, and she right tho
Gan both her hondes soft vpon him ley,
"O for the love of God doe ye not so
To me," (quod she) "eye what is this to sey?
Sir comen am I to you for causes twey,
First you to thonke, and of your lordship eke
Continuaunce I would you beseke."

This Troilus that heard his ladie pray
Of lordship, him wox neither quick ne dedde,
Ne might o word for shame to it say,
Although men shoulden smiten off his hedde,
But Lord so he wox sodaineliche redde:
And sir, his lesson that he wende conne
To praien her, is through his wit ironne.

Creseide all this aspied well ynough,
For she was wise, and loved him never the lasse,
All nere he in all apert, or made it tough,
Or was too bold to sing a foole a masse,
But whan his shame gan somwhat to passe
His reasons, as I may my rimes hold,
I woll you tell, as teachen bookes old.

In chaunged voice, right for his very drede,
Which voice eke quoke, and thereto his manere
Goodly abasht, and now his hewes rede,
Now pale, vnto Creseide his ladie dere,
With looke doun cast, and humble iyolden chere,
Lo, the alderfirst word that him astart,
Was twice, "Mercy, mercy, O my sweet herte."

And stint a while, and whan he might out bring,
The next word was, "God wote for I have
As faithfully as I have had konning,
Ben yours all, God so my soule do save,
And shall, till that I wofull might be grave,
And though I dare ne can vnto you plaine,
Iwis I suffer not the lasse paine.

"Thus much as now, ah, womanliche wife,
I may out bring, and if this you displease,
That shall I wreke vpon mine owne life
Right soone I trow, and do your herte an ease,
If with my death your herte may appease:
But sens that ye han heard me somewhat sey,
Now retch I never how soone that I dey."

Therewith his manly sorrow to behold,
It might have made an herte of stone to rew,
And Pandare wept as he to water would,
And poked ever his nece new and new,
And saied, " Wo begon been hertes true,
For love of God, make of this thing an end,
Or slea us both at ones, ere that ye wend."

" I, what" (quod she) " by God and by my trouth
I not nat what ye wilne that I sey :"
" Eye, what" (quod he) " that ye have on him routh
For Godes love, and doeth him nat to dey :"
" Now than thus" (quod she) " I woll him prey,
To tell me the fine of his entent,
Yet wist I never well what that he ment."

" What that I mean, O my sweet herte dere"
(Quod Troilus) " O goodly fresh and free,
That with the streames of your eyen so clere
Ye shoulden sometime friendly on me see,
And than agreen that I may ben hee
Withouten braunch of vice, on any wise,
In trouth alway to do you my servise,

" As to my lady right, and cheefe resort,
With all my witte and all my diligence,
And to have right as you list comfort,
Under your yerde egall to mine offence,
As death, if that I breake your defence,
And that ye digne me so much honour,
Me to commaunden aught in any hour.

" And I to ben your very humble, true,
Secret, and in my paines patient,
And ever to desiren freshly new
To serven, and to ben aye like diligent,
And with good herte all holly your talent
Receiven well, how sore that me smart,
Lo this meane I, O mine owne sweet herte."

(Quod Pandarus) " Lo here an hard request,
And reasonable, a lady for to werne:
Now nece mine, by Natall Joves feest,
Were I a God, ye should sterve as yerne,
That heren wel this man wol nothing yerne,
But your honour, and seene him almost sterve,
And ben so loth to suffer him you to serve."

With that she gan her eyen on him cast
Full easily, and full debonairely
Avising her, and hied not too fast,
With never a word, but saied him softely,
" Mine honour safe, I woll well truely,
And in such forme, as I can now devise,
Receiven him fully to my servise.

" Beseeching him for Godes love, that he
Would in honour of trouth and gentillesse,
As I well meane, eke meanen well to me:
And mine honour with wit and businesse
Aye kepe, and if I may doen him gladnesse
From henceforth iwis I nill not faine:
Now beth all hole, no lenger ye ne plaine.

" But nathelesse, this warne I you" (quod she)
" A kinges sonne although ye be iwis,
Ye shall no more have soverainte
Of me in love, than right in that case is,
No nill forbeare, if that ye doen amis
To wrath you, and while that ye me serve,
Cherishen you right after that ye deserve.

And shortly, dere herte and all my knight,
Beth glad, and draweth you to lustinesse,
And I shall truely, withall my full might
Your bitter tournen all to sweetnesse,
If I be she that may doe you gladnesse;
For every wo ye shall recover a blisse,"
And him in armes tooke, and gan him kisse.

Fell Pandarus on knees, and up his eyen
To Heaven threw, and held his hondes hie:
" Immortall God" (quod he) " that maiest not dien,
Cupide I meane, of this maiest glorifie,
And Venus, thou maiest maken melodie
Withouten hond, me seemeth that in toune,
For this miracle iche here eche bell soune.

" But ho, no more now of this mattere,
For why? This folke woll comen up anone,
That have the letter redde, lo I hem here,
But I conjure thee Creseide, and one
And two, thou Troilus whan thou maist gone
That at mine house ye hen at my warning,
For I full well shall shapen your comming.

" And easeth there your hertes right ynough,
And let see which of you shall beare the bell
To speak of love aright," and therwith he lough,
" For there have I a leiser for to tell :"
(Quod Troilus) " How long shall I here dwell
Ere this be doen?" (quod he) " Whan thou maiest rise
This thing shall be right as you list devise."

With that Heleine and also Deiphebus
Tho comen upward right at the staires end,
And lord so tho gan gronen Troilus,
His mother and his suster for to blend:
(Quod Pandarus) " It time is that we wend,
Take nece mine your leave at hem all three,
And let hem speak, and commeth forth with me."

She tooke her leave at hem full thriftely,
As she well could, and they her reverence
Unto the full didden hartely,
And wonder well speaken in her absence
Of her, in praising of her excellence,
Her governaunce, her wit, and her manere
Commendeden, that it joy was to here.

Now let her wend unto her owne place,
And tourne we unto Troilus againe,
That gan full lightly of the letter pace,
That Deiphebus had in the garden seine,
And of Heleine and him he would feine
Delivered ben, and saied, that him lest
To slepe, and after tales have a rest.

Heleine him kist, and tooke her leave blive,
Deiphebus eke, and home went every wight,
And Pandarus as fast as he may drive
To Troilus tho came, as line right,
And on a paillet, all that glad night
By Troilus he lay, with merry chere
To tale, and well was hem they were ifere.

Whan every wight was voided but they two,
And all the dores weren fast ishet,
To tell in short, withouten words mo,
This Pandarus, without any let
Up rose, and on his beddes side him set,
And gan to speaken in a sober wise
To Troilus, as I shall you devise.

" Mine alderlevest lord, and brother dere,
God wot, and thou, that it sate me so sore,
Whan I thee saw so languishing to here,
For love of which thy wo woxe alway more,
That I with all my might, and all my lore,
Have ever sithen doen my businesse
To bring thee to joye out of distresse.

" And have it brought to such plite as thou wost
So that through me thou stondest now in way
To faren well, I say it for no bost,
And wost thou why, but shame it is to say,
For thee have I begon a gamen play,
Which that I never doen shall eft for other,
All tho he were a thousand fold my brother.

" That is to say, for thee am I becomen,
Betwixen game and earnest such a meane,
As maken women unto men to comen,
All say I nat, thou wost well what I meane,
For thee have I my nece, of vices cleane,
So fully made thy gentillesse trist,
That all shall ben right as thy selfe list.

" But God, that all woteth, take I to witnesse,
That never I this for covetise wrought,
But only for to abredge that distresse,
For which welnie thou didest, as me thought:
But good brother, do now as thee ought,
For Godes love, and kepe her out of blame,
Sins thou art wise, and save alway her name.

" For well thou wost, the name as yet of her
Emongs the people as (who saith) halowed is,
For that man is unbore I dare well swere,
That ever wist that she did amis,
But wo is me, that I that cause all this,
May thinken that she is my nece dere,
And I hir eme, and traitour eke ifere.

" And wer it wist, that I through mine engine
Had in mine nece iput this fantasie
To doen thy lust, and holly to be thine:
Why all the world would upon it crie,
And say, that I the worste trecherie
Did in this case, that ever was begon,
And she fordone, and thou right nought iwon.

" Wherfore ere I woll further gone or paas,
Yet eft I thee beseech, and fully say,
That privete go with us in this caas,
That is to saine, that thou us never wray,
And be not wroth, though I thee ofte pray,
To holden secre such an high mattere,
For skilfull is, thou wost well, my praiere.

" And thinke what wo there hath betid ere this
For making of avauntes, as men rede,
And what mischaunce in this world yet is
Fro day to day, right for that wicked dede,
For which these wise clerkes that ben dede
Have ever this proverbed to us young,
That the first vertue is to kepe the toung.

" And nere it that I wilne as now abredge
Diffusion of speech, I could almost
A thousand old stories thee alledge
Of women lost, through false and fooles bost,
Proverbes canst thy selfe inow, and wost
Ayenst that vice for to been a blabbe,
All saied men sooth, as often as they gabbe.

" O tongue alas, so often here beforne
Hast thou made many a lady bright of hew,
Saied " Welaway the day that I was borne,"
And many a maidens sorrow for to new,
And for the more part all is untrew
That men of yelpe, and it were brought to preve,
Of kind, none avauntour is to leve.

" Avauntour and a lier, all is one,
As thus: I pose a woman graunt me
Her love, and saieth that other woll she none,
And I am sworne to holden it secree,
And after I tell it two or three,
Iwis I am a vauntour at the lest,
And lie eke, for I breake my behest.

" Now looke than if they be not to blame,
Such maner folk, what shall I clepe hem, what,
That hem avaunt of women, and by name,
That yet behight hem never this ne that,
Ne know hem no more than mine old hat,
No wonder is, so God me sende hele,
Though women dreden with us men to dele.

" I say not this for no mistrust of you,
Ne for no wise men, but for fooles nice,
And for the harme that in the world is now,
As well for follie oft, as for malice,
For well wote I, in wise folke that vice
No woman dredeth, if she be well avised,
For wise been by fooles harme chastised.

" But now to purpose, leve brother dere,
Have all this thing that I have saied in mind,
And keep thee close, and be now of good chere
For all thy daies thou shalt me true find,
I shall thy processe set in such a kind,
And God toforne, that it shall thee suffise,
For it shall be right as thou wolt devise.

" For well I wote, thou meanest well parde,
Therefore I dare this fully undertake,
Thou wost eke what thy lady graunted thee,
And day is set the charters to make,
Have now good night, I may no lenger wake,
And bid for me, sith thou art now in blisse,
That God me sende death, or some lisse."

Who might tellen halfe the joy or feste
Which that the soule of Troilus tho felt,
Hearing theffect of Pandarus beheste:
His old wo, that made his herte to swelt,
Gan tho for joy wasten, and to melt,
And all the richesse of his sighes sore
At ones fled, he felt of hem no more.

But right so as these holtes and these hayis
That han in winter dead ben and dry,
Revesten hem in grene, whan that May is,
Whan every lusty beste listeth to ply,
Right in that selfe wise, sooth for to sey,
Woxe suddainly his herte full of joy,
That gladder was there never man in Troy.

And gan his looke on Pandarus up cast,
Full soberly, and friendly on to see,
And saied, " Friend, in Aprill the last,
As well thou wost, if it remember thee,
How nigh the death for wo thou founde me,
And how thou diddest all thy businesse
To know of me the cause of my distresse.

" Thou wost how long I it forbare to say
To thee, that art the man that I best trist,
And perill none was it to thee to bewray,
That wist I well: but tell me if thee list,
Sith I so loth was that thy selfe it wist,
How durst I mo tellen of this matere?
That quake now, and no wight may us here.

" But nathelesse, by that God I thee swere,
That as him list may all the world governe,
And if I lye, Achilles with his spere
Mine herte cleave, all were my life eterne,
As I am mortall, if I late or yerne
Would it bewray, or durst or should conne,
For all the good that God made under sonne.

" That rather die I would, and determine
As thinketh me now, stocked in prison,
In wretchednesse, in filth, and in vermine,
Captive to cruell king Agamemnon:
And this in all the temples of this toun,
Upon the Godes all, I woll thee swere
To morow day, if that thee liketh here.

" And that thou hast so much idoen for me,
That I ne may it nevermore deserve,
This know I well, all might I now for thee
A thousand times on a morow sterve,
I can no more, but that I woll thee serve
Right as thy slave, whether so thou wend,
For evermore, unto my lives end.

" But here with all mine herte I thee beseech,
That never in me thou deme such folly
As I shall saine: me thought by thy speech,
That this which thou me dost for companie,
I should weuen it were a baudrie,
I am not wood, all if I leude be,
It is not so, that wote I well parde.

" But he that goeth for gold, or for richesse,
On such messages, call him what ye list,
And this that thou dost, call it gentlenesse,
Compassion, and fellowship, and trist,
Depart it so, for wide where is wist
How that there is diversitie required
Betwixen thinges like, as I have lered.

" And that thou know I thinke not ne wene,
That this service a shame be or iape,
I have my faire sister Polexene,
Cassandre, Helein, or any of the frape,
Be she never so faire, or well ishape,
Tell me whiche thou wilt of everychone
To have for thine, and let me than alone.

" But sith that thou hast done me this service,
My life to save, and for none hope of mede:
So for the love of God, this great emprise
Performe it out, now is the most nede
For high and low, withouten any drede,
I woll alway thine hestes all kepe,
Have now good night, and let us both slepe."

Thus held hem ech of other well apaied,
That all the world ne might it bet amend,
And on the morrow when they were araied,
Ech to his owne needs gan to entend:
But Troilus, though as the fire he brend,
For sharpe desire of hope, and of pleasaunce,
He not forgate his good governaunce.

But in himself, with manhood gan restraine
Ech rakell deed, and ech unbridled chere,
That all that liven soothe for to saine,
Ne should have wist by word or by manere
What that he ment, as touching this matere,
From every wight, as ferre as is the cloud,
He was so wise, and well dissimulen coud.

And all the while which that I now devise,
This was his life, with all his full might:
By day he was in Martes high servise,
That is to saine, in armes as a knight,
And for the more part all the long night,
He lay and thought how that he might serve
His lady best, her thanke for to deserve.

Nill I not sweare, although he lay soft,
That in his thought nas somwhat diseased,
Ne that he tourned on his pillowes oft,
And would of that him missed have ben eased,
But in such case men be nat alway pleased,
For naught I wote, no more than was he,
That can I deeme of possibilite.

But certaine is, to purpose for to go,
That in this while, as written is in geste,
He saw his lady sometime, and also
She with him spake, whan that she durst and leste,
And by hir both avise, as was the best,
Appointeden full warely in this need,
So as they durst, how they would proceed,

But it was spoken in so short a wise,
In such awaite alway, and in such feare,
Least any wight divinen or devise
Would of hem two, or to it lay an eare,
That all this world so lefe to hem ne were,
As that Cupide would hem his grace send,
To maken of hir speech right an end.

But thilke little that they spake or wrought,
His wise ghost tooke aye of all such hede,
It seemed her he wiste what she thought,
Withouten word, so that it was no nede
To bid him aught to doen, or aught forbede,
For which she thought that love, all come it late,
Of all joy had opened her the yate.

And shortly of this processe for to pace,
So well his werke and wordes he beset,
That he so full stood in his ladies grace,
That twenty thousand times ere she let,
She thonked God she ever with him met,
So could he him governe in such servise,
That all the world ne might it bet devise.

For she found him so discreet in all,
So secret, and of such obeisaunce,
That well she felt he was to her a wall
Of steel, and shield of every displeasaunce,
That to been in his good governaunce,
So wise he was, she was no more afered,
I meane as ferre as aught ben requered.

And Pandarus to quicke alway the fire,
Was ever ilike prest and diligent,
To ease his friend was set all his desire,
He shone aye on, he to and fro was sent,
He letters bare, whan Troilus was absent,
That never man, as in his friendes nede,
Ne bare him bet than he, withouten drede.

But now peraventure some man waiten would
That every word, or sond, look, or chere
Of Troilus, that I rehearcen should,
In all this while, unto his lady dere,
I trow it were a long thing for to here,
Or of what wight that stant in such disjoint
His wordes all, or every looke to point.

Forsooth I have not herd it done ere this,
In story none, ne no man here I wene,
And though I would, I could not iwis,
For there was some epistle hem betwene,
That would (as saith mine autor) wel contene
Nie half this boke, of which him list not write,
How should I than a line of it endite?

But to the great effect, than say I thus,
That stonden in concord and in quiete
This ilke two, Creseide and Troilus,
As I have told, and in this time swete,
Save onely often might they not mete,
Ne leisure have, hir speeches to fulfell,
That it befell right as I shall you tell,

That Pandarus, that ever did his might,
Right for the fine that I shall speake of here,
As for to bringen to his house some night
His faire neee, and Troilus ifere,
Where as at leiser all this high matere
Touching hir love were at the full up bound,
Had out of doubt a time to it found.

For he with great deliberation
Had every thing that thereto might availe
Forne cast, and put in execution,
And nether left for cost ne for travaile,
Come if hem liste, hem should nothing faile,
And for to ben in aught aspied there,
That wist he well an impossible were.

Dredelesse it clere was in the wind
Of every pie, and every let game,
Now all is well, for all the world is blind
In this matter, both fremed and tame,
This timber is all ready up to frame,
Us lacketh naught, but that we weten would
A certaine houre, in which she comen should.

And Troilus, that all this purveyaunce
Knew at the full, and waited on it aye,
And hereupon eke made great ordinaunce,
And found his cause, and therwith his arraye,
If that he were missed night or day,
They thought there while he was about this servise,
That he was gone to done his saerifice,

And must at soch a temple alone wake,
Answered of Apollo for to be,
And first to sene the holy laurer quake,
Er that Apollo spake out of the tree,
To tellen him next whan Greeks should flie,
And forthy let him no man, God forbede,
But pray Apollo helpe in this nede.

Now is there litell more for to done,
But Pandare up, and shortly for to saine,
Right sone upon the chaunging of the Mone,
Whan lightlesse is the world a night or twaine,
And that the welken shope him for to raine,
He streight a morrow unto his nece went,
Ye have well herde the fine of his entent.

Whan he was comen, be gan anon to play,
As he was wont, and of himselfe to yape,
And finally he swore, and gan her say,
By this and that, she should him not escape,
No lenger done him after her to gape:
But certainly, she must, by her leve,
Come soupen in his house with him at eve.

At which she lough, and gan her first excuse,
And said: "It raineth: lo, how should I gone,"
"Let be," (quod he) "ne stonde not thus to muse,
This mote be don, ye shal come there anone,"
So at the last, hereof they fell at one:
Or eles fast he swore her in her eere,
He nolde never comen there she were.

Sone after this, she to him gan rowne,
And asked him if Troilus were there,
He swore her nay, for he was out of towne:
And said, "Neee, I suppose that he were there,
You durst never thereof have the more fere?
For rather than men might him there aspie,
Me were lever a thousand folde to die."

Naught list mine auctour fully to declare,
What that she thought, whan as he said so,
That Troilus was out of towne ifare,
And if he said thereof soth or no,
But that withouten awaite with him to go,
She graunted him, sith he her that besought,
And as his nece obeyed as her ought.

But nathelesse, yet gan she him besech,
(Although with him to gone it was no fere)
For to beware of gosisshe peoples spech,
That dremen thinges, which that never were,
And wel avise him whom he brought there:
And said him, "Eme, sens I must on you trist,
Loke al be wel, and do now as you list."

He swore her this by stockes and by stones,
And by the Goddes that in Heven dwell,
Or eles were him leaver soule and bones,
With Pluto king, as depe ben in Hell
As Tantalus: what should I more tell?
Whan al was wel, he rose and toke his leve,
And she to souper came whan it was eve.

With a certaine number of her own men,
And with her faire nece Antigone,
And other of her women nine or ten,
But who was glad now, who, as trowe yee?
But Troilus, that stode and might it see
Throughout a litel window in a stewe,
Ther he beshet, sith midnight, was in mewe,

Unwist of every wight, but of Pandare.
But to the point, now whan that she was come,
With al joy, and al her frendes in fare,
Here eme anon in armes hath her nome,
And than to the souper al and some,
Whan as time was, full softe they hem set,
God wot there was no deinte ferre to fet.

And after souper gonnen they to rise,
At ease well, with herte full fresh and glade,
And wel was him that coude best devise
To liken her, or that her laughen made,
He songe, she plaide, he told a tale of Wade:
But at the last, as every thing hath end,
She toke her leave, and nedes would thence wend.

But O Fortune, executrice of wierdes,
O influences of these hevens hie,
Soth is, that vnder God ye ben our hierdes,
Though to vs beestes ben the causes wrie:
This mene I now, for she gan homward hie;
But execute was all beside hir leve,
At the goddes wil, for which she must bleve.

The bente Mone with her hornes all pale,
Saturnus and Jove, in Cancro ioyned were,
That such a raine from Heven gan availe,
That every maner woman that was there,
Had of that smoky raine a very feere:
At which Pandare tho lough, and said thenne,
"Now were it time a lady to go henne."

"But good nece, if I might ever please
You any thing, than pray I you," (quod he)
"To don mine herte as now so great an ease,
As for to dwell here al this night with me,
For why? this is your owne house parde:
For by my trouth, I say it nat in game,
To wende as now, it were to me a shame."

Creseide, which that could as much good
As halfe a world, toke hede of his praire,
And sens it rained, and al was in a flode,
She thought, "As good chepe may I dwel here
And graunt it gladly with a frendes chere,
And have a thonk, as grutch and than abide,
For home to go it may nat well betide.

"I wol," (quod she) "mine vncle liefe and dere,
Sens that you list, it skill is to be so,
I am right glad with you to dwellen here,
I said but agame that I would go,"
"Iwis graunt mercy nece," (quod he) "tho:
Were it agame or no, sothe to tell,
Now am I glad, sens that you list to dwel."

Thus al is wel, but tho began aright
The newe ioy, and al the fest againe,
But Pandarus, if goodly had he might,
He would have hied her to bedde full faine,
And said, "O Lord this is an huge raine,
This were a wether for to sleepen in,
And that I rede vs soone to begin.

"And nece, wote ye where I woll you lay,
For that we shul not liggen ferre a sonder,
And for ye neither shullen, dare I say,
Here noise of raine, ne yet of thonder?
By God right in my closet yonder,
And I wol in that vtter house alone,
Ben wardain of your women everichone.

"And in this middle chambre that ye se,
Shal your women slepen, wel and soft,
And there I said, shal your selven be:
And if ye liggen wel to night, come oft,
And careth not what wether is aloft.
The wine anone, and whan so you lest,
Go we to slepe, I trowe it be the best."

There nis no more, but hereafter sone
They voide, dronke, and travers draw anone,
Gan every wight that hath nought to done
More in the place, out of the chambre gone,
And ever more so stereliche it rone,
And blewe therwith so wonderliche loude,
That wel nigh no man heren other coude.

Tho Pandarus her eme, right as him ought
With women, such as were her most about,
Ful glad vnto her beddes side her brought,
And toke his leave, and gan ful lowe lout,
And said, "Here at this closet dore without,
Right overthwhart, your women liggen all,
That whom ye list of hem, ye may sone call."

Lo whan that she was in the closet laid,
And al her women forth by ordinaunce,
A bedde weren, there as I have said,
There nas no more to skippen nor to praunce,
But boden go to bedde with mischaunce,
If any wight stering were any where,
And let hem slepen, that abedde were.

But Pandarus, that wel couth eche adele,
The old daunce, and every point therin,
Whan that he saw that all thing was wele,
He thought he wold vpon his werke begin:
And gan the stewe dore al soft unpin,
As still as a stone, without lenger let,
By Troilus adoun right he him set.

And shortly to the point right for to gone,
Of al this werke he told him worde and end,
And said, "Make thee redy right anone,
For thou shalt into Heven blisse wend."
"Now blisful Uenus, thou me grace send,"
(Quod Troilus) "for never yet no dede,
Had I er now, ne halfepdele the drede."

(Quod Pandarus) "Ne drede thee never a dele,
For it shal be right as thou wolt desire,
So thriue I, this night shall I make it wele,
Or casten all the gruel in the fire."
"Yet blisful Uenus this night thou me enspire,"
(Quod Troilus) "as wis as I the serve,"
And ever bet and bet shall till I sterve.

"And if I had, O Uenus ful of mirth,
Aspectes badde of Mars, or of Saturne,
Or thou combuste, or let were in my birth,
Thy father pray, al thilke harme disturne
Of grace, and that I glad ayen may turne:
For love of him thou lovedst in the shawe,
I mean Adon, that with the bore was slawe.

"Jove eke, for the love of faire Europe,
The which in forme of a bulle away thou fet:
Now help, O Mars, thou with thy blody cope
For love of Cipria, thou me naught ne let:
O Phebus, think when Daphne her selven shet
Under the barke, and laurer wore for drede,
Yet for her love, O help now at this nede.

"Mercurie, for the love of her eke,
For which Pallas was with Aglauros wroth,
Now helpe, and eke Diane I the beseke,
That this viage be nat to the loth:
O fatall sustren, which or any cloth
Me shapen was, my destine me sponne,
So helpeth to this werke that is begonne."

(Quod Pandarus) "Thou wretched mouces herte,
Art thou agast so that she will the bite?
Why do on this furred cloke on thy sherte,
And folow me, for I wol have the wite:
But bide, and let me gon before alite,"
And with that he gan vndone a trappe,
And Troilus he brought in by the lappe.

The sterne winde so loude gan for to rout
That no wight other noise might here,
And they that laien at the dore without,
Ful sikerly they slepten al ifere:
And Pandarus, with ful sobre chere,
Goth to the dore anon withouten lette,
There as they lay, and softly it shette.

And as he came ayen prively
His nece awoke, and asketh, "Who goeth there?"
"My owne dere nece," (quod he) "it am I,
Ne wondreth not, ne have of it no fere,"
And nere he came, and said her in her eere:
"No worde for love of God I you besech,
Let no wight arise, and here of our spech."

"What, which way be ye comen? benedicite,"
(Quod she) "and how vnwiste of hem all?"
"Here at this secrete trap dore," (quod he)
(Quod tho Creseide) "Let me some wight call:"
"Eigh, God forbid that it should so fall,"
(Quod Pandarus) "that ye such foly wrought,
"They might demen thing they never er thought.

"It is nat good a sleping hound to wake,
Ne yeve a wight a cause for to devine,
Your women slepen al, I vndertake,
So that for hem the house men might mine,
And slepen wollen till the Sunne shine,
And whan my tale is brought to an end,
Unwist right as I came, so wol I wende.

"Now nece mine, ye shul well vnderstonde,"
Quod he) "so as ye women demen all,
That for to hold in love a man in honde,
And him her lefe and dere herte to call,
And maken him an howne above to call:
I mene as love an other in this mene while,
She doth her selfe a shame, and him a gile.

"Now whereby that I tel you al this,
Ye wote your selfe, as wel as any wight,
How that your love al fully graunted is
To Troilus, the worthiest wight
One of the world, and therto trouth iplight,
That but it were on him alone, ye nold
Him never falsen, while ye liven should.

"Now stonte it thus, that sith I fro you went,
This Troilus, right platly for to seine,
Is through a gutter by a privy went,
Into my chambre come in al this reine:
Unwist of every maner wight certaine,
Save of my selfe, as wisely have I joy,
And by the faith I owe to Priam of Troy.

"And he is come in such paine and distresse,
That but if he be al fully wood by this,
He sodainly mote fal into woodnesse,
But if God helpe; and cause why is this?
He saith him tolde is of a frende of his,
How that ye should loven one, that hight Horast,
For sorow of which this night shal be his last."

Creseide, which that al this wonder herde,
Gan sodainly about her herte cold,
And with a sighe she sorowfully answerd,
"Alas, I wende whoso ever tales told,
My dere herte wouldden me nat have hold
So lightly faulse: alas conceites wrong,
What harm they done, for now live I to long.

"Horaste alas, and falsen Troilus,
I know him not, God helpe me so," (quod she)
"Alas, what wicked spirite told him thus,
Now certes, eme, to morrow and I him se,
I shal therof as full excusen me,
As ever did woman, if him like,"
And with that word she gan ful sore sike.

"O God," (quod she) "so worldly selinesse
Which clerkes callen false felicite,
Ymedled is with many bitternesse,
Ful anguishous, than is, God wote," (quod she)
"Condicion of veine prosperite,
For either ioyes comen nat ifere,
Or eles no wight hath hem alway here.

"O brotil wele of mannes joy unstable,
With what wight so thou be, or thou who play,
Either he wote, that thou joy art mutable,
Or wote it nat, it mote ben one of tway:
Now if he wot it nat, how may he say,
That he hath very joy and silinesse,
That is of ignorance aie in derkenesse?

"Now if he wote that joy is transitory,
As every joy of worldly thing mote flee,
Than every time he that hath in memory,
The drede of lesing, maketh him that he
May in no parfite sikernesse be:
And if to lese his joy, he set a mite,
Than semeth it, that joy is worth ful lite.

"Wherfore I wol define in this matere,
That truely for aught I can espie,
There is no very wele in this world here,
But O thou wicked serpent Jalousie,
Thou misbeleved, and envious folie,
Why hast thou Troilus made to me vntrist,
That never yet agilte, that I wist?"

(Quod Pandarus) "Thus fallen is this caas."
"Why vncle mine," (quod she) "who told him this,
And why doth my dere herte thus, alas?"
"Ye wote, ye nece mine," (quod he) "what it is,
I hope al shal we wel, that is amis,
For ye may quenche al this, if that you lest,
And doeth right so, I hold it for the best."

"So shal I do to morrow, iwis," (quod she)
"And God toforne, so that it shall suffice:"
"To morow alas, that were faire," (quod he)
"Nay nay, it may nat stonden in this wise;
For nece mine, this writen clerkes wise,
That peril is with dretching in drawe,
Nay soothe abodes ben nat worth an hawe.

"Nece, al thing hath time I dare avow,
For whan a chambre a fire is or an hall,
Well more nede is, it sodainly rescow,
Than to disputen and aske amonges all,
How the candle in the strawe is fall:
Ah benedicite, for al amoug that fare,
The harme is done, and farwel feldefare.

"And nece mine, ne take it nat a grefe,
If that ye suffre him al night in this wo,
God helpe me so, ye had him never lefe,
That dare I sain, now there is but we two,
But wel I wote that ye wol nat so do,
Ye ben to wise to done so great folie,
To put his life al night in jeopardie."

'Had I him never lefe? By God I wene,
Ye had never thing so lefe," (quod she.) [sene,
"Now by my thrifte," (quod he) "that shall be
For sith ye make this ensample of me,
If iche al night would him in sorow se,
For al the treasour in the toune of Troie,
I bidde God, I never mote have joie,

"Now loke than, if ye that ben his love,
Should put his life al night in jeopardie,
For thing of nought: now by that God above
Nat onely this delay cometh of folie,
But of malice, if that I should nat lie:
What, platly and ye stiffre him in distresse,
Ye neither bounte done ne gentilnesse."

(Quod tho Creseide) "Wol ye done o thing,
And ye therwith shal stinte al his disease,
Have here and bere to him this blew ring,
For there is nothing might him better plese,
Save I my selfe, ne more his herte apese,
And say, my dere herte, that his sorow,
Is causelesse, that shal he sene to morow."

"A ring," (quod he) "ye hasel wodes shaken,
Ye nece mine, that ring must have a stone,
That might deed men alive all maken,
And such a ring trowe I that yee have none:
Discrecion out of your heed is gone,
That fele I now," (quod he) "and that is routh:
O time ilost, wel maist thou cursen slouth.

"Wote ye not wel that noble and hie corage
Ne soroweth nat, ne stinteth eke for lite,
But if a foole were in a jalous rage,
I nolde setten at his sorow a mite,
But feste him with a fewe wordes all white,
Another day, whan that I might him find;
But this thing stant al in another kind.

"This is so gentle and so tender of herte,
That with his death he wol his sorrows wreke
For trust it well, how sore that him smart,
He woll to you no jealous wordes speke,
And forthy nece, er that his herte breke,
So speke your selfe to him of this matere,
For with a worde ye may his herte stere.

"Now have I told what peril he is in,
And is coming vnwist is to every wight,
Ne parde harme may there be none, ne sin,
I wol my self be with you all this night,
Ye know eke how it is your owne knight,
And that by right, ye must vpon him triste,
And I al prest to fetch him whan you liste."

This accident so pitous was to here,
And eke so like a sothe, at prime face,
And Troilus her knight, to her so dere,
His priue comming, and the siker place,
That though she did him as than a grace,
Considred all thinges as they now stood,
No wonder is, seus he did al for good.

Creseide answerde, "As wisely God at rest
My soule bring, as me is for him wo,
And, eme, iwis, faine would I don the best,
If that I grace had for to do so,
But whether that ye dwell, or for him go,
I am, till God me better minde send,
At dulcarnon, right at my wittes end."

(Quod Pandarus) "Ye, nece, wol ye here,
Dulcarnon is called fleming of wretches,
It semeth herd, for wretches wol nought lere,
For very slouth, or other wilfull tetches,
This is said by hem that be not worth two fetches,
But ye ben wise, and that ye han on hond,
Nis neither harde, ne skilfull to withstond."

"Than, eme," (quod she) "doeth here as you list,
But ere he come, I wol vp first arise,
And for the love of God, sens all my trist
Is on you two, and ye beth bothe wise,
So werketh now, in so discrete a wise,
That I honour may have and he plesaunce,
For I am here, al in your governaunce."

"That is well said," (quod he) "my nece dere,
There good thrifte on that wise gentil herte,
But liggeth still, and taketh him right here,
It nedeth nat no ferther for him start,
And eche of you easeth other sorowes smart,
For love of God, and Uenus I the herie,
For sone hope I, that we shall ben merie."

This Troilus full sone on knees him sette,
Ful sobrely, right by her beddes heed,
And in his beste wise his lady grette:
But lord so she woxe sodainliche reed,
Ne though men should smiten of her heed,
She could not o word a right out bring,
So sodainly for his sodaine coming.

But Pandarus, that so wel coulde fele
In every thing, to play anon began,
And said, "Nece se how this lord gan knele:
How for your trouth, se this gentil man:"
And with that worde, he for a quishen ran,
And saied, "Kneleth now while that thou lest,
There God your hertes bring sone at rest."

Can I naught sain, for she bad him nat rise,
If sorow it put out of remembraunce,
Or eles that she toke it in the wise
Of duetie, as for his obseruaunce,
But well find I, she did him this pleasaunce,
That she him kist, although she siked sore,
And bad him sit adoun withouten more.

(Quod Pandarus) "Now woll ye well begin,
Now doth him sitte downe, good nece dere
Upon your beddes side, al there within,
That ech of you the bet may other here,"
And with that worde he drew him to the fiere,
And toke a light, and founde his counteuaunce,
As for to loke vpon an old romaunce.

Creseide that was Troilus lady right,
And clere stode in a ground of sikernesse,
All thought she her seruant and her knight
Ne should none vntrouth in her gesse:
That nathelesse, considered his distresse,
And that love is in cause of such folie,
Thus to him spake she of his jelousie.

"Lo, herte mine, as would the excellence
Of love, ayenst the which that no man may,
Ne ought eke goodly maken resistence,
And eke bicause I felte wel and say,
Your great trouth, and service every day:
And that your herte al mine was, soth to saine,
This droue me for to rewe vpon your paine.

" And your goodnes have I founden alway yet,
Of which, my dere herte, and al my knight,
I thanke it you, as ferre as I have wit,
Al can I nat as much as it were right,
And I emforth my conning and my might
Have, and aie shal, how sore that ye smert,
Ben to you trew and hole with all mine herte.

" And dredelesse that shal be founden at preue,
But, herte mine, what al this is to sain
Shall well be told, so that ye nought you greue
Though I to you right on your self complain,
For there with meane I finally the pain,
That halte your herte and mine in heauinesse,
Fully to slaine, and every wrong redresse.

" My good mine, not I, for why ne how
That jelousie alas, that wicked wivere,
Thus causelesse is cropen into you,
The harme of which I would faine delivere:
Alas, that he all hole or of him some slivere
Should have his refute in so digne a place,
That Jove, him sone out of your herte race.

" But O thou, O auctour of nature,
Is this an honour to thy dignite,
That folke vngilty suffren here iniure,
And who that gilty is, al quite goeth he?
O were it lefull for to plaine of the,
That vndeserved sufferest jalousie,
O, that I would vpon thee plaine and crie.

" Eke al my wo is this, that folke now vsen
To saine right thus: ye jalousie is love,
And would a bushel of venim al excusen,
For that a grane of love is on it shove,
But that wote high Jove that sit above,
If it be liker love, hate, or grame,
And after that it ought beare his name.

" But certaine is, some maner jalousie
Is excusable, more than some iwis,
As whan cause is, and some such fantasie
With pite so well expressed is,
That it vneth doeth or saith amis,
But goodly drinketh vp al his distresse,
And that excuse I for the gentilnesse.

" And some so full of fury is, and despite,
That it surmounteth his repression,
But, herte mine, ye be not in that plite,
That thonke I God, for which your passion,
I will nat call it but illusion
Of haboundance of love, and besie cure,
That doth your herte this disease endure.

" Of whiche I am sory, but not wrothe,
But for my deuoir and your hertes rest,
Whan so you list, by ordal or by othe,
By some, or in what wise so you lest,
For love of God, let preue it for the best,
And if that I be gilty, do me die,
Alas, what might I more done or seie."

With that a few bright teeres new,
Out of her eien fel, and thus she seid,
" Now God thou wost, in thought ne dede untrew
To Troilus was never yet Creseid,"
With that her heed doun in the bed she leid,
And with the shete it wrigh, and sighed sore,
And held her pece, nat a word spake she more.

But now help God, to quench al this sorow,
So hope I that he shall, for he best may,
For I have sene of a full misty morow,
Folowen ful oft a mery somers day,
And after winter foloweth grene May,
Men sene all day, and reden eke in stories,
That after sharpe shoures ben victories."

This Troilus, whan he her wordes herde,
Have ye no care, him list nat to slepe,
For it thought him no strokes of a yerde
To here or see Creseide his lady wepe,
But well he felt about his herte crepe,
For every teare which that Creseide astert,
The crampe of death, to straine him by the herte,

And in his minde he gan the time accurse
That he came there, and that he was borne,
For now is wicke tourned into worse,
And all that labour he hath doen beforne,
He wende it lost, he thought he nas but lorne,
" O Pandarus," thought he, " alas thy wile,
Serveth of nought, so welaway the while."

And therwithall he hing adoun his hedde,
And fell on knees, and sorowfully he sight,
What might he sain? he felt he nas but dedde,
For wroth was she that should his sorows light:
But nathelesse, whan that he speaken might,
Than said he thus, " God wote that of this game,
Whan all is wist, than am I not to blame."

Therwith the sorow of his herte shet,
That from his iyen fell there nat a tere,
And every spirite his vigour in knet,
So they astonied or oppressed were:
The feling of sorow, or of his fere,
Or aught els, fledde were out of toune,
A doune he fell all sodainly in swoune.

This was no little sorrow for to se,
But all was husht, and Pandare up as fast,
" O nece, peace, or we be lost" (quod he.)
Bethe nat agast, but certain at last,
For this or that, he into bedde him cast,
And saied, " O thefe, is this a mannes herte?"
And off he rent all to his bare sherte.

And saied " Nece, but and ye helpe us now,
Alas your owne Troilus is forlorne.
" Iwis so would I, and I wist how,
Full fain" (quod she) " alas that I was borne."
" Ye, nece, woll ye pullen out the thorne
That sticketh in his herte?" (quod Pandare)
" Say all foryeve, and stint is all this fare."

" Ye, that to me" (quod she) " full lever were
Than all the good the Sunne about goeth,"
And therwithall she swore him in his eare,
" Iwis my dere herte I am not wrothe,
Have here my trouth, and many other othe,
Now speake to me, for it am I Creseide:"
But all for naught, yet might he nat abreide.

Therwith his poulce, and paums of his hondes
They gan to frote, and wete his temples twain,
And to deliver him fro bitter bondes,
She oft him kist, and shortly for to sain,
Him to rewaken she did all her pain,
And at the last he gan his breath to drawe,
And of his swough sone after that adawe.

And gan bet minde, and reason to him take,
But wonder sore he was abashed iwis,
And with a sigh whan he gan bet awake
He saied, "O mercy God, what thing is this?"
"Why do ye with your selven thus amis?"
(Quod tho Creseide) "is this a mans game,
What Troilus, woll ye do thus for shame?"

And therwithal her arm over him she laied,
And all foryave, and oftime him kest.
He thonked her, and to her spake and saied
As fill to purpose, for his hertes rest,
And she to that answerde him as her lest,
And with her goodly wordes him disport
She gan and oft his sorowes to comfort.

(Quod Pandarus) "For ought I can aspies,
This light nor I ne serven here of naught,
Light is nat good for sike folkes iyes,
But for the love of God, sens ye been brought
In this good plite, let now none hevy thought
Been hanged in the hertes of you twey,
And bare the candle to the chimney."

Soone after this, though it no nede were,
Whan she soche othes as her list devise
Had of hem take, her thought tho no fere,
Ne cause eke none, to bid him thens rise:
Yet lesse thing than othes may suffice,
In many a case, for every wight I gesse,
That loveth well, meaneth but gentilnesse.

But in effect she would wete anon,
Of what man, and eke where, and also why
He jalous was, sens there was cause non:
And eke the signe that he toke it by,
She bade him that to tell her busily,
Or eles certain she bare him on honde,
That this was doen of malice her to fonde.

Withouten more, shortly for to sain
He must obey unto his ladies hest,
And for the lasse harme he must somwhat fain,
He saied her, whan she was at soche a fest,
She might on him have loked at the lest,
Not I nat what, all dere inough a rishe,
As he that nedes must a cause out fish.

And she answerde, "Swete, all were it so
What harme was that, sens I non evill meane?
For by that God that bought us bothe two,
In all maner thing is mine entent cleane:
Soch arguments ne be nat worth a beane;
Woll ye the childist jalous counterfete,
Now were it worthy that ye were ibete."

Tho Troilus gan sorowfully to sike
Lest she be wroth, him thought his herte deide,
And saied, "Alas upon my sorowes sike,
Have mercy, O swete herte mine Creseide:
And if that in tho wordes that I seide,
Be any wrong, I woll no more trespace,
Doeth what you list, I am all in your grace."

And she answerde, "Of gilt misericorde,
That is to saine, that I foryeve all this,
And evermore on this night you recorde,
And bethe well ware ye do no more amis:"
"Nay, dere herte mine, no more" (quod he) "iwis."
"And now" (quod she) "that I have you do smart,
Foryeve it to me, mine owne swete herte."

This Troilus with blisse of that surprised,
Put all in Goddes hand, as he that ment
Nothing but well, and sodainly avised
He her in his armes fast to him hent:
And Pandarus, with a full good entent,
Laied him to slepe, and saied, "If ye be wise,
Sweveneth not now, lest more folke arise."

What might or may the sely larke say,
Whan that the sparhauke hath him in his fote,
I can no more, but of these ilke tway,
(To whom this tale sugre be or sote)
Though I tary a yeere, sometime I mote,
After mine aucthour tellen hir gladnesse,
As well as I have tolde hir hevinesse.

Creseide, which that felt her thus itake,
(As writen clerkes in hir bokes old)
Right as an aspen lefe she gan to quake,
Whan she him felt her in his armes fold:
But Troilus all hole of cares cold,
Gan thanken tho the blisfull goddes seven,
Through soudry pains to bring folk to Heven.

This Troilus in armes gan her straine,
And saied "Swete, as ever mote I gone,
Now be ye caught, here is but we twaine,
Now yeldeth you, for other boote is none:"
To that Creseide answerde thus anone,
"Ne had I er now, my swete herte dere,
Been yolde iwis, I were now not here."

O soth is saied, that healed for to be
As of a fever, or other great sicknesse,
Men must drinken, as we often se,
Full bitter drinke: and for to have gladnesse
Men drinken of pain, and great distresse:
I meane it here by, as for this aventure,
That through a pain hath founden al his cure.

And now swetnesse semeth far more swete,
That bitternesse assaied was biforne,
For out of wo in blisse now they flete,
Non soch they felten sens they were borne,
Now is this bet, than bath two be lorne:
For love of God, take every woman hede,
To werken thus, if it come to the nede.

Creseide all quite from every drede and tene,
As she that just cause had him to trist,
Made him soche feast, it joy was to sene,
Whan she his trouth and clene entent wist:
And as about a tree with many a twist
Bitrent and writhe the swete wodbinde,
Can eche of hem in armes other winde.

And as the newe abashed nightingale,
That stinteth first, whan she beginneth sing,
Whan that she heareth any heerdes tale,
Or in the hedges any wight stearing,
And after siker doeth her voice out ring:
Right so Creseide, whan that her drede stent,
Opened her herte, and told him her entent.

And right as he that seeth his death ishapen,
And dien mote, in aught that he may gesse,
And sodainly resceoas doeth hem escapen,
And from his death is brought in sikernesse:
For all this world, in soche present gladnesse,
Was Troilus, and hath his lady swete:
With worse hap God let us never mete.

Her armes smal, her streight backe and soft,
Her sides long, fleshy, smooth, and white,
He gan to stroke, and good thrift had full oft,
Her snowisse throte, her brestes round and lite:
Thus in this Heaven he gan him to delite,
And therwithall a thousand times her kist,
That what to doen for joy unneth he wist.

Than saied he thus, "O Love, O Charite,
Thy mother eke, Citheria the swete,
That after thy selfe, next heried be she
Uenus I meane, the well willy planete:
And next that, Imeneus I thee grete,
For never man was to you goddes hold,
As I, which ye have brought fro cares cold.

"Benigne Love, thou holy bond of thingen,
Who so woll grace, and list thee not honouren,
Lo, his desire woll fly withouten wingen,
For noldest thou of bounte hem socouren
That serven best, and most alway labouren,
Yet were all lost, that dare I well sain certes,
But if thy grace passed our desertes.

"And for thou me, that lest thonke coud deserve
Of them that nombred been unto thy grace,
Hast holpen, there I likely was to sterve,
And me bestowed in so high a place,
That thilke boundes may no blisse surpace,
I can no more, but laude and reverence
Be to thy bounte and thine excellence."

And therwithall Creseide anon he kist,
Of whiche certain she felt no disease,
And thus saied he, "Now would God I wist,
Mine herte swete, how I you best might please:
What man" (quod he) "was ever thus at ease,
As I? On which the fairest, and the best
That ever I seie, deineth her to rest.

"Here may men seen that mercy passeth right,
The experience of that is felt in me,
That am unworthy to so swete a wight,
But herte mine, of your benignite
So thinke, that though I unworthy be,
Yet mote I nede amenden in some wise,
Right through the vertue of your hie service.

"And for the love of God, my lady dere,
Sith he hath wrought me for I shal you serve,
As thus I meane: woll ye be my fere,
To do me live, if that you list, or sterve:
So teacheth me, how that I may deserve,
Your thonk, so that I through mine ignorauncе,
Ne doe nothing that you be displeasaunce.

"For certes, freshe and womanliche wife,
This dare I say, that trouth and diligence,
That shall ye finden in me all my life,
Ne I woll not certain breaken your defence,
And if I doe, present or in absence,
For love of God, let slea me with the dede,
If that it like unto your womanhede."

"Iwis" (quod she) "mine owne hertes lust,
My ground of ease, and al mine herte dere,
Graunt mercy, for on that is all my trust:
But let us fall away fro this matere,
For it suffiseth, this that said is here,
And at o worde, without repentaunce,
Welcome my knight, my peace, my suffisaunce."

Of hir delite or ioies, one of the least
Were impossible to my wit to say,
But judgeth ye that have been at the feast
Of soche gladnesse, if that him list play:
I can no more but thus, these ilke tway,
That night betwixen drede and sikernesse,
Felten in love the greate worthinesse.

O blisfull night, of hem so long isought,
How blithe unto hem bothe two thou were?
Why ne had I soch feast with my soule ibought?
Ye, or but the least joy that was there?
Away thou foule daunger and thou fere,
And let him in this Heaven blisse dwell,
That is so high, that all ne can I tell.

But soth is, though I cannot tellen all,
As can mine aucthour of his excellence,
Yet have I saied, and God toforne shall,
In every thing all holly his sentence:
And if that I, at loves reverence,
Have any worde in eched for the best,
Doeth therwithall right as your selven lest.

For my wordes here, and every part,
I speake hem all under correction
Of you that feling have in loves art,
And put it all in your discrecion,
To encrease or make diminicion
Of my language, and that I you beseech,
But now to purpose of my rather speech.

These ilke two that ben in armes laft,
So lothe to hem a sonder gon it were,
That eche from other wenden been biraft,
Or eles lo, this was her moste fere,
That all this thing but nice dreames were,
For which full oft eche of hem saied, "O swete,
Clepe I you thus, or els doe I it mete."

And lord so he gan goodly on her se,
That never his loke ne blent from her face,
And saied, "O my dere herte, may it be
That it be soth, that ye beene in this place?"
"Ye herte mine, God thanke I of his grace,"
(Quod tho Creseide) and therwithall him kist,
That where her spirite was, for joy she nist.

This Troilus full often her iyen two
Gan for to kisse, and saied: "O iyen clere,
It weren ye that wrought me soche wo,
Ye humble nettes of my lady dere:
Tho there be mercy written in your chere,
God wote the text full harde is for to find,
How coud ye withouten bonde me bind?"

Therwith he gan her fast in armes take,
And well an hundred times gan he sike,
Not such sorrowfull sighes as men make
For wo, or eles whan that folke be sike:
But easie sighes, soche as been to like,
That shewed his affection within,
Of soche maner sighes could he not blin.

Sone after this, they spake of sondry things
As fill to purpose of this aventure,
And plaiyng enterchaungeden hir rings,
Of which I can not tellen no scripture,
But well I wot, a broche of gold and azure,
In which a rubbie set was like an herte,
Creseide him yave, and stacke it on his sherte.

Lord, trowe ye that a coveitous wretch,
That blameth love, and halte of it dispite,
That of tho pens that he can muckre and ketch
Ever yet yave to him soche delite,
As is in love, in o poinct in some plite:
Nay doubtelesse, for al so God me save
So parfite joie may no nigard have.

They woll say yes, but lord so they lie,
Tho busie wretches full of wo and drede,
That callen love a woodnesse of follie,
But it shall fall hem, as I shall you rede:
They shal forgon the white and eke the rede,
And live in wo, there God yeve hem mischaunce,
And every lover in his trouth avaunce.

As would God tho wretches that despise
Service of love had eares also long
As had Mida, full of covetise,
And thereto dronken had as hotte and strong
As Cresus did, for his affectes wronge,
To teachen hem, that they been in the vice,
And lovers not, although they hold hem nice.

These ilke two, of whom that I you say,
Whan that hir hertes well assured were,
Tho gonnen they to speake and to play,
And eke rehearcen how, whan, and where
They knewe first, and every wo or fere
That passed was, but all such heavinesse,
I thonke it God, was tourned to gladnesse.

And evermore, whan that hem fell to speake
Of any thing of soche a time agone,
With kissing all that tale should breake,
And fallen into a new ioy anone,
And didden all hir might, sens they were one
For to recoveren blisse, and been at ease,
And praised wo with ioyes counterpaise.

Reason woll not that I speake of slepe,
For it accordeth not to my mattere,
God wote they toke of it full little kepe,
But lest this night that was to hem so dere
Ne should in vaine escape in no manere,
It was biset in ioy and businesse,
Of all that souneth vnto gentilnesse.

But whan the cock, commune astrologer,
Gan on his brest to beate, and after crowe,
And Lucifer, the daies messanger,
Gan to rise, and out his beames throwe,
And estward rose, to him that could it know,
Fortuna maior, than anone Creseide
With herte sore, to Troilus thus seide:

"Mine hertes life, my trust, all my pleasaunce,
That I was borne alas, that me is wo,
That day of vs mote make disceveraunce,
For time it is to rise, and hence go,
Or eles I am lost for ever mo:
O night alas, why nilt thou over vs hove,
As long as whan Alcmena lay by Iove.

"O blaeke night, as folke in boke rede,
That shapen art by God, this world to hide
At certain times, with thy derke wede,
That vnder that men might in rest abide,
Wel oughten beasts to plain, and folke to chide
That there as day with labor would vs brest
That thou thus flieth, and deinest vs not rest.

"Thou doest alas, to shortly thine office,
Thou rakle night, there God maker of kinde,
Thee for thine hast, and thine vnkind vice,
So fast aie to our hemisperie binde,
That nevermore vnder the ground thou wind,
For now for thou so highest out of Troie,
Have I forgone thus hastely my ioie."

This Troilus, that with tho wordes felt,
As thought him tho, for pitous distresse
The bloodie teares from his herte melt,
As he that yet never soche hevinesse,
Assaied had, out of so great gladnesse,
Gan therewith all Creseide his lady dere
In armes strain, and holtl in lovely manere.

O cruell day, accuser of the ioy
That night and love have stole, and fast iwrien,
Accursed be thy coming into Troie,
For every bowre hath one of thy bright iyen:
Envious day, what list thee so to spien,
What hast thou lost, why seekest thou this place?
There God thy light so quench for his grace.

"Alas, what have these lovers thee agilt?
Dispitous day, thine be the paine of Hell,
For many a lover hast thou slain, and wilt,
Thy poring in woll no where let hem dwell:
What profrest thou thy light here for to sell?
Go sell it hem that smale seales grave,
We woll thee not, vs nedeth no day have."

And eke the sonne Titan gan he chide,
And said, "O foole, well may men thee dispise,
That hast all night the dawning by thy side,
And sufferest her so sone vp fro thee rise,
For to disease vs lovers in this wise:
What hold your bed there, thou and thy morow,
I bid God so yeve you both sorow."

Therwith ful sore he sighed, and thus he seide
"My lady right, and of my weale or wo
The well and roote, O goodly mine Creseide,
And shall I rise alas, and shall I so?
Now fele I that mine herte mote a two;
And how should I my life an houre save,
Sens that with you is all the life I have?

"What shall I doen? For certes I not how
Ne whan alas, I shall the time see
That in this plite I may been eft with you,
And of my life God wote how shall that be,
Sens that desire right now so biteth me,
That I am dedde anon, but I retourne,
How should I long alas, fro you soiourne?

"But nathelesse, mine owne lady bright,
Were it so that I wist vtterly,
That your humble servaunt and your knight
Were in your herte iset so fermely,
As ye in mine: the which truely
Me leaver were than these worlds twaine,
Yet should I bet enduren all my paine."

To that Creseide answerde right anon,
And with a sigh she saied, "O herte dere,
The game iwis so ferforth now is gon,
That first shal Phebus fallen from the sphere,
And everiche egle been the doues fere,
And every rocke out of his place sterte,
Er Troilus go out of Creseides herte.

" Ye been so depe within mine herte grave,
That tho I would it turn out of my thought,
As wisely veray God my soule save,
To dien in the pain, I could nought:
And for the love of God, that vs hath wrought,
Let in your brain none other fantasie
So crepen, that it cause me to die.

" And that ye me would have as fast in mind,
As I have you, that would I you beseche:
And if I wist sothly that to find
God might not apoint my ioies to ech.
But herte mine, withouten more spech,
Bethe to me true, or eles were it routh,
For I am thine, by God and by my trouth.

" Bethe glad forthy, and live in sikernesse,
Thus saied I never er this, ne shall to mo,
And if to you it were a great gladnesse,
To tourne ayen sone after that ye go,
As faine would I as ye, it were so,
As wisely God mine herte bring to reste:"
And him in armes toke, and ofte keste.

Ayenst his will, sithe it mote nedes bee,
This Troilus vp rose and fast him cled,
And in his armes toke his ladie free,
An hundred times, and on his way him sped,
And with soche wordes, as his herte bled,
He saied: " Fare well my dere herte swete,
That God vs graunt sound and sone to mete."

To which no word for sorow she answerd,
So sore gan his parting her distrain,
And Troilus vnto his paleis ferd,
As wo begon as she was soth to sain,
So hard him wrong of sharp desire the pain,
For to been efte there he was in pleasaunce,
That it may never out of his remembraunce.

Retourned to his roiall paleis sone,
He soft vnto his bedde gan for to sinke
To slepe long, as he was wont to doen,
But all for naught, he may well ligge and winke,
But slepe may there none in his herte sinke,
Thinking how she, for whom desire him brend,
A M. folde was worth more than he wend.

And in his thought, gan vp and doun to wind
Her wordes all, and every countenaunce,
And fermely impressen in his mind
The lest pointe that to him was pleasaunce,
And verely of thilke remembraunce,
Desire al newe him brende, and lust to brede,
Gan more than erst, and yet toke he noue hede.

Creseide also, right in the same wise,
Of Troilus gan in her herte shet
His worthinsse, his lust, his dedes wise,
His gentilnesse, and how she with him met:
Thonking love, he so well her beset,
Desiring oft to have her herte dere,
In soche a place as she durst make him chere.

Pandare a morow, which that commen was
Unto his neee, gan her faire to grete,
And saied, " All this night so rained it alas,
That all my drede is, that ye, nece swete,
Have little leiser had to slepe and mete:
Al this night" (quod he) " hath rain so do me wake,
That some of vs I trowe hir heddes ake."

And nere he came and said, " How stant it now
This merie morow, nece, how can ye fare?"
Creseide answerde, " Never the bet for you,
Foxe that ye been, God yeve your herte care,
God helpe me so, ye caused all this fare,
Trowe I," (quod she) " for all your wordes white,
O who so seeth you, knoweth you full lite."

With that she gan her face for to wrie,
With the shete, and woxe for shame all redde,
And Pandarus gan vnder for to prie,
And saied " Nece, if that I shall been dedde,
Have here a sword, and smiteth of my hedde:"
With that his arme all sodainly he thrist
Under her necke, and at the last her kist.

I passe all that, which chargeth naught to say,
What, God foryave his death, and she also
Foryave: and with her vncle gan to play,
For other cause was there none than so:
But of this thing right to the effect to go,
Whan time was, home to her house she went,
And Pandarus hath fully his entent.

Now tourne we ayen to Troilus,
That restelesse full long a bedde lay,
And prively sent after Pandarus,
To him to come in all the hast he may,
He come anon, not ones saied he nay,
And Troilus full soberly he grete,
And doune vpon the beddes sides him sete.

This Troilus with all thaffectioun
Of friendly love, that herte may devise,
To Pandarus on his knees fill adoun:
And er that he would of the place arise,
He gan him thanken on his beste wise,
An hundred time he gan the time blesse,
That he was born, to bring him fro distresse.

He said, " O frend of friends, the alderbest
That ever was, the sothe for to tell,
Thou hast in Heaven ibrought my soul at rest,
Fro Phlegeton the firie flood of Hell,
That though I might a thousand times sell
Upon a day my life in thy service,
It might not a mote in that suffice.

" The Sonne, which that all the world may se,
Sawe never yet, my life that dare I leie,
So ioily, faire, and goodly, as is she
Whose I am all, and shall till that I deie,
And that I thus am hers, dare I seie,
That thanked be the high worthinesse
Of love, and eke thy kinde businesse.

" Thus hast thou me no little thing iyeve,
For why to thee obliged be for aie,
My life, and why? for through thine helpe I live,
Or els dedde had I been ago many a day:"
And with that worde doun in his bed he lay,
And Pandarus full soberly him herde,
Till all was said, and than he him answerde.

" My dere frende, if I have doen for thee,
In any case, God wote it is me lefe,
And am as glad as man may of it be,
God helpe me so, but take now not agrife,
That I shall saine, beware of this mischiefe,
That ther as now thou broght art to thy blis,
That thou thy selfe ne cause it not to mis.

" For of fortunes sharpe adversite,
The worst kind of infortune is this,
A man that hath been in prosperite,
And it remember, whan it passed is.
Thou art wise inough, forthy, doe not amis,
Be not to rakell, though thou sit warme,
For if thou be, certain it woll thee harme.

" Thou art at ease, and hold thee well therin,
For al so sure as redde is every fire,
As great a crafte is to kepe well as win,
Bridle alway well thy speach and thy desire,
For worldly ioy holdeth not by a wire,
That preveth well, it brest alday so ofte,
Forthy neede is to werken with it softe."

(Quod Troilus) " I hope, and God to forne,
My dere frende, that I shall so me bere,
That in my gift there shall nothing been lorne,
Ne I nill not rakle, as for to greven here;
It nedeth not this matter often tere,
For wistest thou mine herte wel Pandare,
God wote of this thou wouldest lite care."

Tho gan he tell him of his glad night,
And whereof first his herte dradde, and how,
And saied " Frende, as I am true knight,
And by that faith I owe to God and you,
I had it never halfe so hote as now,
And aie the more that desire me biteth
To love her best, the more it me deliteth.

" I not my selfe not wisely, what it is,
But now I feele a new qualite,
Ye all another than I did er this:"
Pandare answerd and saied thus, " that he
That ones may in Heaven blisse be,
He feeleth other waies dare I lay,
Than thilke time he first heard of it say."

This is a worde for all, that Troilus
Was never ful to speke of this matere,
And for to praisen unto Pandarus
The bounte of his right lady dere,
And Pandarus to thanke, and maken chere,
This tale was aie span newe to begin,
Til that the tale departed hem a twinne.

Soone after this, for that fortune it would,
Icomen was the blisfull time swete,
That Troilus was warned, that he should,
There he was erst, Creseide his lady mete:
For which he felt his herte in ioy flete,
And faithfully gan all the goodes hery,
And let see now, if that he can be mery,

And holden was the forme, and al the gise
Of her comming, and of his also,
As it was erst, which nedeth nought devise,
But plainly to theffect right for to go:
In ioy and surete Pandarus hem two
Abedde brought, whan hem both lest,
And thus they ben in quiet and in rest.

Naught nedeth it to you sith they ben met
To aske at me, if that they blithe were,
For if it erst was well, tho was it bet
A thousand folde, this nedeth not enquere:
A go was every sorow and every fere,
And both iwis they had, and so they wend,
As much ioy as herte may comprehend.

This nis na litel thing of for to sey,
This passeth every wit for to devise,
For eche of hem gan others lust obey,
Felicite, which that these clerkes wise
Commenden so, ne may no here suffise,
This ioy ne may not iwritten be with inke,
This passeth al that herte may bethinke.

But cruel day, so welaway the stound,
Gan for to aproche, as they by signes knew,
For which hem thought felen dethes wound,
So wo was hem, that chaungen gan hir hew
And day they gonnen to dispise al new,
Calling it traitour, envious and worse,
And bitterly the daies light they corse.

(Quod Troilus) " Alas, now am I ware
That Pirous, and tho swifte stedes thre,
Which that drawen forth the Sunnes chare,
Han gon some by pathe in dispite of me,
And maketh it so sone day to be,
And for the Sunne him hasten thus to rise,
Ne shall I neve don him sacrifice.

But nedes day departe hem must sone,
And whan hir speech done was, and hir chere,
They twin anon, as they were wont to done,
And setten time of meting eft ifere:
And many a night they wrought in this manere,
And thus fortune a time ladde in ioie
Creseide, and eke this kinges son of Troie.

In suffisaunce, in blisse, and in singings,
This Troilus gan all his life to lede,
He spendeth, justeth, and maketh feestings,
He geveth frely oft, and chaungeth wede,
He helde about him alway out of drede
A world of folke, as come him well of kind,
The freshest and the best he coulde find.

That such a voice was of him, and a steven,
Throughout the world, of honour and largesse,
That it vp ronge vnto the yate of Heven,
And as in love he was in such gladhesse,
That in his herte he demed, as I gesse,
That there nis lover in this world at ease,
So wel as he, and thus gan love him please.

The goodlihede or beaute, which the kind,
In any other lady had isette,
Can not the mountenaunce of a gnat vnbind,
About his herte, of al Creseides nette:
He was so narowe imasked, and iknette,
That is vndon in any maner side,
That nil nat ben, for ought that may betide.

And by the hond full ofte he would take
This Pandarus, and into gardin lede,
And such a feest, and such a processe make
Him of Creseide, and of her womanhede,
And of her beaute, that withouten drede,
It was an Heven his wordes for to here,
And than he woulde sing in this manere:

" Love, that of erth and sea hath governaunce,
Love, that his heestes hath in Heven hie,
Love, that with an holsome aliaunce
Halte people ioyned, as him list hem gie,
Love, that knitteth law and companie,
And couples doth in vertue for to dwell,
Binde this accord, that I have told and tell.

" That, that the world with faith, which that is
Diverseth so his staundes accordingly, [stable,
That elements that bethe discordable,
Holden a bonde, perpetually during,
That Phebus mote his rosy day forth bring,
And that the Mone hath lordship over the nights,
Al this doeth Love, aie heried be his mights.

" That, that the sea, that greedy is to flowen,
Constraineth to a certaine ende so
His floodes, that so fiercely they ne growen
To drenchen earth and all for evermo,
And if that Love aught let his bridle go,
All that now loveth asunder should lepe,
And lost were all, that Love halt now to hepe.

" So would to God, that authour is of kind,
That with his bond, Love of his vertue list
To searchen hertes all, and fast bind,
That from his bond no wight the wey out wist,
And hertes cold, hem would I that hem twist,
To maken hem love, and that list hem aie rew
On hertes sore, and keep hem that ben trew."

In all needes for the townes werre
He was, and aye the first in armes dight,
And certainely, but if that bookes erre,
Save Hector, most idradde of any wight,
And this encrease of hardinesse and might
Come him of love, his ladies thanke to win,
That altered his spirit so within.

In time of truce on hauking would he ride,
Or els hunt bore, beare, or lioun,
The small beastes let he gon beside,
And whan that he come riding into the toun,
Full oft his lady from her window doun,
As fresh as faucon, comen out of mue,
Full redely was him goodly to salue.

And most of love and vertue was his speech,
And in dispite had all wretchednesse,
And doubtlesse no need was him beseech
To honouren hem that had worthinesse,
And easen hem that weren in distresse,
And glad was he, if any wight well ferde
That lover was, whan he it wist or herde.

For sooth to saine, he lost held every wight,
But if he were in Loves high servise,
I meane folke that aught it ben of right,
And over all this, so well could he devise
Of sentement, and in so vncouth wise
All his array, that every lover thought,
That al was wel, what so he said or wrought.

And though that he be come of blood roiall,
Him list of pride at no wight for to chace,
Benigne he was to ech in generall,
For which he gate him thank in every place:
Thus wolde Love, iheried by his grace,
That pride, and ire, envie, and avarice,
He gan to flie, and every other vice.

Thou lady bright, the doughter of Diane,
Thy blind and winged son eke dan Cupide,
Ye sustren nine eke, that by Helicone
In hill Pernaso, listen for to abide,
That ye thus ferre han deined me to gide,
I can no more, but sens that ye woll wend,
Ye heried ben for aye withouten end,
Through you have I said fully in my song
Theffect and ioy of Troilus servise,
All be that there was some disease among,
As mine authour listeth to devise,
My thirde booke now end I in this wise,
And Troilus in lust and in quiete,
Is with Creseide his owne herte swete.

EXPLICIT LIBER QUARTUS.

But all too little, welaway the while
Lasteth such ioy, ithonked bee Fortune,
That seemeth truest, whan she woll begile,
And can to fooles her songe entune,
That she hem hent, that blent, traitor commune:
And whan a wight is from her whele ithrow,
Than laugheth she, and maketh him the mowe.

From Troilus she gan her bright face
Away to writhe, and tooke of him none hede,
And cast him clene out of his ladies grace,
And on her whele she set vp Diomede,
For which mine herte right now ginneth blede,
And now my pen alas, with which I write,
Quaketh for drede of that I must endite.

For how Creseide Troilus forsooke,
Or at the least, how that she was vnkind,
Mote henceforth ben matter of my booke,
As writen folk through which it is in mind,
Alas, that they should ever cause find
To speake her harme, and if they on her lie,
Iwis hemselfe should have the villanie.

O ye Herines, nightes doughters three,
That endelesse complaine ever in paine,
Megera, Alecto, and eke Tesiphonee,
Thou cruell Mars eke, father of Quirine,
This ilke fourth booke helpe me to fine,
So that the loos, and love, and life ifere
Of Troilus be fully shewed here.

INCIPIT LIBER QUARTUS.

Ligging in host, as I have said ere this,
The Greekes strong, about Troy toun,
Befell, that whan that Phebus shining is
Upon the breast of Hercules Lion,
That Hector, with many a bold baron,
Cast on a day with Greekes for to fight,
As he was wont, to greve hem what he might.

Not I how long or short it was bitwene
This purpose, and that day they fighten ment,
But on a day well armed bright and shene,
Hector and many a worship knight out went
With speare in honde, and big bowes bent,
And in the berde withouten lenger lette,
Hir fomen in the field anone hem mette.

The longe day with speares sharpe iground
With arrows, dartes, swerds, and maces fell,
They fight, and bringen horse and man to ground,
And with hir axes out the braines quell,
But in the last shoure, sooth to tell,
The folke of Troy hem selven so misleden,
That with the worse at night home they fleden.

At whiche day was taken Anthenor,
Maugre Polimidas, or Monesteo,
Xantippe, Sarpedon, Palestinor,
Polite, or eke the Troyan dan Rupheo,
And other lasse folke, as Phebuseo,
So that for harm that day the folk of Troy
Dreden to lese a great part of hir ioy.

Of Priamus was yeve at Grekes request
A time of truce, and tho they gonnen trete
Hir prisoners to chaungen most and lest,
And for the surplus yeven sommes grete,
This thing anon was couth in every strete,
Both in thassiege, in toune, and every where,
And with the first it came to Calcas ere.

Whan Calcas knew this tretise should hold
In consistorie among the Greekes soone
He gan in thringe, forth with lordes old,
And set him there as he was wont to done,
And with a chaunged face hem badde a boone
For love of God, to done that reverence,
To stinten noise, and yeve him audience.

Than said he thus, "Lo lordes mine I was
Troyan, as it is knowen out of drede,
And if that you remember, I am Calcas,
That alderfirst yave comfort to your nede,
And tolde well howe that you should spede,
For dredelesse through you shall in a stound
Ben Troy ibrent, and beaten doun to ground.

"And in what forme, or in what manner wise
This toun to shend, and all your lust atcheve,
Ye have ere this well herde me devise:
This know ye my lordes, as I leve,
And for the Greekes weren me so leve,
I came my selfe in my proper persone
To teach in this how you was best to done.

"Having vnto my treasour, ne my rent,
Right no regard in respect of your ease,
Thus all my good I left, and to you went,
Wening in this you lordes for to please,
But all that losse ne doth me no disease,
I vouchsafe, as wisely have I ioy,
For you to lese all that I have in Troy.

"Save of a doughter that I left, alas,
Sleeping at home, whan out of Troy I stert,
O sterne, O cruell father that I was,
How might I have in that so hard an herte?
Alas that I ne had brought her in my shert,
For sorow of which I wol nat live to morow,
But if ye lordes rew vpon my sorow.

"For because that I saw no time ere now
Her to deliver, iche holden have my pees,
But now or never, if that it like you,
I may her have right now doubtlees:
O helpe and grace, among all this prees,
Rew on this old caitife in distresse,
Sith I through you have all this hevinesse.

"Ye have now caught, and fettred in prison
Troyans inow, and if your willes be,
My child with one may have redemption,
Now for the love of God, and of bounte,
One of so fele alas, so yefe him me:
What need were it this praier for to werne,
Sith ye shull have both folk and toun as yerne.

"On perill of my life I shall nat lie,
Apollo hath me told full faithfully,
I have eke found by astronomie,
By sort, and by augurie truely,
And dare well say the time is fast by,
That fire and flambe on all the toun shall sprede,
And thus shall Troy turne to ashen dede.

"For certaine, Phebus and Neptunus both,
That makeden the walles of the toun,
Ben with the folke of Troy alway so wroth,
That they woll bring it to confusioun,
Right in despite of king Laomedoun,
Because he nolde paien hem hir hire,
The toune of Troy shall ben set on fire."

Telling his tale alway this olde grey,
Humble in his speech and looking eke,
The salte teares from his eyen twey,
Full faste ronnen doune by either cheke,
So long he gan of succour hem beseke,
That for to heale him of his sorowes sore,
They gave him Antenor withouten more.

But who was glad inough, but Calcas tho,
And of this thing full soone his nedes leide
On hem that shoulden for the treatise go
And hem for Antenor full ofte preide,
To bringen home king Thoas and Creseide,
And whan Priam his safegarde sent,
Thembassadours to Troy streight they went.

The cause I told of hir comming, the old
Priam the king, full soone in generall,
Let here vpon his parliment hold,
Of which theffect rehearsen you I shall:
Thembassadours ben answerde for finall,
The eschaunge of prisoners, and all this nede
Hem liketh well, and forth in they procede.

This Troilus was present in the place,
When asked was for Antenor Creseide,
For which full sone chaungen gan his face,
As he that with tho wordes well nigh deide,
But nathelesse he no word to it seide,
Lest men should his affection espie,
With mannes herte he gan his sorowes drie.

And full of anguish and of gresly drede,
Abode what other lords would to it sey,
And if they would graunt, as God forbede,
Theschange of her, than thought he thinges twey:
First, how to save her honour, and what wey
He might best theschaunge of her withstond,
Full fast he cast how all this might stond.

Love him made all prest to done her bide,
And rather dien than she should go,
But Reason said him on that other side,
"Withouten assent of her do nat so,
Lest for thy werke she would be thy fo,
And saine, that through thy medling is yblow
Your brother love, there it was not erst know."

For which he gan deliberen for the best,
And though the lordes would that she went,
He would let hem graunt what hem lest,
And tell his lady first what that they ment,
And whan that she had said him her entent,
Thereafter would he worken also blive,
Tho all the world ayen it wolde strive.

Hector, which that well the Greekes herd,
For Antenor how they would have Creseide,
Gan it withstond, and soberly answerd:
" Sirs, she nis no prisoner," (he seide)
" I not on you who that this charge leide,
But on my part, ye may eftsoones hem tell,
We usen here no women for to sell."

The noise of people up stert than atones,
As brimme as blase of straw iset on fire,
For infortune it would for the nones,
They shouldden hir confusion desire:
" Hector," (quod they) " what ghost may you enspire
This woman thus to shild, and done us lese
Dan Antenore, a wrong way now ye chese.

" That is so wise, and eke so bold baroun,
And we have need of folke, as men may see,
He is one of the greatest of this toun:
O Hector, lette, thy fantasies bee,
O king Priam," (quod they) " thus segge wee,
That all our voice is to forgone Creseide,"
And to deliver Antenor they preide.

O Juvenall lord, true is thy sentence,
That little wenen folke what is to yerne,
That they ne finden in hir desire offence,
For cloud of errour ne lette hem discerne
What best is, and lo, here ensample as yerne:
These folke desiren now deliverance
Of Antenor, that brought hem to mischaunce.

For he was after traitour to the toun
Of Troy alas, they quitte him out to rathe,
O nice world, so thy discretioun,
Creseide, which that never did hem scathe,
Shall now no lenger in her blisse bathe,
But Antenor, he shall come home to toun,
And she shall out, thus said heere and houn.

For which delibered was by parliment,
For Antenor to yeelden out Creseide;
And it pronouced by the president,
Though that Hector nay full oft praid,
And finally, what wight that it withsaid,
It was for naught, it must ben, and should,
For substaunce of the parliment it would.

Departed out of the parliment echone,
This Troilus, without wordes mo,
Unto his chamber spedde him fast alone,
But if it were a man of his or two,
The which he bad out faste for to go,
Because he would slepen, as he said,
And hastely upon his bedde him laid.

And as in winter, leaves ben biraft
Ech after other, till trees be bare,
So that there nis but barke and branch ilaft,
Lithe Troilus, biraft of ech welfare,
I bounden in the blacke barke of care,
Disposed wode out of his witte to breide,
So sore him sate the chaunging of Creseide.

He rist him up, and every dore he shette,
And window eke, and tho this sorrowfull man
Upon his beddes side doune him sette,
Full like a dead image, pale and wan,
And in his breast the heaped wo began
Out brust, and he to worken in this wise
In his woodnesse, as I shall you devise.

Right as the wilde bull beginneth spring
Now here, now there, idarted to the herte,
And of his death roreth, in complaining,
Right so gan he about the chamber stert,
Smiting his breast aye with his fistes smert,
His head to the wall, his body to the ground,
Foll oft he swapt, himselven to confound.

His eyen two for pity of his herte
Out stremeden as swift as welles twey,
The highe sobes of his sorrowes smert
His speech him reft, unnethes might he sey,
" O death alas, why nilt thou do me dey?
Accursed be that day which that nature
Shope me to ben a lives creature."

But after whan the fury and all the rage
Which that his heart twist, and fast threst,
By length of time somewhat gan assuage,
Upon his bed he laid him doun to rest,
But tho begon his teares more out to brest,
That wonder is the body may suffise
To halfe this wo, which that I you devise.

Than said he thus: " Fortune alas the while
What have I done? what have I thee agilt?
How mightest thou for routhe me begile?
Is there no grace? and shall I thus be spilt?
Shall thus Creseide away for that thou wilt?
Alas, how mightest thou in thine herte find
To ben to me thus cruell and unkind?

" Have I thee nat honoured all my live,
As thou well wotest, above the Gods all?
Why wilt thou me fro ioy thus deprive?
O Troilus, what may men now thee call,
But wretch of wretches, out of honour fall
Into misery, in which I woll bewaile
Creseide alas, till that the breath me faile.

" Alas Fortune, if that my life injoy
Displeased had unto thy foule envie,
Why ne haddest thou my father king of Troy
Biraft the life, or done my brethren die,
Or slaine my selfe, that thus complaine and crie?
I combre world, that may of nothing serve,
But ever dye, and never fully sterve.

" If that Creseide alone were me laft,
Naught raught I whider thou woldest me stere,
And her alas, than hast thou me byraft:
But evermore, lo this is thy manere,
To reve a wight that most is to him dere,
To preve in that thy gierfull violence:
Thus am I lost, there helpeth no defence.

" O very Lord, O Love, O God alas,
That knowest best mine herte and al my thought,
What shal my sorowfull life done in this caas,
If I forgo that I so dere have bought,
Sens ye Creseide and me have fully brought
Into your grace, and both our hertes sealed,
How may ye suffer alas it be repealed?

" What I may done, I shal while I may dure
On live, in turment and in cruell paine,
This infortune, or this disaventure,
Alone as I was borne I woll complaine,
Ne never woll I seene it shine or raine,
But end I woll as Edippe in derkenesse
My sorrowfull life, and dien in distresse.

" O wery ghost, that errest to and fro,
Why nilt thou flien out of the wofullest
Body, that ever might on grounde go?
O soule, lurking in this wofull neste,
Fly forthout mine herte, and let it breste,
And follow alway Creseide thy lady dere,
Thy right place is now no lenger here.

" O wofull eien two, sens your disport
Was all to seene Creseides eyen bright,
What shall ye done, but for my discomfort
Stoden for naught, and wepen out your sight,
Sens she is queint, that wont was you to light,
In veine from this forth have I eyen twey
Iformed, sens your vertue is awey.

" O my Creseide, O lady soveraine
Of this wofull soule that thus erieth,
Who shall now yeven comfort to thy paine?
Alas, no wight, but whan mine herte dieth,
My spirit, which that so unto you hieth,
Receive in gree, for that shall aye you serve,
Forthy no force is, though the body sterve.

" O ye lovers, that high upon the whele
Ben sette of Fortune in good aventure,
God lene that ye finded aye love of stele,
And long mote your life in joy endure,
But whan ye comen by my sepulture,
Remembreth that your fellow resteth there,
For I loved eke, though I unworthy were.

" O old unholsome and mislived man,
Calcas I meane, alas what eiled thee
To ben a Greek, sens thou art borne Trojan?
O Calcas, which that wolt my bane be,
In cursed time was thou borne for me,
As would blissfull Jove for his joy,
That I thee had where I would in Troy."

A thousand sighes hotter than the glede,
Out of his breast, each after other went,
Medled with plaint new, his wo to fede,
For which his wofull teares never stent,
And shortly so his sorowes him to rent,
And woxe so mate, that joy or pennaunce
He feeleth none, but lieth in a traunce.

Pandare, which that in the parliment
Had heard what every lord and burgess seid,
And how full graunted was by one assent,
For Antenor to yelden out Creseid:
Gan well nigh wood out of his wit to breid,
So that for wo he niste what he ment,
But in a rage to Troilus he went.

A certaine knight, that for the time kept
The chamber dore, undid it him anone,
And Pandare, that full tenderly wept,
Into the derke chamber as still as stone,
Toward the bedde gan softly to gone,
So confuse, that he nist what to say,
For very wo, his wit was nigh away.

And with chere and looking all to torne,
For sorow of this, and with his armes folden,
He stood this wofull Troilus beforne;
And on his pitous face he gan beholden,
But so oft gan his herte colden,
Seeing his friend in wo, whose heavinesse
His herte slough, as thought him for distresse.

This wofull wight, this Troilus that felt
His friend Pandare icomen him to see,
Gan as the snow ayenst the Sunne melt,
For which this wofull Pandare of pite
Gan for to weepe as tenderly as he:
And speechlesse thus ben these ilke twey,
That neither might for sorow o word sey.

But at the last, this wofull Troilus,
Nigh dead for smert, gan bresten out to rore,
And with a sorrowfull noise he said thus
Among his sobes and his sighes sore,
" Lo Pandare I am dead withouten more,
Hast thou not heard at parliament," he seide,
" For Antenor how lost is my Creseide?"

This Pandare full dead and pale of hew,
Full pitously answerde, and said, " Yes,
As wisely were it false as it is trew,
That I have heard, and wote all how it is,
O mercy God, who would have trowed this,
Who would have wend, that in so little a throw
Fortune our joy would have overthrow.

" For in this world there is no creature,
As to my dome, that ever saw ruine
Straunger than this, through case or aventure,
But who may all eschue or all devine,
Such is this world, forthy I thus define:
Ne trust no wight to find in Fortune
Aye property, her yeftes ben commune.

" But tell me this, why thou art now so mad
To sorrowen thus, why list thou in this wise,
Sens thy desire all holly hast thou had,
So that by right it ought inough suffise,
But I that never felt in my servise
A friendly chere or looking of an eie,
Let me thus wepe and wailen till I die.

" And over al this, as thou wel wost thy selve,
This toune is full of ladies all about,
And to my dome, fairer than such twelve
As ever she was, shal I finden in some rout,
Ye one or twey, withouten any dout:
Forthy be glade mine owne dere brother,
If she be lost, we shall recover another.

" What God forbid alway that ech pleasaunce
In o thing were, and in none other wight,
If one can sing, another can well daunce,
If this be goodly, she is glad and light,
And this is faire, and that can good aright,
Ech for his vertue holden is for dere,
Both heroner and faucon for rivere.

" And eke as writ Zansis, that was full wise,
The new love out chaseth oft the old:
And vpon new case lieth new avise,
Thinke eke thy selfe to saven art thou hold,
Such fire by processe shall of kind cold,
For sens it is but casuell pleasaunce,
Some case shall put it out of remembraunce.

" For also sure as day commeth after night,
The newe love, labour or other wo,
Or eles selde seeing of a wight,
Done old affections all overgo,
And for thy part, thou shalt haue one of tho
To abredge with thy bitter paines smart,
Absence of her shall driue her out of herte."

These wordes saied he for the nones all
To helpe his friend, least he for sorow deide,
For doubtlesse to doen his wo to fall,
He raught nat what vnthrift that he seide:
But Troilus that nigh for sorrow deide,
Tooke little hede of all that ever he ment,
One eare it heard, at the other out it went.

But at the last he answerd, and said, "Friend,
"This lechecraft, or healed thus to be,
Were well fitting, if that I were a fiend,
To traien a wight, that true is vnto me,
I pray God let this counsaile never ithee,
But doe me rather sterue anon right here,
Ere thus I doen, as thou me wouldest lere.

"She that I serue iwis, what so thou sey,
To whom mine herte enhabite is by right,
Shall have me holly hers, till that I dey,
For Pandarus, sens I have trouth her hight,
I woll nat ben vntrue for no wight,
But as her man I woll aye live and sterve,
And never none other creature serve.

"And there thou saiest thou shalt as fair find
As she, let be, make no comparison,
To creature iformed here by kind,
O leve Pandare, in conclusion,
I woll nat been of thine opinion
Touching all this, for which I thee beseech,
So hold thy peace, thou slaest me with thy speech.

"Thou biddest me I should love another
All freshly new, and let Creseide go,
It lithe nat in my power, leve brother,
And though I might, yet would I nat do so,
But canst thou plaien raket to and fro,
Nettle in dock out, now this, now that, Pandare?
Now foule fall her for thy wo that care.

"Thou farest eke by me Pandarus,
As he, that whan a wight is wo bigon,
He commeth to him apace, and saith right thus,
'Thinke not on smart, and thou shalt feele none,'
Thou maiest me first transmewen in a stone,
And reve me my passions all,
Or thou so lightly doe my wo to fall.

"The death may well out of my brest depart
The life, so long may this sorow mine:
But fro my soule shall Creseides dart
Out nevermore, but doune with Proserpine
Whan I am dead, I woll won in pine,
And there I woll eternally complain
My wo, and how that twinned be we twain.

"Thou hast here made an argument full fine,
How that it should lasse paine be
Creseide to forgone, for she was mine,
And lived in ease and in felicite:
Why gabbest thou, that saidest vnto me,
That him is wors that is fro wele ithrow,
Than he had erst none of that wele know?

"But tel me now, sen that thee thinketh so light
To chaungen so in love aye to and fro,
Why hast thou nat doen busily thy might
To chaungen her, that doth thee all thy wo?
Why nilt thou let her fro thine herte go?
Why nilt thou love another lady swete,
That may thine herte setten in quiete?

"If thou hast had in love aye yet mischance,
And canst it not out of thine herte drive,
I that lived in lust and in pleasance
With her, as much as creature on live,
How would I that foryet, and that so blive?
O where hast thou ben hid so long in mew,
Thou canst so well and formeliche argew.

"Nay God wot, naught worth is al thy rede,
For which, for what that ever may befall,
Withouten wordes mo I woll ben dede:
O Death, that ender art of sorrowes all,
Come now, sens I so oft after thee call,
Fot sely is that death, sooth for to saine,
That oft icleped, commeth and endeth paine.

"Well wote I, while my life was in quiete.
Ere thou me slue, I would have yeven hire,
But now thy comming is to me so swete,
That in this world I nothing so desire:
O Death, sens with this sorow I am a fire,
Thou either doune anone in teares drench,
Or with thy cold stroke mine herte quench.

"Sens that thou slaiest so fele in sundry wise
Ayenst hir will, vnpraied day and night,
Doe me at my request this servise,
Deliver now the world, so doest thou right,
Of me that am the wofullest wight
That ever was, for time is that I sterve,
Sens in this world of right naught do I serve."

This Troilus in teares gan distill
As licour out of allambike full fast,
And Pandarus gan hold his tongue still,
And to the ground his eyen downe he cast,
But nathelesse, thus thought he at last,
"What parde, rather than my fellow dey,
Yet shall I somewhat more unto him sey."

And said, "Friend, sens thou hast such distresse,
And sens thee list mine argumentes blame,
Why nilt thy selven helpe doen redresse,
And with thy manhood letten all this game.
Go rauish her, ne canst thou not for shame?
And either let her out of toune fare,
Or hold her still, and leave thy nice fare.

"Art thou in Troy, and hast non hardiment
To take a wight, whiche that loveth thee,
And would her selven been of thine assent,
Now is nat this a nice vanite?
Rise vp anon, and let this weeping be,
And sith thou art a man, for in this hour
I woll been dead, or she shall ben our."

To this answerde him Troilus full soft,
And saied, "Iwis, my leve brother dere,
All this have I my selfe yet thought full oft,
And more thing than thou devisest here,
But why this thing is laft, thou shalt wel here,
And whan thou hast me yeven audience,
Thereafter mayst thou tell all thy sentence.

First, sin thou wost this toun hath al this werre
For ravishing of women so by might,
It should not been suffred me to erre,
As it stont now, ne doue so great vnright,
I should have also blame of every wight,
My fathers graunt if that I so withstood,
Sens she is chaunged for the tounes good.

" I have eke thought, so it were her assent,
To aske her of my father of his grace,
Than thinke I, this were her accusement,
Sens well I wot I may her nat purchace,
For sens my father in so high a place
As parliment, hath her eschaunge ensealed,
He nill for me his letter be repealed.

" Yet drede I most her herte to perturbe
With violence, if I doe such a game,
For if I would it openly disturbe,
It must be disclaunder to her name,
And me were lever die than her diffame,
As nolde God, but I should have
Her honour, lever than my life to save.

" Thus am I lost, for aught that I can see,
For certaine is that I am her knight,
I must her honour lever have than me
In every case, as lover ought of right,
Thus am I with desire and reason twight:
Desire for to disturben her me redeth,
And reason nill not, so mine herte dredeth."

Thus weeping, that he could never cease,
He said, " Alas, how shall I wretche fare,
For well fele I alway my love encrease,
And hope is lasse and lasse Pandare,
Encreasen eke the causes of my care,
So welaway, why nill mine herte brest,
For as in love there is but little rest."

Pandare answerde, " Friend thou mayst for me
Done as thee list, but had I it so hote,
And thine estate, she should go with me,
Tho all this toun cried on this thing by note,
I nolde set at all that noise a grote,
For whan men have cried, than wol they roun,
Eke wonder last but nine deies never in toun.

" Devine not in reason aye so deepe,
Ne curtesly, but helpe thy selfe anone,
Bet is that other than thy selven wepe,
And namely, sens ye two ben al one,
Rise vp, for by mine head she shall not gone,
And rather ben in blame a little ifound,
Than sterve here as a gnat withouten wound.

" It is no shame vnto you, ne no vice,
Her to withholden, that ye loveth most,
Peraventure she might hold thee for nice,
To letten her go thus vnto the Grekes hoste,
Think eke Fortune, as well thy selven woste,
Helpeth hardie man vnto his emprise,
And weiueth wretches for hir cowardise.

" And though thy lady would alite her greve,
Thou shalt thy self thy peace hereafter make,
But as to me certaine I cannot leve,
That she would it as now for evill take,
Why should than for feare thine herte quake,
Thinke how Paris hath, that is thy brother,
A love, and why shal thou not have another?

" And Troilus, o thing I dare thee swere,
That if Creseide, which that is thy lefe,
Now loveth thee, as well as thou dost here,
God helpe me so, she nill not take a grefe,
Though thou do bote anon in this mischefe,
And if she wilneth fro thee for to passe,
Than is she false, so love her well the lasse.

" Forthy, take herte, and think right as a knight,
Through love is broken alday every law,
Kith now somwhat thy courage and thy might,
Have mercie on thy selfe for any awe,
Let not this wretched wo thine herte gnawe,
But manly set the world on sixe and seven,
And if thou die a martir, go to Heaven.

" I woll my selfe ben with thee at this dede,
Though I and all my kin vpon a stound,
Should in a strete, as dogs, liggen dede,
Through girt with many a bloodie wound,
In every case I woll a friend be found,
And if thee listeth here sterven as a wretch,
Adieu, the devill speede him that retch."

This Troilus gan with tho wordes quicken,
And saied, " Friend, graunt mercie, I assent,
But certainly, thou mayst nat so me pricken,
Ne paine none ne may me so torment,
That for no case it is not mine entent,
At shorte wordes, though I dien should,
To ravishen her, but if her selfe it would."

" Why, so mean I" (quod Pandarus) " al this day,
But tell me than, hast thou her well assaid,
That sorowest thus?" and he answerde him " Nay."
" Wherof art thou" (quod Pandare) " than dismaid,
That noste not that she woll ben evill apaid
To ravishen her, sens thou hast not ben there,
But if that Jove told it in thine eare?

" For thy, rise vp as naught ne were, anone,
And wash thy face, and to the king thou wend,
Or he may wondren whider thou art gone,
Thou must with wisdome him and other blend,
Or vpon case he may after thee send
Or thou beware, and shortly brother dere
Be glad, and let me werke in this mattere.

" For I shall shape it so, that sikerly
Thou shalt this night somtime in some manere
Come speaken with thy ladie prively,
And by her wordes eke, as by her chere,
Thou shalt full soone aperceive and well here
Of her entent, and in this case the best,
And fare now well, for in this point I rest."

The swifte fame, whiche that fals thinges
Equall reporteth, like the thinges true,
Was throghout Troy ifled, with prest winges,
Fro man to man, and made his tale all new,
How Calcas doughter with her bright hew,
At parliment without words more,
Igraunted was in chaunge of Antenore.

The whiche tale anon right as Creseide
Had heard, she, which that of her father rought
(As in this case) right naught, ne whan he deide,
Full busily to Jupiter besought
Yeve him mischance, that this tretis brought:
But shortly, least these tales sooth were,
She durst at no wight asken it for fere.

As she that had her herte and all her mind
On Troylus yset so wonder fast,
That al this world ne might her love vnbind,
Ne Troylus out of her herte cast,
She would been his while that her life may last,
And she thus brenneth both in love and drede,
So that she nist what was best to rede.

But as men seene in toune, and all about,
That women vsen hir friends to visite,
So to Creseide of women came a rout,
For pitous ioy, and wenden her delite,
And with hir tales dere ynough a mite,
These women, which that in the citie dwell,
They set hem doune, and sayd as I shall tell.

(Quod, first that one) "I am glad truely,
Because of you, that shall your father see,"
Another sayd, "Iwis, so am not I,
For all too little hath she with vs be:"
(Quod tho the third) "I hope iwis that she
Shall bringen vs the peace on every side,
That whan she goth, almighty God her gide."

Tho wordes and tho womannish thinges
She herd hem right as though she thenee were:
For God it wote, her herte on other thing is,
Although the body sat emong hem there,
Her advertence is alway els where,
For Troilus full fast her soule sought,
Withouten word, on him alway she thought.

These women that thus wenden her to please,
About naught gan all hir tales spend,
Such vanitie ne can done her none ease,
As she that all this meane while brend
Of other passion than they wend,
So that she felt almost her herte die
For wo, and werie of that companie.

For which might she no lenger restraine
Her teares, they gan so vp to well,
That gave signes of her bitter paine,
In which her spirit was, and must dwell,
Remembring her from Heaven vnto which Hell
She fallen was, sens she forgo the sight
Of Troilus, and sorrowfully she sight.

And thilke fooles, sitting her about,
Wende that she wept and sighed sore,
Because that she should out of the rout
Departen, and never play with hem more,
And they that had knowen her of yore,
See her so wepe, and thoght it was kindnesse,
And ech of hem wept eke for her distresse.

And busily they gonnen hir to comforten
On thing God wot, on which she litle thoght,
And with hir tales wenden her disporten,
And to be glad they ofte her besought,
But such an ease therwith they her wrought,
Right as a man is eased for to fele,
For ache of head, to clawen him on his hele.

But after all this nice vanitie,
They took hir leve, and home they wenten all,
Creseide full of sorrowfull pitie,
Into her chamber vp went out of the hall,
And on her bedde she gan for dead to fall,
In purpose never thence for to rise,
And thus she wrought, as I shall you devise.

Hir ownded hair, that sonnish was of hew,
She rent, and eke her fingers long and smale
She wrong full oft, and bad God on her rew,
And with the death to do bote on her bale,
Her hewe whylom bright, that tho was pale,
Bare witnesse of her wo, and her constreint;
And thus she spake, sobbing in her compleint.

"Alas" (quod she) "out of this regioun,
I wofull wretch and infortuned wight,
And borne in cursed constellatioun,
Mote gon, and thus departen fro my knight,
Wo worth alas, that ilke daies light,
On which I saw him first with eyen twaine,
That causeth me, and I him all this paine."

Therewith the teares from her eyen two
Doune fell, as shoure in Aprill swithe,
Her white breast she bet, and for the wo,
After the death she cried a thousand sithe,
Sens he that wont her wo was for to lithe,
She mote forgone, for which disaventure
She held her selfe a forlost creature.

She said, "How shall he done and I also
How should I live, if that I from him twin?
O dere herte eke that I love so,
Who shall that sorow slaen, that ye ben in?
O Calcas, father, thine be all this sin:
O mother mine, that cleped wert Argive,
Wo worth that day that thou me bare on live.

"To what fine should I live and sorowen thus?
How should a fish withouten water dure?
What is Creseide worth from Troilus?
How should a plant or lives creature
Live withouten his kind noriture?
For which full oft a by word here I sey,
That rootlesse mote greene soone dey.

"I shal done thus, sens neither sword ne dart
Dare I none handle, for the cruelte,
That ilke day that I fro you depart,
If sorow of that nill nat my bane be,
Than shall no meat ne drinke come in me,
Till I my soule out of my brest vnsheath,
And thus my selven woll I done to death.

"And Troilus, my clothes everychone
Shull blacke ben, in tokening, herte swete,
That I am as out of this world agone,
That wont was you to set in quiete,
And of mine order aye till death me mete,
The observaunce ever in your absence,
Shall sorrow ben complaint and abstinence.

"Mine herte and eke the woful ghost therein
Bequeath I with your spirit to complaine
Eternally, for they shall never twin,
For though in yearth twinned be we twaine,
Yet in the field of pitie, out of paine,
That hight Elisos, shall we ben ifere,
As Orpheus and Erudice his fere.

"Thus, herte mine, for Antenor alas
I soone shall be chaunged, as I wene,
But how shull ye done in this sorowfull caas,
How shall your tender herte this sustene?
But herte mine, foryet this sorow and tene,
And me also, for soothly for to sey,
So ye well fare, I retche not to dey."

How might it ever redde ben or isong
The plaint that she made in her distresse,
I not, but as for me my little tong
If I discriven would her heavinesse,
It should make her sorrow seeme lesse
Than that it was, and childishly deface
Her high complaint, and therefore I it pace.

Pandare, which that sent from Troilus
Was vnto Creseide, as ye have heard devise,
That for the best it was recorded thus,
And he full glad to done him that servise,
Unto Creseide in a full secret wise,
There as she lay in tourment and in rage,
Came her to tell all holly his message.

And fond that she her selven gan to grete
Full pitously, for with her salte teres,
Her breast and face ibathed was full wete,
Her mightie tresses of her sonnish heres
Unbroiden, hangen all about her eares,
Which yave him very signe of mattire
Of death, which that her herte gan desire.

Whan she him saw, she gan for sorrow anon
Her tearie face atwixt her armes hide,
For which this Pandare is so wo bigon,
That in the hous he might vnneth abide,
As he that felt sorrow on every side,
For if Creseide had erst complained sore,
Tho gan she plaine a thousand times more.

And in her aspre plaint, thus she seide:
"Pandare, first of joies more than two
Was cause, causing vnto me Creseide,
That now transmued ben in cruell wo,
Whether shall I say to you welcome or no?
That alderfirst me brought vntò servise
Of love alas, that endeth in such wise.

"Endeth than love in wo? Ye or men lieth,
And all worldly blisse, as thinketh me,
The end of blisse aye sorrow it occupieth,
And who troweth not that it so be,
Let him vpon me wofull wretche see,
That my selfe hate, and aye my birth curse,
Feeling alway, fro wicke I go to worse.

"Who so me seeth, he seeth sorow all atonis,
Paine, tourment, plaint, wo and distresse,
Out of my wofull body harme there none is,
As langour, anguish, cruell bitternesse,
Annoy, smart, drede, furie, and eke sicknesse,
I trow iwis from Heaven teares raine,
For pitie of my aspre and cruell paine."

"And thou my suster, full of discomfort,"
(Quod Pandarus) "what thinkest thou to do?
Why ne hast thou to thy selven some resport?
Why wilt thou thus thy selfe alas fordo?
Leave all this werke, and take now heed to
That I shall saine, and herken of good entent
This message, that by me Troilus you sent."

Tourned her tho Creseide a wo making,
So great, that it a death was for to see,
"Alas" (quod she) "what wordes may ye bring,
What woll my dere herte saine to mee,
Which that I drede nevermore to see,
Woll he have plaint or teares ere I wend?
I have ynough, if he thereafter send."

She was right such to seene in her visage,
As is that wight that men on beare bind,
Her face like of Paradis the image,
Was all ichaunged in another kind,
The play, the laughter men were wont to find
On hir, and eke her joyes everichone
Ben fled, and thus lieth Creseide alone.

About her eyen two, a purpre ring
Bitrent, in soothfast tokening of her paine,
That to behold it was a deadly thing,
For which Pandare might nat restraine
The teares from his eyen for to raine,
But nathelesse as he best might he seide
From Troilus these wordes to Creseide.

"Lo nece, I trow ye han heard all how
The king with other lordes for the best,
Hath made eschaunge of Antenor and you,
That cause is of this sorow and this vnrest,
But how this case doth Troilus molest,
This may none yearthly mannes tongue say,
For very wo, his wit is all away.

"For which we have so sorowed, he and I,
That into little it had vs both slaw,
But through my counsaile this day finally,
He somewhat is fro weeping withdraw,
And seemeth me that he desireth faw
With you to ben all night for to devise
Remedie of this, if there were any wise.

"This short and plain, theffect of my message,
As ferforth as my wit can comprehend,
For ye that ben of tourment in such rage,
May to no long prologue as now entend.
And herevpon ye may answer him send,
And for the love of God my nece dere,
So leave this wo or Troilus be here."

"Great is my wo," (quod she) and sighed sore,
As she that feeleth deadly sharpe distresse,
But yet to me his sorrow is mokell more,
That love him bet than he himselfe I gesse,
Alas, for me hath he such hevinesse,
Can he for me so pitously complaine,
Iwis this sorow doubleth all my paine.

"Greuous to me God wot is for to twin,"
(Quod she) "but yet it harder is to me,
To seene that sorrow which that he is in,
For well wot I, it woll my bane be,
And die I woll in certaine tho" (quod she:)
"But bid him come, er deth that thus me threteth,
Drive out the ghost which in mine herte beteth."

These wordes said, she on her armes two
Fill gruffe, and gan to weepen pitously:
(Quod Pandarus) "Alas, why doe ye so?
Sens ye well wote the time is fast by
That he shall come, arise vp hastely,
That he you nat biwopen thus ne find,
But ye woll have him wode out of his mind.

"For wist he that ye farde in this manere,
He would himselfe slea: and if I wend
To have this fare, he should not come here,
For all the good that Priam may dispend:
Far to what fine he would anon pretend,
That know I well, and forthy yet I sey,
So leave this sorow, or plainly he woll dey.

"And shapeth you his sorow for to abredge,
And nat encrease, lefe nece swete,
Beth rather to him cause of plat than edge,
And with some wisdome ye his sorowes bete:
What helpeth it to weepen full a strete,
Or though ye both, in salt teares dreint?
Bet is a time of cure aye than of pleint,

" I meane thus, whan I him hither bring,
Sens ye be wise, and both of one assent,
So shapeth how to distourbe your going,
Or come ayen soone after ye be went,
Women been wise, in short avisement,
And let seene how your wit shall availe,
And what that I may helpe, it shall not faile."

" Go," (quod Creseide) " and, vncle, truely
I shall done all my might me to restraine
From weeping in his sight, and busily
Him for to glad, I shall done all my paine,
And in my herte seeken every vaine,
If to his sore there may ben founden salve,
It shall nat lacke certaine on mine halve."

Goth Pandarus, and Troilus he sought,
Till in a temple he found him all alone,
As he that of his life no lenger rought,
But to the pitous goddes everichone,
Full tenderly he praid, and made his mone,
To done him soone out of the world to pace,
For well he thoght there was none other grace.

And shortly all the soothe for to sey,
He was so fallen in dispaire that day,
That vtterly he shope him for to dey,
For right thus was his argument alway,
He saied he nas but lorne, welaway,
" For all that commeth, commeth by necessitie,
Thus to ben lorne, it is my destinie.

" For certainly, this wote I well," he said,
" That foresight of devine purveiaunce
Had seen alway me to forgone Creseide,
Sens God seethe every thing out of doutance
And hem disposeth through his ordinance,
In his merites soothly for to be,
As they shull comen by predestine.

" But nathelesse, alas, whom shall I leve,
For there ben greate clerkes many one,
That destinie, through argumentes preve,
And some saine, that nedely there is none,
But that free choice is yeven vs everychone:
O welaway, so sligh arne clerkes old,
That I not whose opinion I may hold.

" For some men sain, that God seeth all beforne,
Ne God may nat deceived ben parde,
Than mote it fallen, though men had it sworn,
That purveiaunce hath seene beforne to be,
Wherefore I say, that from eterne if he
Hath wist beforn our thought eke as our dede,
We have no free choice, as these clerkes rede.

" For other thought, nor other deed also,
Might never been, but such as purveyaunce,
Which may nat been deceived never mo,
Hath feled biforne, withouten ignoraunce,
For if there might ben a variaunce
To writhen out fro Goddes purveying,
There nere no prescience of thing comming.

" But it were rather an opinion
Uncertaine, and no stedfast foreseeing,
And certes that were an abusion,
That God should have no perfite clere weting
More than we men that have doutous wening,
But such an errour vpon God to gesse,
Were false, and foule, and wicked cursednesse.

" Eke this is an opinion of some,
That have hir top ful high and smooth ishore,
They saine right thus, that thing is nat to come,
For that the prescience hath seene before
That it shall come, but they sain that therfore
That it shall come, therefore the purveyaunce
Wote it beforne withouten ignoraunce.

" And in this manner this necessite
Retourneth in his part contrary againe,
For needfully behoueth it nat to be,
That thilke thinges fallen in certa ne
That ben purveied, but needfully as they saine
Behoueth it that thinges which that fall,
That they in certaine ben purveyed all.

" I meane as though I laboured me in this,
To inquire which thing cause of which thing be,
As whether that the prescience of God is
The certaine cause of the necessite
Of thinges that to comen be parde,
Or if necessitie of thing comming,
Be cause certaine of the purveying.

" But now ne enforce I me not in shewing,
How the order of the causes stant, but well wot I
That it behoueth, that the befalling
Of thinges wiste before certainly,
Be necessarie, all seeme it not thereby,
That prescience put falling necessaire
To thing to come, all fall it foule or faire.

" For if there sit a man yond on a see,
Than by necessitie behoueth it,
That certes thine opinion sooth be,
That wenest or conjectest that he sit,
And further over, now ayenward yet,
Lo right so is it on the part contrarie,
As thus, now hearken, for I woll nat tarie.

" I say, that if the opinion of thee
Be sooth for that he sit, than say I this,
That he mote sitten by necessitee,
And thus necessitie in either is,
For in him nede of sitting is iwis,
And in the nede of sooth, and thus forsoth
There mote necessitie ben in you both.

" But thou maist saine the man sit nat therfore,
That thine opinion of his sitting sooth is,
But rather for the man sate there before,
Therefore is thine opinion sooth iwis,
And I say though the cause of sooth of this
Commeth of his sitting, yet necessitee
Is enterchaunged both in him and in thee.

" Thus in the same wise out of doutaunce,
I may well maken, as it seemeth me,
My reasoning of Goddes purveyaunce,
And of the thinges that to comen be,
By whiche reason men may well isee,
That thilke thinges that in earth yfall,
That by necessitie they comen all.

" For although that forthing shall come iwis
Therefore is it purveyed certainely,
Nat that it commeth, for it purveyed is,
Yet nathelesse behoueth it needfully,
That thing to come be purveyed truly,
Or else thinges that purveyed be,
That they betiden by necessite.

" And this suffiseth right ynough certaine,
For to destroy our free choise everydell,
But now is this abusion to saine,
That falling of the thinges temporell,
Is cause of the goddes prescience eternell;
Now truely that is a false sentence,
That thing to com shuld cause his prescience.

" What might I wene, and I had such a thought?
But that God purveieth thing that is to come,
For that it is to come, and else nought:
So might I wene, that thinges all and some,
That whylome ben befall and overcome,
Ben cause of thilke soveraine purveyaunce,
That forwote all, withouten ignoraunce.

" And over all this, yet say I more thereto,
That right as whan I wote there is a thing,
Iwis that thing mote needfully be so,
Eke right so, whan I wot a thing comming,
So mote it come; and thus they befalling
Of thinges that ben wist before the tide,
They mowe not ben eschewed on no side."

Than said he thus, " Almighty Jove in trone,
That wotest of all this thing the soothfastnesse,
Rew on my sorrow and do me dien sone,
Or bring Creseide and me fro this distresse."
And while he was in all this heavinesse,
Disputing with himselfe in this matere,
Came Pandare in, and said as ye may here.

" O mighty God" (quod Pandarus) " in trone,
Eigh, who saw ever a wise man faren so?
Why Troilus, what thinkest thou to done?
Hast thou such lust to ben thine owne fo?
What, parde, yet is nat Creseide ago,
Why list thee so thy selfe fordone for drede,
That in thine head thine eyen semen dede.

" Hast thou nat lived many a yere beforne
Withouten her, and farde full well at ease?
Art thou for her and for none other borne,
Hath kind thee wrought al only her to please?
Let be and thinke right thus in thy disease,
That in the dice right as ther fallen chaunces,
Right so in love there come and gon plesaunces.

" And yet this is a wonder most of all,
Why thou thus sorowest, sith thou wost nat yet
Touching her going, how that it shall fall,
Ne if she can her selfe distourben it,
Thou hast nat yet assaied all her wit;
A man may all betime his necke bede
Whan it shall off, and sorowen at the nede.

" Forthy, take hede of all that I shall say,
I have with her ispoke, and long ibe,
So as accorded was betwixe vs twey,
And evermore me thinketh thus, that she
Hath somewhat in her hertes privite,
Wherewith she can, if I shall aright rede,
Disturbe all this, of which thou art in drede.

" For which my counsell is, whan it is night,
Thou to her go; and make of this an end,
And blisfull Juno, through her great might,
Shall (as I hope) her grace vnto vs send,
Mine herte seith certaine she shall nat wend,
And forthy, put thine herte a while in rest,
And hold thy purpose, for it is the best."

This Troilus answerde, and sighed sore,
" Thou saist right well, and I will do right so,"
And what him list, he said vnto him more,
And whan that it was time for to go,
Full prively himselfe withouten mo
Unto her came, as he was wont to done,
And how they wrought, I shall you tell soone.

Sooth is, that whan they gonne first to mete,
So gan the paine hir hertes for to twist,
That neither of hem other mighte grete,
But hem in armes tooke, and after kist,
The lasse wofull of hem bothe nist
Where that he was, ne might o word outbring,
As I said erst, for wo and for sobbing.

The wofull teares that they leten fall,
As bitter weren out of teares kind
For paine, as is ligne aloes, or gall,
So bitter teares wept not as I find
The wofull Mirra, through the barke and rind,
That in this world there nis so hard an herte,
That nolde have rewed on hir paines smart.

But whan hir wofull wery ghostes twaine
Returned ben, there as hem ought to dwell,
And that somewhat to weken gan the paine
By length of plaint, and ebben gan the well
Of hir teares, and the herte vnswell,
With broken voice, al horse for shright, Creseid
To Troilus these ilke wordes seid.

" O Jove, I die, and mercy thee besech,
Helpe Troilus:" and therewithal her face
Upon his brest she laid, and lost her spech,
Her wofull spirite from his proper place
Right with the worde away in point to pace,
And thus she lith, with hewes pale and grene,
That whilom fresh and fairest was to sene.

This Troilus that on her gan behold,
Cleping her name, and she lay as for deed,
Withouten answere, and felt her limmes cold,
Her eien throwen vpward to her heed:
This sorowful man can now non other rede,
But oft time her colde mouth he kist,
Where him was wo, God and himself it wist.

He riseth him vp, and long straite he her leide,
For signe of life, for aught he can or may,
Can he none finde, in nothing of Creseide,
For which his song full oft is " Welaway:"
But whan he saw that spechlesse she lay,
With sorowful voice, and herte of blisse al bare,
He said, how she was fro this world ifare.

So after that he long had her complained,
His hondes wrong, and said that was to sey,
And with his teeres salt her brest berained,
He gan tho teeres wipen off full drey,
And pitously gan for the soule prey,
And said, " Lord, that set art in thy throne,
Rewe eke on me, for I shall folow her sone."

She colde was, and without sentement,
For ought he wote, for brethe felt he none,
And this was him a preignant argument,
That she was forth out of this world agone:
And whan he saw there was non other wonne,
He gan her limmes dresse, in such manere,
As men don hem that shall ben laide on bere.

And after this, with sterne and cruel herte,
His swerde anon out of his sheth he twight,
Him selfe to sleen, how sore that him smart,
So that his soule, her soule folowen might,
There as the dome of Minos would it dight,
Sith love and cruel fortune it ne would,
That in this world he lenger liven should.

Than said he thus, fulfilde of high disdaine,
" O cruel Jove, and thou Fortune adverse,
This is all and some, that falsly have ye slaine
Creseide, and sith ye may do me no werse,
Fie on your might and werkes so diverse,
Thus cowardly ye shull me never winne,
There shall no deth me fro my lady twinne.

" For I this world, sith ye have slain her thus,
Woll let, and fo ow her spirite low or hie,
Shal never lover saine that Troilus,
Dare nat for feare with his lady die,
For certaine I woll beare her companie,
But sithe ye wol nat suffre vs liven here,
Yet suffreth that our soules ben ifere.

" And thou citie, in which I live in wo,
And thou Priam, and brethren al ifere,
And thou my mother, farewell, for I go,
And Attropose make redy thou my bere:
And thou Creseide, O swete herte dere,
Receive now my spirite," would he sey
With swerde at herte, all redy for to dey.

But as God would, of swough she abraide,
And gan to sighe, and Troilus she cride,
And he answerde, " Lady mine Creseide,
Live ye yet ?" and let his swerde doun glide:
" Ye herte mine, that thanked be Cupide,"
(Quod she) and therewithal she sore sight,
And he began to glade her as he might.

Toke her in armes two and kist her oft,
And her to glad, he did al his entent,
For which her gost, that flikered aie a loft,
Into her wofull herte ayen it went:
But at the last, as that her eye glent
Aside, anon she gan his sworde aspie,
As it lay bare, and gan for feare crie.

And asked him why he had it out draw,
And Troilus anon the cause her told,
And how himself therwith he wold have slain,
For which Creseide vpon him gan behold,
And gan him in her armes faste fold,
And said, " O mercy God, lo which a dede,
Alas, how nigh we weren bothe dede.

" Than if I nadde spoken, as grace was,
Ye would have slain your selfe anon ?" (quod she.)
" Ye doutlesse:" and she answerde, " Alas,
For by that ilke lorde that made me,
I nolde a furlong way on live have be,
After your deth, to have ben crouned quéne
Of al the londe the Sunne on shineth shene.

" But with this selve sword, which that here is
My selfe I would have slain" (quod she) " tho :
But ho, for we have right inough of this,
And let vs rise and straite to bedde go:
And there let vs speken of our wo,
For by that morter, which that I see brenne,
Know I ful well, that day is nat farre heune."

Whan they wer in hir bed in armes fold,
Naught was it like tho nightes here beforne,
For petously ech other gan behold,
As they that hadden al hir blisse ilorne,
Bewailing aie the day that they were borne,
Til at the last, this sorowful wight Creseide,
To Troilus these ilke wordes seide.

" Lo herte mine, wel wote ye this" (quod she)
" That if a wight alway his wo complaine,
And seketh nat how holpen for to be,
It nis but folie, and encreace of paine:
And sens that here assembled be we twaine,
To finde bote of wo that we ben in,
It were time al done to begin.

" I am a woman, as ful wel ye wotte,
And as I am avised sodainly,
So wol I tel you, while it is hotte,
Me thinketh thus, that neyther ye nor I,
Ought halfe this wo to maken skilfully,
For there is art inough for to redresse,
That yet is misse, and sleen this heuinesse.

" Soth is, the wo the whiche we ben inne,
For aught I wote, for nothing eles is,
But for the cause that we should twinne,
Considred al, there nis no more amis:
And what is than a remedy vnto this ?
But that we shape vs sone for to mete,
This al and some, my dere herte swete.

" Now that I shall wel bringen it about
To comen ayen, sone after that I go,
Thereof am I no maner thing in dout,
For dredelesse, within a weke or two
I shal ben here: and that it may be so,
By all right, and in wordes few,
I shal you wel an heape of waies shew.

" For which I woll nat maken long sermon,
For time ilost may not not recovered be,
But I will go to my conclusion,
And to the best, in aught that I can see:
And for the love of God forgeve it me,
If I speake aught ayenst your hertes rest,
For truely I speake it for the best.

" Making alway a protestation,
That nowe these wordes which I shal say,
Nis but to shewe you my mocion,
To find vnto our helpe the beste way,
And take it no otherwise I pray,
For in effect, what so ye me commaund,
That wol I done, for that is no demaund.

" Now herkeneth this, ye have wel understond
My going graunted is by parliment,
So ferforth that it may not ben withstond,
For al this world, as by my judgement:
And sithe there helpeth none avisement,
To letten it, lette it passe out of mind,
And let vs shape a better way to find.

" The sothe is, the twinning of vs twaine,
Wol vs disease, and cruelly anoie:
But him behoveth sometime have a paine,
That serveth love, if that he woll have joie:
And sith I shall no farther out of Troie
Than I may ride ayen on halfe a morow,
It ought lasse causen vs for to sorow.

" So as I shal nat so ben hid in mew,
That day by day, mine owne herte dere,
Sens well ye wote that it is now a trew,
Ye shal ful wel al mine estate here:
And er that truce is done, I shal ben here,
Than have ye bothe Antenor iwonne,
And me also, bethe glad now if ye conne.

" And thinke right thus, Creseide is now agon,
But what, she shal come hastely ayen,
And whan alas? by God, lo right anon
Er daies ten, this dare I safely saine,
And than at erste, shal we be so faine,
So as we shal togithers ever dwell,
That all this world ne might our blisse tell.

" I see that oft time, there as we ben now
That for the best, our counsaile for to hide,
Ye speke nat with me, nor I with you
In fourtenight, ne see you go ne ride:
May ye nat ten daies than abide,
For mine honour, in such aventure?
Iwis ye mowe, or eles lite endure.

" Ye know eke how that all my kin is here,
But if that onely it my father be,
And eke mine other thinges al ifere,
And namely my dere herte ye,
Whom that I nolde leaven for to see,
For all this world, as wide as it hath space,
Or eles see I never Joves face.

" Why trowe ye my father in this wise
Coveiteth so to see me, but for drede,
Lest in this toune that folkes me dispise,
Bicause of him, for his vnhappy dede?
What wote my father what life that I lede,
For if he wist in Troie how well I fare,
Us neded for my wending nat to care.

" Ye see, that every day eke more and more,
Men treate of peace, and it supposed is,
That men the quene Heleine shall restore,
And Grekes vs restore that is mis:
Though there ne were comfort none but this,
That men purposen peace on every side,
Ye may the better at ease of herte abide.

" For if that it be peace, mine herte dere,
The nature of the peace mote nedes drive,
That men must entrecomune ifere,
And to and fro eke ride and gone as blive,
Al day as thicke as been flien from an hive,
And every wight haue liberty to bleve,
Where as him list, the bet withouten leve.

" And tho so be that peace there may bene none,
Yet hither, though ther never peace ne were,
I must come, for whider should I gone,
Or how mischaunce should I dwell there
Among tho men of armes ever in fere,
For which, as wisely God my soule rede,
I can nat sene wherof ye should drede.

" Have here another way, if it so be
That all this thing ne may you not suffice,
My father, as he knowen well parde,
Is olde, and eke full of covetise,
And I right now have founden al the gise,
Withouten nette, wherwith I shal him hent,
And herkeneth now, if that ye woll assent.

" Lo Troilus, men saine, that ful hard it is
The wolfe ful, and the wedder hole to have,
This is to saine, that men full oft iwis,
Mote spenden parte, the remnant for to save:
For aie with gold, men may the herte grave,
Of him that set is vpon covetise,
And how I meane, I shal it you devise.

" The moveable, which that I have in this toun,
Unto my father shall I take, and say,
That right for trust, and for salvatioun,
It sent is from a frende of his or tway,
The whiche frendes fervently him pray,
To sende after more and that in hie,
While that this toun stant thus in jeopardie.

" And that shall be of gold an huge quantite,
Thus shal I sain, but lest folke it aspide,
This may be sent by no wight but by me:
I shal eke shewen him, if peace betide,
What frendes that I have on every side,
Toward the court, to don the wrathe pace,
Of Priamus, and do him stonde in grace.

" So what for o thing and for other, swete,
I shall him so enchaunten with my sawes,
That right in Heven his soule is, shal he mete,
For all Apollo, or his clerkes lawes,
Or calculing, availeth not three hawes:
Desire of gold shall so his soule blend,
That as me list, I shall well make an end.

" And if he would aught by his sorte it preve,
If that I lie, in certaine I shall fond
To disturben him, and plucke him by the sleve,
Making his sorte and bearen him on hond,
He hath nat well the goddes vnderstond,
For goddes speke in amphibologies,
And for o sothe, they tellen twenty lies.

" Eke drede fond first goddes, I suppose,
Thus shall I saine, and that his coward herte,
Made him amis the goddes text to glose,
Whan he for ferde out of Delphos stert:
And but I make him sone to convert,
And done my rede, within a day or twey,
I wol to you oblige me to dey."

And truely, as written wel I find,
That al this thing was said of good entent,
And that her herte trewe was and kind
Towardes him, and spake right as she ment,
And that she starfe for wo nigh whan she went,
And was in purpose ever to be trewe,
Thus writen they that of her werkes knew.

This Troilus, with herte and eeres sprad,
Herde all this thing devised to and fro,
And verily it seemed that he had
The selve witte, but yet to let her go
His herte misyave him evermo,
But finally he gan his herte wrest,
To trusten her, and toke it for the best.

For which the great fury of his penaunce,
Was queint with hope, and therewith hem betwene
Began for joye the amorous daunce,
And as the birdes, whan the Sunne shene,
Deliten in hir songe, in leves greene,
Right so the wordes, that they spake ifere,
Deliten hem, and made hir hertes chere.

But nathelesse, the wending of Creseide,
For all this world may nat out of his mind,
For which full oft he pitously her preide,
That of her heste he might her trewe find:
And said her, "Certes if ye be kind,
And but ye come at daie set, in Troie,
Ne shal I never have heale, honor, ne joie.

"For al so sothe as Sunne vprist to morow,
And God so wisely thou me woful wretch
To reste bring, out of this cruel sorow,
I wol my selven slee, if that ye dretch:
But of my death though little be to retch,
Yet er that ye me causen so to smart,
Dwel rather here, my owne swete herte.

"For truely mine owne lady dere,
The sleightes yet, that I have herd you stere,
Ful shapely ben to fallen all ifere,
For thus men saith, that one thinketh the bere,
But al another thinketh the ledere,
Your sire is wise, and said is out of drede,
Men may the wise out renne, and not out rede.

"It is full harde to halten vnespied
Before a crepil, for he can the craft,
Your father is in sleight as Argus eied,
For al be it that his movable is him biraft,
His olde sleight is yet so with him laft,
Ye shal nat blende him for your womanhede
Ne faine aright, and that is all my drede.

"I not if peace shal evermo betide,
But peace or no, for ernest ne for game,
I wote sith Gaicas on the Grekes side
Hath ones ben, and lost so foule his name,
Ne dare no more come here ayen for shame,
For which that we, for ought I can espie,
To trusten on, nis but a fantasie.

"Ye shal eke seen your father shall you glose,
To ben a wife, and as he can well prech,
He shal some Greke so preise and wel alose,
That ravishen he shal you with his speech:
Or do you done by force, as he shall tech,
And Troilus on whom ye nil have routh,
Shall causelesse so sterven in his trouth.

"And over al this your father shall dispise
Us al, and saine this cite is but lorne,
And that thassege never shall arise,
For why? the Grekes have it al sworne,
Till we ben slaine, and doune our walles torne,
And thus he shall you with his wordes fere,
That aie drede I, that ye wol bleven there.

"Ye shall eke sene so many a lusty knight,
Among the Grekes ful of worthinesse,
And ech of hem, with herte, wit and might
To pleasen you, done al his businesse,
That ye shull dullen of the rudenesse
Of sely Troians, but if routhe
Remorde you, or vertue of your trouthe.

"And this to me so grevouse is to thinke,
That fro my brest it wol my soule rende,
Ne dredelesse, in me there may nat sinke
O good opinion, if that ye wende,
For why? your fathers sleight woll vs shende,
And if ye gone, as I have tolde you yore,
So thinke I nam but deed, withouten more.

"For which with humble, true and pitous herte
A thousand times mercy I you pray,
So reweth on mine aspre paines smart,
And doth somwhat, as that I shall you say:
And let vs steale away betwixt vs tway,
And thinke that foly is, whan a man may chese
For accident, his substaunce for to lese.

"I meane thus, that sens we mowe or day
Wel steale away, and ben togither so,
What wit were it to putten in assay,
(In case ye shoulden to your father go)
If that ye mighten come ayen or no:
Thus meane I, that were a great follie
To put that sikernesse in jeopardie.

"And vulgarly to speken of substaunce,
Of treasour may we both with vs lede,
Ynough to live in honour and pleasaunce,
Til vnto time that we shall ben dede,
And thus we may eschewen all this drede,
For every other waie ye can record,
Mine herte iwis may therewith nat acord.

"And hardely ne dredeth no poverte,
For I have kin and frendes eles where,
That though we comen in our bare sherte,
Us should never lacke golde ne geere,
But ben honoured while we dwelten there,
And go we anone, for as in mine entent,
This is the best, if that ye well assent."

Creseide with a sigh, right in this wise
Answerde, "Iwis, my dere herte trew,
We may well steale away, as ye devise,
And finden such vnthrifty waies new:
But afterward full sore it woll vs rew,
And helpe me God so at my most nede,
As causelesse ye suffren al this drede.

"For thilke day that I for cherishing,
Or drede of father, or for any other wight,
Or for estate, delite, or for wedding,
Be false to you, my Troilus, my knight,
Saturnus doughter Juno, through her might,
As wood as Achamante do me dwell
Eternally with Stix in the pit of Hell.

"And this on every god celestiall
I swere it you and eke on eche goddesse,
On every nimphe, and deite infernall,
On satiry and fauny more and lesse,
That halve goddes ben of wildernesse,
And Attropos my threde of life to brest,
If I be false, now trowe me if you lest.

"And thou Simois, that, as an arowe, clere
Through Troy rennest, aie dounward to the see,
Be witnesse of this word, that saied is here,
That thilke day that I vntrewe be
To Troilus, mine owne herte fre,
That thou return backwarde to thy well,
And I with body and soule sinke to Hell.

"But that ye speake away thus for to go,
And letten all your frendes, God forbede,
For any woman that ye shoulden so,
And namely, sens Troy hath now such nede
Of helpe, and eke of o thing taketh hede,
If this were wist, my life lay in ballaunce,
And your honor, God shild vs fro mischaunce,

" And if so be that peace hereafter be take,
As all day happeth after angre game,
Why lord the sorow and wo ye wolden make,
That ye ne durst come ayen for shame,
And ere that ye ieoparden so your name,
Beth nat too hasty in this hotte fare,
For hasty man ne wanteth never care.

" What trowe ye the people eke all about
Would of it say? it is full light to arede,
They woulden say, and swere it out of dout.
That love ne drave you nat to done this dede
But lust voluptuous, and coward drede,
Thus were all lost iwis, mine herte dere
Your honour, whiche that now shineth clere.

" And also thinketh on mine honeste,
That floureth yet, how foul I should it shend,
And with what filth it spotted shulde be,
If in this forme I should with you wend,
Ne though I lived unto the worldes end,
My name should I never ayenward win,
Thus were I lost, and that were routh and sin.

" And forthy, slee with reason all this hete,
Men sain, the suffraunt overcommeth parde,
Eke whoso woll have lefe, he lefe mote lete,
Thus maketh vertue of necessite
By patience, and thinke that lord is he
Of fortune aye, that naught woll of her retch,
And she ne daunteth no wight but a wretch.

" And trusteth this, that certes, herte swete,
Or Phebus suster, Lucina the shene,
The Lion passe out of this Arite,
I woll been here, withouten any wene,
I meane, as helpe me Juno, Heavens quene,
The tenth day, but if that death me assaile,
I woll you seene, withouten any faile."

" And now so this be sooth?" (quod Troilus)
" I shall well suffer unto the tenth day,
Sens that I see that nede it mote ben thus,
But for the love of God, if be it may,
So let us stealen prively away:
For ever in one, as for to live in rest,
Mine herte saieth that it woll be the best."

" O mercy God, what life is this?" (quod she)
" Alas, ye slea me thus for very tene,
I see well now that ye mistrusten me,
For by your wordes it is well isene:
Now for the love of Scinthia the shene,
Mistrust me nat thus causelesse for routh,
Sens to be true I have you plight my trouth.

" And thinketh well, that sometime it is wit
To spend a time, a time for to win,
Ne parde lorne am I nat fro you yet,
Though that we ben a day or two atwin:
Drive out tho fantasies you within,
And trusteth me, and leaveth eke your sorow,
Or here my trouth, I wol nat live til morow.

" For if ye wist how sore it doth me smart,
Ye would cesse of this, for God thou wost
The pure spirit weepeth in mine herte
To seen you weepen, which that I love most,
And that I mote gone unto the Greekes host,
Ye, nere it that I wist a remedy
To com ayen, right here I wolde dy.

" But certes I am not so nice a wight,
That I ne can imaginen a way
To come ayen that day that I have hight,
For who may holden a thing that woll away,
My father naught, for all his queint play,
And by my thrift, my wending out of Troy
Another day shall tourne us all to joy.

" Forthy, with all mine herte I you beseke,
If that you list done aught for my prayere,
And for the love which that I love you eke,
That ere I departe fro you here,
That of so good a comfort and a chere
I may you seen, that ye may bring at rest
My herte, whiche is at point to brest.

" And over all this I pray you," (quod she tho)
" My owne hertes soothfast suffisaunce,
Sith I am thine all hole withouten mo,
That while that I am absent, no pleasaunce
Of other, do me fro your remembraunce:
For I am ever agast, for why? men rede,
That love is thing aye full of busie drede.

" For in this world there liveth lady none,
If that ye were vntrue, as God defend,
That so betrayed were, or wo begon,
As I, that all trouthe in you entend:
And doubtlesse, if that iche other wend,
I nere but dead, and ere ye cause find,
For Goddes love, so beth ye nat unkind."

To this answered Troilus and seide,
" Now God to whom there nis no cause iwrie,
Me glad, as wis I never unto Creseide,
Sith thilke day I saw her first with eye,
Was false, ne never shall till that I die,
At short wordes, well ye may me leue,
I can no more, it shall be found at preue."

" Graunt mercy, good herte mine, iwis" (quod she)
" And blisful Uenus let me never sterve,
Er I may stonde of pleasaunce in degre,
To quite him well, that so well can deserve:
And while that God my wit will me conserve
I shall so done, so true I have you found,
That aie honour to meward shall rebound.

" For trusteth well, that your estate royall,
Ne vain delite, nor onely worthinesse
Of you in werre or turnay marciall,
Ne pompe, array, nobley, or eke richesse:
Ne made me to rue on your distresse,
But moral vertue, grounded upon trouth,
That was the cause I first had on you routh.

" Eke gentle herte, and manhood that ye had,
And that ye had (as me thought) in dispite
Every thing that sowned in to bad,
As rudenesse, and peoplish appetite
And that your reason bridled your delite,
This made aboven every creature.
That I was yours, and shall while I may dure.

" And this may length of yeres nat fordoe,
Ne remuablest fortune deface,
But Iupiter, that of his might may doe
The sorowfull to be glad, so yeve vs grace,
Er nightes teene to meten in this place,
So that it may your herte and mine suffise,
And fareth now well, for time is that ye rise."

And after that they long yplained had,
And oft ikist, and straite in armes fold,
The day gan rise, and Troilus him clad,
And rufully his lady gan behold:
As he that felt deathes cares cold,
And to her grace he gan him recommaund,
Where he was wo, this hokl I no demaund.

For mannes hedde imaginen ne can,
Ne entendement consider, ne tongue tell
The cruell paines of this sorowfull man,
That passen every torment doune in Hell:
For whan he sawe that she ne might dwell,
Which that his soule out of his herte rent,
Withouten more, out of the chamber he went.

INCIPIT LIBER QUINTUS.

Atrochen gan the fatall destine,
That Joves hath in disposicioun,
And to you angry Parcas sustren thre,
Committeth to done execucioun,
For which Creseide must out of the toun,
And Troilus shall dwell forth in pine,
Till Lachesis his threde no lenger twine.

The golden tressed Phebus high on loft,
Thrise had all with his beames clere
The snowes molte, and Zephirus as oft
Ibrought ayen the tender leaves grene:
Sens that the sonne of Eccuba the quene
Began to love her first, for whom his sorrow
Was all, that she departe should a morow.

Full redy was at prime Diomede,
Creseide vnto the Grekes hoste to lede,
For sorow of which, she felt her herte blede,
As she that niste what was best to rede:
And truely, as men in bokes rede,
Men wiste never woman have the care,
Ne was so lothe out of a toune to fare.

This Troilus withouten rede or lore,
As man that hath his joies eke forlore,
Was waiting on his lady evermore,
As she that was sothfast croppe and more,
Of all his lust or joyes here tofore:
But Troilus, now farwell all thy joie,
For shalt thou never seen her eft in Troie.

Soth is, that while he bode in this manere,
He gan his wo full manly for to hide,
That well vneth it seen was in his chere,
But at the yate there she should out ride,
With certain folke he hoved her to abide,
So wo-bigon, all would he not him plain,
That on his horse vneth he sate for pain.

For ire he quoke, so gan his herte gnaw,
Whan Diomede on horse gan him dight,
And sayd vnto himselfe this ilke saw,
"Alas," (quod he) "thus foule a wretchednesse
Why suffre I it? Why nill I it redresse?
Were it nat bet at ones for to die,
Than evermore in langour thus to crie?

"Why nill I make at ones rich and poore,
To have inough to done er that she go?
Why nill I bring all Troie vpon a roore?
Why nill I slaen this Diomede also?
Why nill I rather with a man or two,
Steale her away? Why woll I this endure?
Why nill I helpen to mine owne cure?"

But why he nolde done so fell a deede,
That shall I sain, and why him list it spare,
He had in herte alway a maner drede,
Lest that Creseide, in rumour of this fare,
Should have ben slain, lo this was al his care,
And eles certain, as I sayed yore,
He had it done withouten wordes more.

Creseide whan she redy was to ride,
Full sorowfully she sighed, and sayd "Alas,"
But forth she mote, for aught that may betide,
And forth she rideth full sorowfully apaas:
There is no other remedy in this caas:
What wonder is, though that her sore smart
Whan she forgoeth her owne swete herte?

This Troilus in gise of curtesie,
With hauke on hond, and with an huge rout
Of knightes, rode and did her companie,
Passing all the valey ferre without,
And ferther would have ridden out of doubt,
Full faine, and wo was him to gone so sone,
But tourne he must, and it was eke to done.

And right with that was Antenor icome,
Out of the Grekes hoste, and every wight
Was of him glad, and sayd he was welcome,
And Troilus, al nere his herte light,
He pained him, with all his full might
Him to with hold of weping at least,
And Antenor he kist, and made feast.

And therewithal he must his leave take,
And cast his iye upon her pitously,
And nere he rode, his cause for to make,
To take her by the honde al soberly:
And Lorde so she gan wepen tenderly,
And he full soft and slighly gan her seie,
"Now hold your day, and doe me not to deie."

With that his courser tourned he about,
With face pale, and vnto Diomede
No worde he spake, ne none of all his rout,
Of which the sonne of Tideus toke hede,
As he that kouthe more than the crede,
In soche a craft, and by the rain her hent,
And Troilus to Troie homewardes went.

This Diomede, that lad her by the bridell,
Whan that he saw the folke of Troy away,
Thought, "All my labor shall not been on idell,
If that I may, for somewhat shall I say:
For at the worst, it short maie our way,
I have heard say eke, times twise twelve,
He is a foole that woll foryete him selve."

But nathelesse, this thought he well inough
That "I certainly I am about naught,
If that I speake of love, or make it to tought,
For doubtlesse, if she have in her thought,
Him that I gesse, he may not been ibrought
So sone away, but I shall find a meane,
That she nat yet wete shall what I meane."

This Diomede, as he that could his good,
Whan this was done, gan fallen forth in spech
Of this and that, and aske why she stood
In soch disease, and gan her eke besech
That if that he encreasen might or ech
With any thing her ease, that she should
Commaunde it him, and said he done it would.

For truely he swore her as a knight,
That ther nas thing, with which he might her plese
That he nolde done his pain, and al his might
To done it, for to done her herte an ease:
And prayed her she would her sorrow appease,
And sayd, " Iwis we Greekes can have joy
To honouren you, as well as folke of Troy."

He said eke thus, " I wot you thinketh strange,
No wonder is, for it is to you new,
Thacquaintance of these Trojans to change
For folke of Grece, that ye never knew:
But would never God, but if as true,
A Greeke ye should emong us all find,
As any Trojan is, and eke as kind.

" And bicause I swore you right now,
To ben your frende, and helply to my might,
And for that more acquaintaunce eke of you
Have I had, than an other straunger wight:
So fro this forth, I pray you day and night,
Commaundeth me, how sore that me smart,
To done all that may like unto your herte.

" And that ye me wold, as your brother treat,
And taketh not my frendship in dispite,
And though your sorowes been for thinges gret,
Not I nat why, but out of more respite,
Mine herte hath for to amend it great delite,
And if I may your harmes nat redresse,
I am right sory for your heavinesse.

" For though ye Trojans with us Greekes wroth
Have many a day been, alway yet parde,
O god of love, in sothe we serven bothe:
And for the love of God my lady free,
Whom so ye hate, as beth not wroth with me,
For truely there can no wight you serve,
That half so loth your wrathe would deserve.

" And nere it that we been so nere the tent
Of Calcas, which that seen us bothe may,
I would of this you tell all mine entent,
But this ensealed till an other day:
Yeve me your honde, I am and shall be aie,
God helpe me so, while that my life may dure,
Your owne, aboven every creature.

" Thus said I never er now to woman borne,
For God mine herte as wisely glad so,
I loved never woman here beforne,
As paramours, ne never shall no mo:
And for the love of God be not my fo,
All can I not to you, my lady dere,
Complain a right, for I am yet to lere.

" And wondreth nought, mine owne lady bright,
Though that I speake of love to you thus blive,
For I have heard or this of many a wight,
Hath loved thing he never saw his live:
Eke I am not of power for to strive
Ayenst the god of love, but him obay
I woll alway, and mercy I you pray.

" There beeth so worthy knightes in this place,
And ye so faire, that everiche of hem all
Woll pain him to stonden in your grace,
But might to me so faire a grace fall
That ye me for your servaunt would call,
So lowly, ne so truely you serve,
Nill none of hem, as I shall till I sterve."

Creseide unto that purpose lite answerde,
As she that was with sorow oppressed so,
That in effect she naught his tales herde,
But here and there, now here a word or two:
Her thought her sorowfull herte brest a two,
For whan she gan her father ferre espie,
Well nigh doune of her hors she gan to sie.

But nathelesse she thonketh Diomede,
Of all his travaile and his good chere,
And that him list his frendship to her bede,
And she accepteth it in good manere,
And woll do fain that is him lefe and dere,
And trusten him she would, and well she might,
As saied she, and from her hors she alight.

Her father hath her in his armes nome,
And twenty times he kist his doughter swete,
And saied: " O dere doughter mine, welcome,"
She said eke, she was fain with him to mete:
And stode forth muet, milde, and mansuette,
But here I leave her with her father dwell,
And forth I woll of Troilus you tell.

To Troy is come this wofull Troilus,
In sorowe aboven all sorowes smert,
With felon loke, and face dispitous,
Tho sodainly doune from his hors he stert,
And through his paleis with swolne herte,
To chamber he went, of nothing toke he hede
Ne none to him dare speke o worde for drede.

And there his sorowes that he spared had,
He yave an issue large, and death he cride,
And in his throwes, frenetike and mad
He curseth Juno, Apollo, and eke Cupide,
He curseth Bachus, Ceres, and Cipride,
His birth, himselfe, his fate, and eke nature,
And save his ladie, every creature.

To bed he goth, and weileth there and turneth,
In furie, as doeth he Ixion in Hell,
And in this wise he nigh till day sojourneth,
But tho began his herte alite vnswell,
Through teares, which that gonnen vp to wel,
And pitiously he cried upon Creseide,
And to him self right thus he spake and seide,

" Where is mine owne lady lefe and dere?
Where is her white brest, where is it, where?
Where been her armes, and her iyen clere
That yesterday this time with me were?
Now may I wepe alone many a teare,
And graspe about I may, but in this place
Save a pilew, I find naught to embrace.

" How shal I doen? whan shal she come againe?
I not alas, why let I her to go?
As would God I had as tho be slain:
O herte mine Creseide, O swete fo,
O lady mine, that I love and no mo,
To whom for ever more mine herte I vowe,
See how I die, ye nill me not rescowe.

"Who seeth you now, my right lodesterre?
Who sitteth right now in your presence?
Who can comforten now your hertes werre?
Now I am gon, whom yeve ye audience?
Who speaketh for me right now in my absence?
Alas no wight, and that is all my care,
For well wote I, as evill as I ye fare.

"How should I thus ten daies full endure,
Whan I the firste night have all this tene?
How shall she eke sorowfull creature,
For tendernesse, how shall she this sustene,
Soche wo for me? o pitous, pale, and grene,
Shall been your freshe womanly face,
For langour, er ye tourne vnto this place."

And whan he fill in any slombringes,
Anon begin he shoulde for to grone,
And dreamen of the dreadfullest thinges
That might been: as mete he were alone
In place horrible, making aie his mone,
Or meten that he was emonges all
His enemies, and in hir hondes fall.

And therewithall his bodie should start,
And with the start all sodainly awake,
And soche a tremour fele about his herte,
That of the feare his bodie should quake:
And therwithall he should a noise make,
And seme as though he should fall depe,
From high alofe, and than he would wepe,

And rewen on himselfe so pitously,
That wonder was to here his fantasie.
An other time he should mightely
Comfort himselfe, and sain it was folie,
So causelesse, soche drede for to drie,
And eft begin his aspre sorowes new,
That every man might on his paines rew.

Who could tell all, or fully discrive
His wo, his plaint, his langour, and his pine?
Nat all the men that han or been on live,
Thou reader mayst thy self full well devine,
That soche a wo my wit can not define,
Unidell for to write it should I swinke,
Whan that my wit is werie it to thinke.

On Heaven yet the sterres weren seen
Although full pale iwoxen was the Mone,
And whiten gan the orisont shene,
All eastward, as it was wont to done,
And Phebus with his rosie carte sone,
Gan after that to dresse him vp to fare,
Whan Troilus hath sent after Pandare.

This Pandare, that of all the day beforne
Ne might him comen this Troilus to se,
Although he on his hedde it had sworne,
For with the king Priam alday was he,
So that it lay nat in his liberte,
No where to gon, but on the morow he went
To Troilus, whan that he for him sent.

For in his herte he could well devine,
That Troilus al night for sorow woke,
And that he would tell him of his pine,
This knew he well inough without boke:
For which to chamber streight the way he toke,
And Troilus tho soberly he grette,
And on the bedde full sone he gan him sette.

"My Pandarus," (quod Troilus) "the sorow
Which that I drie, I may not long endure,
I trowe I shall not liven till to morow,
For which I would alwaies on aventure
To thee devisen of my sepoulture
The forme, and of my movable thou dispoen
Right as thee semeth best is for to doen.

"But of the fire and flambe funerall,
In which my body brennen shall to glede,
And of the feast and plaies palestrall,
At my vigile, I pray thee take good hede
That that be well: and offer Mars my stede,
My sword, mine helme: and leve brother dere,
My shelde to Pallas yeve, that shineth clere.

"The poudre in which min herte ibrend shal turn
That pray I thee thou take, and it conserve
In a vessell that men clepeth an vrne
Of gold, and to my lady that I serve,
For love of whom thus pitously I sterve,
So yeve it her, and doe me this pleasaunce,
To praien her to kepe it for a remembraunce.

"For well I fele by my maladie,
And by my dreames, now and and yore ago,
All certainly, that I mote nedes die:
The oule eke, which that hight Ascaphilo,
Hath after me shright, all these nightes two,
And god Mercurie, now of me wofull wretch
The soule guide, and whan thee list it fetch."

Pandare answerde and saied, "Troilus,
My dere frende, as I have told thee yore,
That it is follie for to sorowen thus,
And causelesse, for which I can no more:
But who so woll not trowen rede ne lore,
I can not seen in him no remedie,
But let him worchen with his fantasie.

"But, Troilus, I pray thee tell me now,
If that thou trowe er this that any wight,
Hath loved paramours as well as thou,
Ye, God wot, and fro many a worthy knight
Hath his ladie gon a fourtenight,
And he nat yet made halvendele the fare,
What nede is the to maken all this care?

"Sens day by day thou maist thy selven see
That from his love, or eles from his wife
A man mote twinnen of necessitie,
Ye though he love her as his owne life:
Yet nill he with himself thus maken strife,
For well thou wost, my leve brother dere,
That alway frendes may not been ifere.

"How done this foike, that seen hir loves wedded
By frendes might, as it betideth full oft,
And seen hem in hir spouses bedde ibedded?
God wote they take it wisely faire and soft:
For why, good hope halt vp hir herte aloft,
And for they can a time of sorow endure,
As time hem hurteth, a time doth hem cure.

"So shouldest thou endure, and letten slide
The time, and fonde to been glad and light,
Ten dayes nis not so long to abide,
And sens she to comen thee hath behight,
She nill her hest breaken for no wight,
For drede thee not, that she nill finde way
To come ayen, my life that durst I lay.

" Thy sweuenes eke, and all soch fantasie
Drive out, and let hem faren to mischaunce,
For they procede of thy melancolie,
That doth thee fele in slepe all this penaunce:
A straw for all sweuenes signifiaunce,
God helpe me so, I count hem not a bean,
There wot no man aright what dremes mean.

" For priestes of the temple tellen this,
That dreames been the reuelacions
Of Goddes, and als well they tel iwis,
That they been infernalles illusions
And leches saine, that of complections
Proceden they of fast, or glotonie,
Who wot in sothe thus what they signifie?

" Eke other saine, that through impressions,
As if a wight hath fast a thing in mind,
That thereof cometh soche avisions:
And other sain, as they in bokes find,
That after times of the yere by kind,
Men dreme, and that theffect goth by the Mone,
But leve no dreme, for it is nat to done.

" Wel worth of dreames aie these old wives,
And truly eke, augurie of these foules,
For feare of which, men wenen lese hir lives,
As ravens qualm, or schriching of these oules:
To trowen on it, bothe false and foule is,
Alas, alas, that so noble a creature
As is a man, should drede such ordure.

" For which with al mine herte I thee beseche,
Unto thy self, that all this thou foryeve,
And rise now vp, withouten more speche,
And let vs cast how forth may best be driven
The time, and eke how freshly we may liven,
Whan she cometh, the which shall be right sone,
God helpe me so, the best is thus to done.

" Rise, let vs speake of lustie life in Troy
That we have lad, and forth the time drive,
And eke of time coming vs rejoy,
That bringen shall our blisse now to blive,
And langour of these twise daies five
We shall therewith so foryet or oppresse,
That well vneth it done shall vs duresse.

" This toune is full of lordes al about,
And truce lasten all this meane while,
Go we plaien vs in some lustie rout,
To Sarpedon, not hennes but a mile,
And thus thou shalt the time well beguile,
And drive it forth vnto that blisfull morow,
That thou her see, that cause is of thy sorow.

" Now rise, my dere brother Troilus,
For certes it non honour is to thee
To wepe, and in thy bedde to rouken thus,
For truely of o thing trust to me,
If thou thus ligge, a day, two or three,
The folke woll wene, that thou for cowardise,
Thee fainest sick, and that thou darst not rise."

This Troilus answerde: " O brother dere,
This folke know that have isuffred pain,
That though he wepe, and make sorowful chere
That feeleth harme and smart in every vain,
No wonder is; and though I ever plain
Or alway wepe, I am nothing to blame,
Sens that I have lost the cause of all my game,

" But sens of fine force I mote arise,
I shall arise, as sone as ever I may,
And God, to whom mine herte I sacrifice,
So send vs hastely the tenthe day:
For was there never foule so faine of May
As I shall ben, whan that she cometh in Troie,
That cause is of my tourment and my joie.

" But whider is thy rede," (quod Troilus)
" That we may play vs best in all this toun?"
" By God my counsaile is," (quod Pandarus)
" To ride and play vs with king Sarpedoun."
So long of this they speaken vp and doun,
Till Troilus gan at the last assent
To rise, and forth to Sarpedon they went.

This Sarpedon, as he that honourable
Was ever his live, and full of hie prowesse,
With all that might iserved been on table,
That deintie was, all coste it great richesse,
He fedde hem day by day, that such noblesse
As saiden both the most and eke the least,
Was never er that day wiste at any feast.

Nor in this world there is none instrument,
Delicious, through winde, or touche on corde,
As ferre as any wight hath ever iwent,
That tonge tell, or herte may recorde,
But at that feast, it was well heard recorde:
Ne of ladies eke so faire a companie,
On daunce er tho, was never iseen with eye.

But what availeth this to Troilus,
That for his sorrow, nothing of it rought,
But ever in one, as herte pitous,
Full busily Creseide his lady sought:
On her was ever al that his herte thought,
Now this, now that, so fast imagining,
That glad iwis can him no feasting.

These ladies eke, that at this feast been,
Sens that he saw his lady was away,
It was his sorow upon hem for to seen,
Or for to heare on instrumentes play:
For she that of his herte hath the kay,
Was absent, to this was his fantasie
That no wight shulde maken melodie.

Nor there nas houre in al the day or night,
Whan he was ther as no man might him here,
That he ne sayd, " O lovesome lady bright,
How have ye faren sins that ye were there?
Welcome iwis mine owne lady dere.
But welaway, all this nas but a mase,
Fortune his hove entended bet to glase."

The letters eke, that she of olde time
Had him isent, he would alone rede
An hundred sith, atwixt noone and prime,
Refiguring her shape, and her womanhede,
Within his herte, and every worde and dede
That passed was, and thus he drove to an end,
The fourth day, and saied he wol wend.

And said " Leve brother Pandarus,
Intendest thou that we shall here bleve,
Til Sarpedon woll forth conveyen us,
Yet were it fairer that we toke our leve:
For Goddes love, let us now sone at eve
Our leave take, and homeward let us turne,
For trewely I nill nat thus sojourne."

Pandare answerde, "Be we comen hither
To fetchen fire, and rennen home againe?
God helpe me so, I can nat tellen whither
We might gone, if I shall sothly saine:
There any wight is of us more faine
Than Sarpedon, and if we hence hie
Thus sodainly, I hold it vilanie.

"Whan that we saiden we would bleve
With him a weke, and now thus sodainly
The fourth day to take of him our leve,
He would wondren on it trewly:
Let us holden forth our purpose fermely,
And sens that ye behighten him to abide,
Hold forward now, and after let us ride."

This Pandarus, with all pine and wo
Made him to dwell, and at the wekes end,
Of Sarpedon they token hir leave tho,
And on hir way they speden hem to wend:
(Quod Troilus) "Now Lorde me grace send,
That I may find at mine home comming,
Creseide comen," and therwith gan he sing.

"Ye haselwode," thought this Pandare,
And to himselfe ful softly he seide,
"God wotte refroiden may this hotte fare,
Er Calcas sende Troilus Creseide:"
But nathelesse he yaped thus and seide,
And swore iwis, his herte him wel behight,
She wolde come as sone as ever she might.

Whan they unto the paleis were ycomen,
Of Troilus, they doun of horse alight,
And to the chambre hir way have they nomen,
And unto time that it gan to night,
They speken of Creseide the lady bright,
And after this, whan hem bothe lest,
They spede hem fro the supper unto rest.

On morow as sone as day began to clere,
This Troilus gan of his slepe to abreide,
And to Pandarus, his own brother dere,
"For loue of God," full pitously he seide:
"As go we seene the paleis of Creseide,
For sens we yet may have no more feest,
So let us seine her paleis at the leest."

And therewithall his meine for to blende,
A cause he fonde in toune for to go,
And to Creseides house they gan wende,
But Lorde this sely Troilus was wo,
Him thought his sorowful herte brast atwo,
For when he saw her doores sparred all,
Well nigh for sorow adoun he gan to fall.

Therwith whan he was ware, and gan behold
How shet was every window of the place,
As frost him thought his herte gan to cold,
For which with changed deedly pale face,
Withouten worde, he forth by gan to pace,
And as God would, he gan so faste ride,
That no wight of his countenance aspide.

Than said he thus: "O paleis desolate,
O house of houses, whilom best ihight,
O paleis empty and disconsolate,
O thou lanterne, of which queint is the light,
O paleis whilom day, that now art night,
Wel oughtest thou to fall, and I to die,
Sens she is went, that wont was us to gie.

"O pale's whilom crowne of houses all,
Enlumined with Sunne of all blisse,
O ring, of which the rubie is out fall,
O cause of wo, that cause hast ben of blisse:
Yet sens I may no bet, fain would I kisse
Thy colde doores, durst I for this rout,
And farewel shrine of which the saint is out."

Therwith he cast on Pandarus his eie,
With changed face, and pitous to behold,
And whan he might his time aright aspie,
Aie as he rode, to Pandarus he told
His new sorow, and eke his ioyes old.
So petously, and with so deed an hew,
That every wight might on his sorow rew.

Fro thence-forth he rideth vp and doune,
And every thing came him to remembraunce,
As he rode forth by the places of the toune,
In which he whilom had all his pleasaunce:
"Lo, yonder saw I mine owne lady daunce,
And in that temple with her eien clere,
Me caught first my right lady dere.

"And yonder have I herde full lustely
My dere herte laugh, and yonder play
Saw I her ones eke ful blisfully,
And yonder ones to me gan she say
'Now good sweete, love me well I pray,'
And yonde so goodly gan she me behold,
That to the death mine herte is to her hold.

"And at the corner in the yonder house,
Herde I mine alderlevest lady dere,
So womanly, with voice melodiouse,
Singen so wel, so goodly and so clere,
That in my soule yet me thinketh I here
The blisful sowne, and in that yonder place
My lady first me toke vnto her grace."

Than thought he thus, "O blisful lord Cupide,
Whan I the processe have in memory,
How thou me hast wcried on every side,
Men might a booke make of it like a story:
What nede is thee to seeke on me victory,
Sens I am thine, and holly at thy will,
What joy hast thou thine owne folke to spill?

"Wel hast thou, lord, iwroke on me thine ire,
Thou mighty god, and dredful for to greve,
Now mercy, lord, thou wost wel I desire
Thy grace most, of all lustes leve,
And live and die I wol in thy beleve,
For which I ne aske in guerdon but a bone,
That thou Creseide ayen me sende sone.

"Distraine her herte as fast to returne,
As thou doest mine to longen her to see,
Than wote I wel that she nil nat sojourne:
Now blisful lord, so cruel thou ne be
Unto the blood of Troy, I praie thee,
As Juno was vnto the blode Thebane,
For which the folke of Thebes caught hir bane."

And after this he to the yates went,
There as Creseide out rode, a full good paas,
And vp and doun there made he many a went,
And to him selfe ful oft he said, "Alas,
Fro hence rode my blisse and my solas,
As would blisful God now for his joie,
I might her sene ayen come to Troie,

" And to the yonder hil I gan her guide,
Alas, and there I toke of her my leve,
And yonde I saw her to her father ride,
For sorow of which mine herte shal to cleve:
And hither home I come whan it was eve,
And here I dwell, out cast from all joie,
And shal, til I may sene her eft in Troie."

And of him selfe imagined he oft,
To ben defaited, pale, and woxen lesse
Than he was wont, and that men saiden soft,
" What may it be? who can the sothe gesse,
Why Troilus hath al this hevinesse?"
And al this nas but his melancholie,
That he had of him selfe such fantasie.

Another time imagined he would,
That every wight that went by the wey,
Had of him routh, and that they saine should,
" I am right sory, Troilus wol dey:"
And thus he drove a day yet forth or twey,
As ye have herde, such life gan he lede,
As he that stode betwixen hope and drede.

For which him liked in his songes shewe
Thencheson of his wo, as he best might,
And made a songe, of wordes but a fewe,
Somwhat his wofull herte for to light:
And whan he was from every mannes sight,
With softe voice, he of his lady dere,
That absent was, gan sing as ye may here.

" O sterre, of which I lost have all the light,
With herte sore, wel ought I to bewaile,
That ever derke in turment, night by night
Toward my deth, with winde I stere and saile:
For which the tenth night, if that I faile,
The guiding of thy bemes bright an houre,
My ship and me Caribdes woll devoure."

This song whan he thus songen had sone,
He fel ayen into his sighes old,
And every night, as was he wont to done,
He stode the bright Moone to behold:
And al his sorow he to the Moone told,
And said, " Iwis whan thou art horned new,
I shal be glad, if al the world be trew.

" I saw thine hornes old eke by that morow,
Whan hence rode my right lady dere,
That cause is of my turment and my sorow,
For whiche, O bright Lucina the clere,
For love of God ren fast about thy sphere,
For whan thine hornes newe ginnen spring,
Than shall she come that may my blisse bring."

The day is more, and lenger every night
Than they ben wont to be, him thought tho,
And that the Sunne went his course vnright,
By lenger way than it was wont to go,
And said, " Iwis, I drede me evermo
The Sunnes sonne Pheton be on live,
And that his fathers cart amisse he drive."

Upon the walles fast eke would he walke,
And on the Greekes host he would see,
And to himselfe right thus he would talke:
" Lo, yonder is mine owne lady free,
Or else yonder, there the tents bee,
And thence commeth this aire that is so soote,
That in my soule I fele it doth me boote.

" And hardily, this wind that more and more
Thus stoundmeale encreaseth in my face,
Is of my ladies deepe sighes sore,
I preve it thus, for in none other space
Of all this toune, save only in this place,
Feele I no wind, that souneth so like paine,
It saith, " Alas, why twined be we twaine."

This longe time he driveth forth right thus,
Till fully passed was the ninthe night,
And aye beside him was this Pandarus,
That busily did all his full might
Him to comfort, and make his herte light,
Yeving him hope alway the tenth morow,
That she shal comen, and stinten all his sorow.

Upon that other side eke was Creseide
With women few among the Grekes strong,
For which full oft a day, " Alas" she seide
" That I was borne, well may mine herte long
After my death, for now live I too long
Alas, and I ne may it not amend,
For now is worse than ever yet I wend.

" My father nill for nothing doe me grace
To gone ayen, for aught I can him queme,
And if so be that I my terme pace,
My Troilus shall in his herte deme
That I am false, and so it may well seme,
Thus shall I have vnthonke on every side,
That I was borne so welaway the tide.

" And if that I me put in jeopardie,
To steale away by night, and it befall
That I be caught, I shall be hold aspie,
Or else lo, this drede I most of all,
If in the honds of some wretch I fall,
I nam but lost, all be mine herte trew:
Now mightie God, thou on my sorow rew."

Full pale iwoxen was her bright face,
Her limmes leane, as she that all the day
Stode whan she durst, and loked on the place
There she was borne, and dwelt had aye,
And all the night weeping alas she lay,
And thus dispeired out of all cure
She lad her life, this wofull creature.

Full oft a day she sighed eke for distresse,
And in her selfe she went aye purtraying
Of Troilus the great worthinesse,
And all his goodly wordes recording,
Sens first that day her love began to spring,
And thus she set her wofull herte afire,
Through remembrance of that she gan desire.

In all this world there nis so cruell herte,
That her had heard complainen in her sorow,
That nold have wepten for her paines smart,
So tenderly she wept, both eve and morow,
Her needed no teares, for to borow,
And this was yet the worst of all her paine,
Ther was no wight, to whom she durste plain.

Full rewfully she looked vpon Troy,
Beheld the toures high, and eke the hallis,
" Alas," (quod she) " the pleasaunce and the joy,
The which that now all turned into gall is,
Have I had ofte within yonder wallis.
O Troilus, what doest thou now?" she seide,
" Lord, whether thou yet thinke vpon Creseide,

" Alas that I ne had itrowed on your lore,
And went with you, as ye me redde ere this,
Than had I now not sighed halfe so sore:
Who might have said, that I had done amis
To steale away with such one as he is?
But all too late commeth the lectuarie,
Whan men the corse vnto the graue carie.

" Too late is now to speke of that matere,
Prudence, alas, one of thine eyen three
Me lacked alway, ere that I came here:
For on time passed well remembred mee,
And present time eke could I well see,
But future time, ere I was in the snare,
Could I not seene, that causeth now my care.

" But nathelesse, betide what betide,
I shall to morow at night, by east or west,
Out of this hoast steale, on some side,
And gone with Troilus, where as him lest,
This purpose woll I hold, and this is the best,
No force of wicked tongues ionglerie,
For ever on love have wretches had envie.

" For who so woll of every word take hede,
Or rule hem by every wightes wit,
Ne shall he never thriven out of drede,
For that that some men blamen ever yet,
Lo, other manner folke commenden it,
And as for me, for all such variaunce,
Felicitie clepe I my suffisaunce.

" For which, withouten any wordes mo,
To Troy I woll, as for conclusioun."
But God it wote, ere fully moneths two,
She was full ferre fro that ententioun,
For bothe Troilus and Troie toun
Shall knotlesse throughout her herte slide,
For she woll take a purpose for to abide.

This Diomede, of whom I you tell gan,
Goth now within himselfe aye arguing,
With all the sleight and all that ever he can,
How he may best with shortest tarying,
Into his nette Creseides herte bring,
To this entent he couthe never fine,
To fisher her, he laid out hooke and line.

But nathelesse, woll in his herte he thought,
That she nas nat without a love in Troy,
For never sithen he her thence brought,
Ne couth he seene her laugh, or maken joy,
He nist how best her herte for tacoie,
But for tassey, he said nought it ne greveth,
For he that naught assaieth, naught atcheveth.

Yet saied he to himselfe vpon a night,
" Now am I nat a foole, that wote well how
Her wo is, for love of another wight,
And hereupon to gone assay her now,
I may well wete, it nill nat ben my prow,
For wise folke in bookes it expresse,
Men shall nat wowe a wight in hevinesse.

" But who so might winnen such a floure
Fro him, for whom she mourneth night and day,
He might saine he were a conquerour:
And right anone, as he that bold was aye,
Thought in his herte, hap how hap may,
All should I dye, I woll her herte seech,
I shall no more lesen but my speech."

This Diomede, as bookes us declare,
Was in his nedes prest and courageous,
With sterne voice, and mighty limmes square,
Hardy, testife, strong, and chevalrous
Of deedes like his father Tideus,
And some men saine he was of tonge large,
And heire he was of Calcidony and Arge.

Creseide meane was of her stature,
Thereto of shape, of face, and eke of chere,
There might ben no fairer creature,
And ofte time this was her manere,
To gone itressed with her haires clere
Downe by her colere, at her backe behind,
Which with a threde of gold she would bind.

And save her browes joyneden ifere,
There nas no lacke, in aught I can espien,
But for to speaken of her eyen clere,
Lo, truely they written that her seien,
That Paradis stood formed in her eien,
And with her riche beauty evermore
Strove love in her, aie which of hem was more.

She sobre was, eke simple, and wise withall,
The best inorished eke that might bee,
And goodly of her speech in generall,
Charitable, estately, lusty, and free,
Ne nevermore, ne lacked her pitee,
Tender hearted, sliding of corage,
But truely I cannat tell her age.

And Troilus well woxen was in hight,
And complete formed by proportioun,
So well that kind it naught amenden might,
Young, fresh, strong, and hardy as lioun,
Trew as steele, in ech condition,
One of the best enteched creature,
That is or shall, while that the world may dure.

And certainely, in story as it is fond,
That Troilus was never unto no wight
As in his time, in no degree second,
In daring do that longeth to a knight,
All might a giaunt passen him of might,
His herte aye with the first and with the best,
Stood peregall to dare done what him lest.

But for to tellen forth of Diomede,
It fill, that after on the tenthe day,
Sens that Creseide out of the city yede,
This Diomede, as fresh as braunch in May,
Came to the tente there as Calcas lay,
And fained him with Calcas have to done,
But what he ment, I shall you tellen sone.

Creseide at shorte wordes for to tell,
Welcommed him, and downe him by her sette,
And he was ethe ynough to maken dwell,
And after this, withouten longe lette,
The spices and the wine men forth hem fette,
And forth they spoke of this and that ifere,
As friendes done, of which some shall ye here.

He gan first fallen of the warre in speech
Betwixen hem and the folke of Troy toun,
And of thassiege he gan eke her beseech,
To tellen him what was her opinioun:
Fro that demaund he so discendeth doun,
To asken her, if that her straunge thought
The Greekes gise, and werkes that they wrought?

And why her father tarieth so long
To wedden her unto some worthy wight?
Creseide that was in her paines strong,
For love of Troilus her owne knight,
So ferforth as she cunning had or might,
Answerde him tho, but as of his entent,
It seemed nat she wiste what he ment.

But nathelesse, this ilke Diomede
Gan on himselfe assure, and thus he seide:
"If I aright have taken on you hede,
Methinketh thus, O lady mine Creseide,
That sens I first hond on your bridle leide,
Whan I out came of Troy by the morrow,
Ne might I never seene you but in sorrow.

"I can nat saine what may the cause be,
But if for love of some Trojan it were,
The which right sore would a thinken me,
That ye for any wight that dwelleth there,
Shoulden spill a quarter of a tere,
Or pitously your selven so begile,
For dredelesse it is nat worth the while.

"The folke of Troy, as who saith all and some,
In prison ben, as ye your selven see,
Fro thence shall nat one on live come,
For all the gold atwixen sunne and see,
Trusteth well, and understondeth mee,
There shall nat one to mercy gone on live,
All were he lord of worldes twise five.

"Such wrech on hem for fetching of Heleine
There shall be take, ere that we hence wend,
That Maunes, which that goddes ben of peine,
Shall ben agast that Grekes wol hem shend,
And men shall drede unto the worldes end
From henceforth to ravishen any queene,
So cruell shall our wreche on hem be seene.

"And but if Calcas lede us with ambages,
That is to saine, with double wordes slie,
Such as men clepen a word with two visages,
Ye shall well knowen that I nat ne lie,
And all this thing right sene it with your eie,
And that anon, ye nill nat trow how soone,
Now taketh hede, for it is for to doone.

"What wene ye your wise father would
Have yeven Antenor for you anone,
If he ne wiste that the city should
Destroied ben? why nay so mote I gone,
He knew full well there shall nat scapen one
That Troian is, and for the greate fere
He durste nat that ye dwelt lenger there.

"What woll ye more, O lovesome lady dere,
Let Troy and Troians fro your herte passe,
Drive out that bitter hope, and make good chere,
And clepe ayen the beautie of your face,
That ye with salte teares so deface,
For Troy is brought in such a ieopardie,
That it to save is now no remedie.

"And thinketh well, ye shall in Grekes find
A more perfite love, ere it be night,
Than any Troian is, and more kind,
And bet to serven you woll done his might,
And if ye vouchsafe my lady bright,
I woll ben he, to serven you my selve,
Ye lever than be lord of Greces twelve."

And with that word he gan to waxen reed,
And in his speech a little whilé he quoke,
And cast aside a little with his heed,
And stint a while, and afterward he woke,
And soberly on her he threw his loke,
And said, "I am, albeit to you no joy,
As gentill a man as any wight in Troy.

"For if my father Tideus" (he seide)
"Ilived had, I had been ere this,
Of Calcidonie and Arge a king, Creseide,
And so hope I that I shall be iwis:
But he was slaine alas, the more harme is,
Unhappily at Thebes all to rathe,
Polimite, and many a man to scathe.

"But herte mine, sithe that I am your man,
And ben the first, of whom I seche grace,
To serve you as heartely as I can,
And ever shall, while I to livé have space,
So that, ere I depart out of this place,
Ye woll me graunte, that I may to morow
At better laiser tell you of my sorow."

What shuld I tell his wordes that he seide?
He spake ynough for o day at the mest
It preveth well he spake so, that Creseide
Graunted on the morrow at his request
For to speake with him at the leest,
So that he nolde speaké of such matere,
And thus she to him said, as ye mowe here.

As she that had her herte on Troilus
So fast, that there may it none arace,
And straungely she spake, and saied thus:
"O Diomede, I love that ilke place
There was I borne, and Joves of thy grace
Deliver it soone of all that doth it care,
God for thy might so leve it well to fare.

"That Grekes wold hir wrath on Troie wreke
If that they might, I know it well iwis,
But it shall naught befallen as ye speke,
And God toforne, and farther over this,
I wote my father wise and ready is,
And that he me hath bought, as ye me told,
So dere am I the more vnto him hold.

"That Grekes ben of high conditioun,
I wote eke well, but certaine men shall find
As worthie folke within Troie toun,
As conning, as perfite, and as kinde,
As ben betwixte Orcades and Inde,
And that ye coulde well your lady serve
I trow eke well, her thonke for to deserve.

"But as to speake of love, iwis" (she seide)
"I had a lord, to whom I wedded was,
His whose mine herte was all till he deide,
And other love, as helpe me now Pallas,
There in mine herte nis, ne never was,
And that ye ben of noble and high kinrede,
I have well herde it tellen out of drede.

"And that doth me to have so great a wonder,
That ye woll scornen any woman so,
Eke God wote, love and I ben fer asonder,
I am disposed bet, so mote I go,
Unto my death plaine and make wo;
What I shall after done, I can not say,
But truely as yet me list nat play.

" Mine herte is now in tribulatioun,
And ye in armes busie day by day,
Hereafter whan ye wonen have the toun,
Paraventure than, so it happen may,
That whan I see that I never ere sey,
Than woll I werke that I never ere wrought,
This word to you ynough suffisen ought.

" To morow eke wol I speken with you faine,
So that ye touchen naught of this matere,
And whan you list, ye may come here againe,
And ere ye gone, thus much I say you here,
As helpe me Pallas, with her haires clere,
If that I should of any Greeke have routh,
It shulde be your selven by my trouth.

" I say nat therefore that I woll you love,
Ne say nat nay, but in conclusioun,
I meane well by God that sit above:"
And therewithall she cast her eien doun,
And gan to sigh, and said, "Troilus and Troy toun
Yet bidde I God, in quiet and in rest
I may you seene, or do mine herte brest."

But in effect, and shortly for to say,
This Diomede all freshly new againe
Gan preasen on, and fast her mercy pray,
And after this, the soothe for to saine,
Her gloue he toke, of which he was full faine,
And finally, whan it was woxen eve,
And all was well, he rose and tooke his leve.

The bright Venus folowed and aie taught
The way there brode Phebus doune alight,
And Cithera her chare horse over raught,
To whirle out of the Lion, if she might,
And Signifer his candles sheweth bright,
Whan that Creseide vnto her bed went,
Within her fathers faire bright tent.

Retourning in her soule aye vp and doun
The wordes of this suddaine Diomede,
His great estate, and perill of the toun,
And that she was alone, and had nede
Of friendes help, and thus began to brede
The cause why, the soothe for to tell,
She tooke fully purpose for to dwell.

The morow came, and ghostly for to speke,
This Diomede is come vnto Creseide,
And shortly, least that ye my tale breke,
So well he for himselfe spake and seide,
That all her sighes sore doune he leide,
And finally, the soothe for to saine,
He refte her the great of all her paine.

And after this, the story telleth vs,
That she him yave the faire bay stede,
The which she ones wan of Troilus,
And eke a brooch (and that was litle nede)
That Troilus was, she yave this Diomede,
And eke the bet from sorow him to releve,
She made him weare a peneell of her sleve.

I find eke in stories elsewhere,
Whan through the body hurt was Diomede
Of Troilus, tho wept she many a tere,
Whan that she saw his wide woundes blede,
And that she tooke to kepen him good hede,
And for to healen him of his smart,
Men saine, I not, that she yave him her herte.

But truely the storie telleth vs,
There made never woman more wo
Than she, whan that she falsed Troilus,
She said " Alas, for now is clene ago
My name in trouth of love for evermo,
For I have falsed one the gentillest
That ever was, and one the worthiest.

" Alas, of me vnto the worldes end
Shall neither ben iwritten or isong
No good worde, for these bokes woll me shend:
Itrolled shall I been on many a tong,
Throughout the world my bell shall be rong,
And women most woll hate me of all,
Alas, that such a cass me should fall.

" They woll saine, in as much as in me is,
I have hem done dishonour welaway,
All be I not the first that did amis,
What helpeth that, to done my blame away,
But sens I see there is no better way,
And that too late is now for me to rue,
To Diomede I woll algate be true.

" But, Troilus, sens I no better may,
And sens that thus departen ye and I,
Yet pray I God so yeve you right good day,
As for the gentillest knight truely
That ever I saw, to serven faithfully,
And best can aye his ladies honour kepe,"
And with that word she brast anon to wepe.

" And certes, you ne haten shall I never,
And friendes love, that shall ye have of me,
And my good word, all should I liven ever,
And truely I would right sorrie be,
For to seene you in adversite,
And guiltlesse I wot well I you leave,
And all shall passe, and thus take I my leave."

But truely how long it was bitwene,
That she forsoke him for this Diomede,
There is none authour telleth it I wene,
Take every man now to his bookes hede,
He shall no terme finden, out of drede,
For though that he began to wowe her sone,
Ere he her wan, yet was there more to done.

Ne me ne list this sillie woman chide
Ferther than the storie woll devise,
Her name alas is published so wide,
That for her gilt it ought ynough suffise,
And if I might excuse her in any wise,
For she so sorrie was for her vntrouth,
Iwis I would excuse her yet for routh.

This Troilus, as I before have told,
Thus driveth forth, as wel as he hath might,
But ofte was his herte hote and cold,
And namely that ilke ninthe night,
Which on the morrow she had him behight
To come ayen, God wote full little rest
Had he that night, nothing to slepe him lest.

The laurer crowned Phebus, with his heat
Gan in his course aie vpward as he went,
To warmen of the east sea the waves wete,
And Circes doughter song, with fresh entent,
Whan Troilus his Pandare after sent,
And on the walles of the towne they pleide,
To looke, if they can seene ought of Creseide.

Till it was noone, they stooden for to see
Who that there came, and every maner wight
That came fro ferre, they saiden it was shee,
Till that they coulden knowen him aright:
Now was his herte dull, now was it light,
And thus beyaped stooden for to stare
About naught, this Troilus and Pandare.

To Pandarus this Troilus tho seide
" For aught I wot, before noone sikerly,
Into this toune ne cometh not here Creseide,
She hath ynough to doen hardely
To winnen from her father, so trow I,
Her olde father woll yet make her dine
Ere that she go, God yeve his herte pine."

Pandarus answerd, " It may well been certain
And forthy let vs dine. I thee beseech,
And after noone than maist thou come again:"
And home they go, without more speech,
And comen ayen, but long may they seech,
Ere that they finde that they after gape,
Fortune hem bothe thinketh for to yape.

(Quod Troilus) " I see well now that she
Is taried with her old father so,
That ere she come, it woll nigh even be.
Come forth, I woll vnto the yate go,
These porters ben vnkonning evermo,
And I woll done hem holden vp the yate,
As naught ne were, although she come late."

The day goth fast, and after that came eve,
And yet came nat to Troilus Creseide,
He looketh forth by hedge, by tree, by greve,
And ferre his head over the wall he leide,
And at the last he tourned him, and seide,
" By God I wote her meaning now Pandare,
Almost iwis all newe was my care.

" Now doubtlesse this lady can her good,
I wote she commeth riding prively,
I commend her wisedome by mine hood,
She woll nat maken people nicely
Gaure on her whan she commeth, but softely
By night into the toune she thinketh ride,
And, dere brother, thinke nat long to abide,

" We have naught else for to done iwis,
And Pandarus, now wilt thou trowen me,
Have here my trouth, I see her, yond she is,
Heave up thine eyen man, mayst thou nat see?"
Pandare answerde, " Nay, so mote I thee,
Al wrong by God, what saist thou man, wher art,
That I see yonde afarre, nis but a cart."

" Alas thou sayst right sooth," (quod Troilus)
" But hardely it is not all for nought,
That in mine herte I now rejoyce thus,
It is ayenst some good, I have a thought,
Not I nat how, but sens that I was wrought,
Ne felt I sueh a comfort dare I say,
She cometh to night, my life that durst I lay."

Pandarus answerde, " It may be well inough,"
And held with him of all that ever he saied,
But in his herte he thought, and soft he lough,
And to himselfe full soberly he saied,
" From hasell wood, there jolly Robin plaied,
Shall come all that thou abidest here,
Ye, farwell all the snow of ferne yere."

The wardein of the yates gan to call
The folk, which that without the yates were,
And bad hem driven in hir beastes all,
Or all the night they must bleven there,
And ferre within the night, with many a tere,
This Troilus gan homeward for to ride,
For well he seeth it helpeth nat to abide.

But nathelesse, he gladded him in this,
He thought he misacompted had his day,
And saied, " I understand have all amis,
For thilke night I last Creseide sey,
She sayd, ' I shall ben here, if that I may,
Ere that the Moone, O dere herte swete,
The Lion passe out of this Ariete.'

" For which she may yet hold all her behest,"
And on the morrow unto the yate he went,
And up and doune, by west and eke by east
Upon the walles made he many a went,
But all for naught, his hope alway him blent,
For which at night, in sorow and sighe sore,
He went him home, withouten any more.

This hope all cleane out of his herte fled,
He ne hath whereon now lenger for to hong,
But for the paine him thought his herte bled,
So were his throwes sharp, and wonder strong,
For whan he saw that she abode so long,
He nist what he judgen of it might,
Sens she hath broken that she him behight.

The thirde, fourth, fifte, and sixt day
After tho dayes tenne, of which I told,
Betwixen hope and drede his herte lay,
Yet somewhat trusting on her hestes old,
But whan he saw she nolde her terme hold,
He can now seene none other remedie,
But for to shape him soone for to die.

Therwith the wicked spirit, God us blesse,
Which that men clepen woode jealousie,
Gan in him crepe, in all this hevinesse,
For which because he would soone die,
He ne eat ne dronke for his melancholie,
And eke from every company he fled,
This was the life that all this time he led.

He so defaite was, that no manner man,
Unneth he might knowen there he went,
So was he leane, and thereto pale and wan,
And feeble, that he walketh by potent,
And with his ire he thus himselfe shent:
But who so asked him whereof him smart,
He sayd, his harme was all about his herte.

Priam full oft, and eke his mother dere,
His bretherne and his sustren gan him frain
Why he so sorrowfull was in all his chere,
And what thing was the cause of all his pain?
But all for naught, he nolde his cause plain,
But sayd, he felt a grievous maladie
About his herte, and faine he would die.

So on a day he laid him down to slepe,
And so befell, that in slepe him thought,
That in a forrest fast he walked to wepe
For love of her that him these paines wrought,
And up and doune as he that forrest sought,
He met he saw a bore, with tuskes great,
That slept ayenst the bright Sunnes heat.

And by this bore, fast in her armes fold
Lay kissing aye his lady bright Creseide,
For sorrow of which, whan he it gan behold,
And for dispite, out of his slepe he breide,
And loude he cried on Pandarus, and seide,
"O Pandarus, now know I crop and root,
I nam but dead, there nis none other boot.

"My lady bright Creseide hath me betraied,
In whom I trusted most of any wight,
She elsewhere hath now her herte apaied,
The blisfull goddes, through hir greate might,
Have in my dreame ishewed it full right,
Thus in my dreame Creseide have I behold,"
And all this thing to Pandarus he told.

"O my Creseide, alas, what subtelte?
What newe lust? what beauty? what science?
What wrath of juste cause have ye to me?
What guilt of me? what fell experience
Hath me rafte alas thine advertence?
O trust, O faith, O depe assuraunce,
Who hath me raft Creseide, all my pleasaunce?

"Alas, why let I you from hence go?
For which well nigh out of my wit I breide;
Who shall now trow on any othes mo?
God wote I wend, O lady bright Creseide,
That every word was gospell that ye seide,
But who may bet beguile, if him list,
Than he on whom men wenen best to trist?

"What shall I done, my Pandarus, alas?
I fele now so sharpe a newe paine,
Sens that there is no remedy in this caas,
That bet were it I with mine hondes twaine
My selven slow than alway thus to plaine,
For throgh the death my wo shuld have an end,
There every day with life my self I shend."

Pandare answerde and said, "Alas the while
That I was borne, have I nat saied er this,
That dreames many a manner man beguile?
And why? For folke expounden hem amis:
How darest thou saine that false thy lady is,
For any dreame, right for thine own drede,
Let be this thoght, thou canst no dreames rede.

"Peraventure there thou dremest of this bore,
It may so be that it may signifie
Her father, which that old is and eke hore,
Ayen the sunne lieth on point to die,
And she for sorow ginneth wepe and crie,
And kisseth him, there he lieth on the ground,
Thus shuldest thou thy dreme aright expound."

"How might I then doen" (quod Troilus)
"To know of this, yea were never so lite?"
"Now sayst thou wisely" (quod this Pandarus)
"My rede is this, sens thou canst well endite,
That hastily a letter thou her write,
Through which thou shalt well bringen about
To know a sooth of that thou art in dout.

"And see now why: for this dare I well sain,
That if so is, that she untrue be,
I cannot trowen that she woll write again,
And if she write, thou shalt full sone isee,
As whether she hath any liberte
To come ayen, or els in some clause
If she be let, she woll assigne a cause.

"Thou hast not written to her sens she went,
Nor she to thee, and this I durst lay,
There may such cause ben in her entent,
That hardly thou wolt thy selven say,
That her abode the best is for you tway:
Now write her than, and thou shalt fele sone
A sooth of all, there is no more to done."

Accorded ben to this conclusioun,
And that anon, these ilke lords two,
And hastely sate Troilus adoun,
And rolleth in his herte too and fro,
How he may best descriven her his wo,
And to Creseide his owne lady dere,
He wrote right thus, and said as ye may here.

THE COPY OF THE LETTER.

"Right fresh flour, whose I have ben and shall,
Withouten part of elsewhere servise,
With herte, body, life, lust, thought, and all,
I wofull wight in every humble wise
That tong can tell, or herte may devise,
As oft as matter occupieth place,
Me recommaund unto your noble grace.

"Liketh it you to weten, sweete herte,
As ye well know, how long time agon
That ye me left in aspre paines smart,
Whan that ye went, of which yet bote non
Have I non had, but ever worse bigon,
Fro day to day am I, and so mote dwell,
While it you list, of wele and wo my well.

"For which to you, with dredefull herte trew,
I write (as he that sorow driveth to write)
My wo, that every houre encreaseth new,
Complaining as I dare, or can endite,
And that defaced is, that may ye wite,
The teares, which that from mine eyen rain,
That wulden speke, if that they durst, and plain.

"You first beseech I, that your eyen clere
To looke on this defouled ye nat hold:
And over all this, that ye, my lady dere,
Woll vouchsafe this letter to behold,
And by the cause eke of my cares cold,
That slaeth my wit, if aught amis me start,
Foryeve it me, mine owne sweet herte.

"If any seruaunt durst or ought of right
Upon his lady pitously complaine,
Than wene I that I ought be that wight,
Considred this, that ye these moneths twaine
Have taried, there ye saiden sooth to saine,
But tenne daies ye nolde in hoste soiourne,
But in two moneths yet ye not retourne.

"But for as much as me mote nedes like
All that you list, I dare nat plaine more,
But humbly, with sorowfull sighes sike,
You right I mine vnrestie sorowes sore,
Fro day to day, desiring evermore
To knowen fully, if your will it were,
How ye have fared and don while ye be there.

" Whose welfare and heale eke God encreasc
In honour such, that upward in degree
It grow alway, so that it never cease,
Right as your herte aye can, my lady free,
Devise, I pray to God so mote it be,
And graunt it, that you soone vpon me rew,
As wisely as in all I am to you trew.

" And if you liketh knowen of the fare
Of me, whose wo ther may no wight discrive,
I can no more, but chest of every care,
At writing of this letter I was on live,
All redy out my wofull ghost to drive,
Which I delay, and hold him yet in hond,
Upon the sight of matter of your sond.

" Mine eyen two, in vaine with which I see,
Of sorowfull teres salt arne woxen wellis,
My song in plaint of mine adversite,
My good in harm, mine ease eke woxen Hell is,
My joy in wo, I can sey now nought ellis,
But tourned is, for which my life I warie,
Every joy or ease in his contrarie.

" Which with you coming home ayen to Troy
Ye may redresse, and more a thousand sithe,
Than ever I had encreasen in me joy,
For was there never herte yet so blithe
To save his life, as I shall ben as swithe
As I you see, and though no manner routh
Can meuen you, yet thinketh on your trouth.

" And if so be my gilt hath death deserved,
Or if you list no more vpon me see,
In guerdon yet of that I have you served,
Beseech I you, mine owne lady free,
That hereupon ye woulden write me
For love of God, my right lodesterre,
That death may make an end of al my werre.

" If other cause aught doth you for to dwell,
That with your letter ye may me recomfort,
For though to me your absence is an Hell,
With patience I woll my wo comfort,
And with your letter of hope I woll disport:
Now writeth, swete, and let me thus nat plaine,
With hope or deathe delivereth me fro paine.

" Iwis, mine owne dere herte trew,
I wote that whan ye next vpon me see,
So lost have I mine heale and eke mine hew,
Creseide shall not conne knowen me,
Iwis, mine hertes day, my lady free,
So thursteth aye mine herte to behold
Your beautie, that vnneth my life I hold.

" I say no more, all have I for to sey
To you well more than I tell may,
But whether that ye do me live or dey,
Yet pray I God so yeve you right good day,
And fareth well, goodly faire fresh May,
As ye that life or death me may commaund,
And to your trouth aye I me recommaund.

" With heale such, that but ye yeven me
The same heale, I shall none heale have,
In you lieth, whan you list that it so be,
The day in which me clothen shall my grave,
And in you my life, in you might for to save
Me fro disease of all my paines smart,
And fare now well, mine owne sweet herte.

" La voster T."

This letter forth was sent vnto Creseide,
Of which her answere in effect was this,
Full pitously she wrote ayen, and seide,
That all so soone as she might iwis,
She would come, and amend all that was amis,
And finally, she wrote and saied than,
She would come, ye, but she nist whan.

But in her letter made she such feasts,
That wonder was, and swore she loved him best,
Of which he found but bottomlesse bihests.
But Troilus thou mayst now east and west
Pipe in an iuie leafe, if that thee lest;
Thus goth the world, God shild vs fro mischaunce,
And every wight that meaneth trouth avaunce.

Encreasen gan the wo fro day to night
Of Troilus, for tarying of Creseide,
And lessen gan his hope and eke his might,
For which all doun he in his bedde him leide,
He ne eat, dronke, ne slept, ne worde seide,
Imagining aye that she was vnkind,
For which wel nigh he wext out of his mind.

This dreme, of which I told have eke beforne,
May never come out of his remembraunce,
He thought aye well he had his lady lorne,
And that Ioves, of his purveyaunce,
Him shewed had in sleepe the signifiaunce
Of her vntrouth, and his disaventure,
And that the bore was shewed him in figure.

For which he for Sibilie his suster sent,
That called was Cassandre eke all about,
And all his dreame he told her ere he stent,
And her besought assoilen him the dout
Of the strong bore, with tuskes stout,
And finally, within a little stound,
Cassandre him gan thus his dreme expound.

She gan first smile, and said, " O brother dere,
If thou a seoth of this desirest to know,
Thou must a fewe of old stories here,
To purpose how that fortune overthrow
Hath lordes old, through which within a throw
Thou shalt this bore know, and of what kind
He comen is, as men in bookes find.

" Diane, which that wroth was and in ire,
For Greekes nolde done her sacrifice,
Ne incens vpon her altar set on fire,
She for that Greekes gon her so dispise,
Wrake her in a wonder cruell wise,
For with a bore as great as exe in stall.
She made vp frete her corne and vines all.

" To slea the bore was all the country raised,
Emong whiche there came this bore to se
A maid, one of this world the best ipraised,
And Meleager, lord of that countre:
He loved so this freshe maiden free,
That with his manhood, ere he would stent,
This bore he slough, and her the hed he sent.

" Of whiche, as old bookes tellen vs,
There rose a conteke and a great envie,
And of this lord discended Tideus
By line, or els old bookes lie:
But how this Meleager gan to die
Through his mother, woll I you not tell,
For all too long it were for to dwell."

She told eke how Tideus, ere she stent,
Unto the strong citie of Thebes
(To claimen kingdome of the citie) went
For his fellawe dan Polimites,
Of which the brother dan Ethiocles
Full wrongfully of Thebes held the strength.
This told she by processe all by length.

She told eke how Hemonides astart,
Whan Tideus slough fiftie knightes stout,
She told eke all the prophesies by herte,
And how that seven kinges with hir rout
Besiegeden the citie all about,
And of the holy serpent, and the well,
And of the furies all she gan him tell.

Associat profugus Tideus primo Polynicem,
Tidea ligatum docet insidiasque secundo,
Tertius Hæmoniden canit, et vatem latitantem,
Quartus habet reges ineuntes prælia septem,
Lemniadum furiæ quinto narrantur et anguis,
Archemori bustum sexto ludique seguuntur.
Dat Thebis vatem Graiorum septimus umbris,
Octavo cecidit Tideus, spes, vita Pelasgum,
Hippomedon nono moritur cum Parthenopeo,
Fulmine percussus decimo Capeneus superatur,
Undecimo perimunt sese per vulnera fratres,
Argivum flentem, narrat duodenus et ignem.

Of Archinories burying, and the plaies,
And how Amphiorar fill through the ground,
How Tideus was slaine, lord of Argeis,
And how Hippomedon in a little stound
Was dreint, and dead Parthenope of wound,
And also how Campaneus the proud
With thunder dint was slaine, that cried loud.

She gan eke tell him how that either brother
Ethiocles and Poliniees also
At a scarmishe eche of hem slouth other,
And of Argiues weeping and her mo,
And how the toun was brent she told eke tho,
And tho discended doun from iestes old
To Diomede, and thus she spake and told.

"This ilke bore betokeneth Diomede,
Tideus son, that doun descended is
Fro Meleager, that made the bore to blede,
And thy lady, where so she be iwis,
This Diomede her herte hath, and she is his:
Weep if thou wolt, or leave, for out of dout
This Diomede is in, and thou art out."

"Thou saydst not sooth," (quod he) "thou sorceresse,
With all thy false ghost of prophecie,
Thou wenest been a great devineresse,
Now seest thou nat this foole of fantasie,
Painen her on ladies for to lie,
Away," (quod he) "there Joves yeve the sorow,
That shalt be fals peraventure yet to morow.

"As well thou mightest lien on good Alceste,
That was of creatures (but men lie)
That ever weren, kindest, and the best,
For whan her husbond was in ieopardie
To die himselfe, but if she would die,
She chese for him to die, and gon to Hell,
And starfe anon, as us the bookes tell."

Cassandre goeth, and he with cruell herte
Foryate his wo, for anger of his speech,
And fro his bedde all suddainly he start,
As though a hole him had I made a leech,
And day by day he gan require and seech
A sooth of this, with all his full cure,
And thus he driveth forth his aventure.

Fortune which that permutation
Of all things hath, as it is her committed,
Through purveyaunce and disposition
Of high Jove, as reignes shall ben flitted
Fro folk to folk, or whan they shal ben smitted,
Gan pull away the feathers bright of Troy
Fro day to day till they ben bare of joy.

Emong all this, the fine of the ieopardie
Of Hector gan approchen wonder blive,
The fate would his soule should vnbodie,
And shapen had a meane it out to drive,
Ayenst which fate him helpeth not to strive,
But on a day to fighten gan he wend,
At which alas, he caught his lives end.

For which me thinketh every manner wight
That haunteth armes, ought to bewaile
The death of him that was so noble a knight
For as he drough a king by thauentaile
Unware of this, Achilles through the maile
And through the bodie gan him for to rive,
And thus the worthy knight was reft of live.

For whom, as old bookes tellen us,
Was made such wo, that tong it may nat tell,
And namely, the sorow of Troilus,
That next him was of worthinesse the well,
And in this wo gan Troilus to dwell,
That what for sorow, love, and for unrest,
Full oft a day he bad his herte brest.

But nathelesse, tho he gon him dispaire,
And drede aye that his lady was untrue,
Yet aye on her his herte gan repaire,
And as these lovers done, he sought aye new
To get ayen Creseide bright of hew,
And in his herte he went her excusing,
That Calcas caused all her tarying.

And oft time he was in purpose great,
Himselven like a pilgrime to disguise,
To seene her, but he may not counterfeat,
To ben unknowen of folke that weren wise,
Ne find excuse aright that may suffise,
If he among the Grekes knowen were,
For which he wept full oft many a tere.

To her he wrote yet oft time all new,
Full pitously, he left it nat for slouth,
Beseeching her, sens that he was true,
That she wol come ayen, and hold her trouth,
For which Creseide upon a day for routh,
I take it so, touching all this matere,
Wrote him ayen, and said as ye may here.

"Cupides sonne, ensample of goodlihede,
O swerde of knighthood, sours of gentilnesse,
How might a wight in turment and in drede,
And healelesse, you send as yet gladnesse,
I herteless, I sicke, I in distresse,
Sens ye with me, nor I with you may deale,
You neither send I herte may nor heale.

" Your letters full the paper all iplainted,
Conceived hath mine hertes pite;
I have eke seene with teares all depainted,
Your letter, and how that ye requiren me
To come ayen, which yet ne may not be,
But why, least that this letter founden were,
No mention ne make I now for fere.

" Grevous to me (God wote) is your unrest,
Your hast, and that the Goddes ordinaunce
It seemeth nat ye take it for the best,
Nor other thing nis in your remembraunce,
As thinketh me, but only your pleasaunce,
But beth not wroth, and that I you beseech,
For that I tary is all for wicked speech.

" For I have heard well more than I wend
Touching us two, how thinges have istond,
Which I shall with dissimuling amend,
And beth nat wroth, I have eke understond,
How ye ne do but holden me in hond,
But now no force, I can nat in you gesse,
But all trouth and all gentilnesse.

" Come I well, but yet in such disjoint
I stond as now, that what yere or what day
That this shall be, that can I nat appoint,
But in effect I pray you as I may
Of your good word, and of your friendship aye,
For truly while that my life may dure,
As for a friend ye may in me assure.

" Yet pray I you, no evill ye ne take
That it is short which that I to you write,
I dare nat there I am well letters make,
Ne never yet ne could I well endite,
Eke great effect, men write in place lite,
Thentent is all, and nat the letters space,
And fareth well, God have you in his grace.
" La vostre C."

This Troilus thought this letter all straunge
Whan he it saw, and sorowfully he sight,
Him thought it like a kalends of eschaunge,
But finally he full ne trowen might,
That she ne would him holden that she hight,
For with ful evell will list him to leve,
That loveth well in such case, though him greve.

But nathelesse, men saine that at the last,
For any thing, men shall the soothe see,
And such a case betide, and that as fast,
That Troilus well understood that she
Nas nat so kind as that her ought to be,
And finally, he wote now out of dout,
That all is lost that he hath ben about.

Stood on a day in his melancholy
This Troilus, and in suspectioun
Of her, for whom he wend to dye,
And so befell, that throughout Troie toun,
As was the guise, iborne was up and doun
A manner cote armoure, as saith the story,
Before Deiphebe, insigne of his victory.

The whiche cote, as telleth Eollius,
Deiphebe it hath rent fro Diomede
The same day, and whan this Troilus
It saw, he gan to taken of it hede,
Avising of the length and of the brede,
And all the werke, but as he gan beheld,
Full sodainly his herte gan to cold.

As he that on the coler found within
A brooch, that he Creseide yave at morow
That she from Troy must nedes twin,
In remembraunce of him, and of his sorow,
And she him laid ayen her faith to borow,
To keepe it aye: but now full well he wist,
His lady nas no longer on to trist.

He goth him home, and gan full soone send
For Pandarus, and all this newe chaunce,
And of this broch, he told him word and end,
Complaining of her hertes variaunce,
His longe love, his trouth, and his penaunce,
And after Death, without words more,
Full fast he cried, his rest him to restore.

Than spake he thus, " O lady mine Creseide,
Where is your faith, and where is your behest?
Where is your love, where is your trouth" he seide,
" Of Diomede have ye now all the fest?
Alas, I would have trowed at the least,
That sens ye nolde in trouthe to me stond,
That ye thus nolde have holden me in hond.

" Who shall now trowen on any othes mo?
Alas I never would have wend ere this,
That ye, Creseide, could have chaunged so,
Ne but I had agilt, and done amis;
So cruell wend I nat your herte iwis,
To slea me thus, alas your name of trouth,
Is now fordone, and that is all my routh.

" Was there none other broche you list lete,
To feast with your new love," (quod he)
" But thilke broche that I with teres wete
You yave, as for a remembraunce of me?
None other cause alas, ne had ye,
But for dispite, and eke for that ye ment
All utterly to shewen your entent.

" Through which I see, that clene out of your mind
Ye have me cast, and I ne can nor may
For all this world within mine herte find,
To unloven you a quarter of a day:
In cursed time I borne was, welaway,
That you that done me all this wo endure,
Yet love I best of any creature.

" Now God" (quod he) " me sende yet the grace,
That I may meten with this Diomede,
And truely, if I have might and space,
Yet shall I make I hope his sides blede:
Now God" (quod he) " that oughtest taken hede
To forthren trouth, and wronges to punice,
Why nilt thou don a vengeance of this vice.

" O Pandarus, that in dremes for to trist
Me blamed hast, and wont art oft upbreide,
Now mayst thou seen thy self, if that thee list,
How trew is now thy nece, bright Creseide:
In sundry formes (God it wote)" he seide,
" The gods shewen both joy and tene
In slepe, and by my dreme it is now sene.

" And certainely, withouten more speech,
From henceforth, as ferforth as I may,
Mine owne death in armes woll I seech,
I retche nat how soone be the day,
But truely Creseide, sweet Maie,
Whom I have with all my might iserved,
That ye thus done, I have it nat deserved."

This Pandarus, that all these thinges herd,
And wiste well he said a sooth of this,
He nat a word ayen to him answerd,
For sorie of his friends sorrow he is,
And shame for his nece hath done amis,
And stant astonied of these causes twey,
As still as stone, o word ne could he sey.

But at the last, thus he spake and seide,
" My brother dere, I may do thee no more,
What should I saine, I hate iwis Creseide,
And God it wote, I woll hate her everunore:
And that thou me besoughtest done of yore,
Having vnto mine honour ne my rest
Right no regard, I did all that thee lest.

" If I did aught that might liken thee,
It is me lefe, and of this treason now,
God wote that it a sorrow is to me,
And dredelesse, for hertes ease of you,
Right faine I would amend it, wist I how:
And fro this world, Almighty God I pray
Deliver her soone, I can no more say."

Great was the sorow and plaint of Troilus,
But forth her course fortune aye gan hold,
Creseide loveth the sonne of Tideus,
And Troilus mote wepe in cares cold,
Such is this world, who so it can behold,
In eche estate is little hertes rest,
God leve vs to take it for the best.

In many cruell battaile out of drede,
Of Troilus, this ilke noble knight,
(As men may in these old bookes rede)
Was seen his knighthood and his great might,
And dredelesse his ire day and night
Full cruelly the Grekes aye abought,
And alway most this Diomede, he sought.

And oft time (I finde) that they mette
With bloody strokes, and with wordes great,
Assaying how hir speares were whette,
And God it wote, with many a cruell heat
Gan Troilus vpon his helme to beat,
But nathelesse, fortune it naught ne would
Of others hond that either dien should.

And if I had itaken for to write
The armes of this ilke worthy man,
Than would I of his battailes endite,
And for that I to writen first began
Of his love, I have said as I can
His worthy deedes, who so list hem here,
Rede Dares, he can tell hem all ifere.

Beseeching every lady bright of hew,
And every gentill woman, what she be,
Albeit that Creseide was untrew,
That for that gilt ye be nat wroth with me,
Ye may her gilt in other bookes see,
And gladder I would write, if you lest,
Penelopes trouth, and good Alceste.

Ne say I nat this all onely for these men,
But most for women that betraied be
Throgh false folk, God yeve hem sorow, amen,
That with hir great wit and subtilte
Betraien you: and this meveth me
To speake, and in effect you all I pray
Beth ware of men, and hearkeneth what I say.

Go, little booke, go, my little tregedie,
There God my maker yet ere that I die,
So send me might to make some comedie:
But little booke, make thou none envie,
But subject ben vnto all poesie,
And kisse the steps whereas thou seest pace
Of Uergil, Ovid, Homer, Lucan, and Stace.

And for there is so great diversite
In English, and in writing of our tong,
So pray I to God, that none miswrite thee,
Ne the misse metre, for defaut of tong:
And redde where so thou be, or eles song,
That thou be vnderstond, God I beseech,
But yet to purpose of my rather speech.

The wrath (as I began you for to sey)
Of Troilus, the Greekes boughten dere,
For thousandes his hondes maden dey,
As he that was withouten any pere,
Save in his time Hector, as I can here,
But welaway, save onely Goddes will,
Dispitously him slough the fierce Achill.

And whan that he was slain in this manere,
His light ghoste full blisfully is went
Up to the hollownesse of the seventh sphere,
In his place leting everiche element,
And there he saw with full avisement
The erratike sterres, herkening armonie,
With sownes full of Heavens melodie.

And doun from thence, fast he gan avise
This little spot of earth, that with the see
Embraced is, and fully gan despise
This wretched world, and held all vanite
To respect of the plaine felicite
That is in Heaven above: and at the last,
There he was slaine, his looking doun he cast.

And in himselfe he lough, right at the wo
Of hem that wepten for his death so fast,
And dampned all our werkes that followeth so
The blinde lust, whiche that may nat last,
And shoulden all our herte on Heaven cast,
And forth he went, shortely for to tell,
There as Mercurie sorted him to dwell.

Such fine hath lo this Troilus for love,
Such fine hath all his great worthinesse,
Such fine hath his estate royall above,
Such fine his lust, such fine hath his noblesse,
Such fine hath false worldes brotelnesse,
And thus began his loving of Creseide,
As I have told, and in this wise he deide.

O young fresh folkes, he or she,
In which that love vp groweth with your age,
Repaireth home from worldly vanite,
And of your hertes vp casteth the visage
To thilke God, that after his image
You made, and thinketh all nis but a faire,
This world that passeth sone, as floures faire.

And loveth him the which that right for love
Upon a crosse our soules for to bey,
First starfe and rose, and sit in Heven above,
For he nill falsen no wight dare I sey,
That wol his herte all wholly on him ley,
And sens he best to love is and most meeke,
What needeth fained loves for to seeke.

Lo here of painems cursed olde rites,
Lo here what all hir goddes may availe,
Lo here this wretched worldes appetites,
Lo here the fine and guerdon for travaile,
Of Jove, Apollo, of Mars, and such raskaile,
Lo here the forme of olde clerkes speech
In poetrie, if ye hir bookes seech.

O morall Gower, this booke I direct
To thee, and to the philosophicall Strode,
To vouchsafe there need is, to correct,
Of your benignities and zeales good,
And to the soothfast Christ that starfe on rood,
With all mine herte of mercy ever I pray,
And to the Lord aright, thus I speake and say,

Thou one, two, and three, eterne on live,
That raignest aie in thre, two, and one,
Uncircumscript, and all maist circumscrive,
Us from visible and invisible fone
Defend, and to thy mercy everichone,
So make vs, Jesus, to thy mercy digne,
For love of maide, and mother thine benigne.

THUS ENDETH THE FIFTH AND LAST BOOKE OF TROILUS.

THE TESTAMENT OF CRESEIDE.

A DOLY season till a carefull dite,
Should corespond, and be equivolent,
Right so it was whan I began to write
This tragedy, the weder right fervent,
Whan Aries in middes of the Lent,
Showres of haile gan fro the north discend,
That scantly fro the cold I might me defend.

Yet neverthelesse within mine orature
I stode, whan Titan had his beames bright
Withdrawen doun, and scyled vnder cure,
And faire Uenus the beaute of the night,
Upraise, and sette vnto the weste ful right,
Her golden face, in oppositioun
Of god Phebus, directe discending doun.

Throughout the glasse her beames brast so faire,
That I might see on every side me by,
The northren winde had purified the aire,
And shedde his misty cloudes fro the skie:
The froste fresed, the blastes bitterly
Fro pole Artike come whisking loud and shrill,
And caused me remove ayenst my will.

For I trusted that Uenus, loves quene,
To whom somtime I hight obedience,
My faded herte, of love she would make grene,
And ther vpon with humble reverence,
I thought to pray her high magnificence,
But for great colde as than I letted was,
And in my chambre to the fire can pas.

Though love be hote, yet in a man of age,
It kindleth nat so soone as in youtheed,
Of whom the blood is flowing in a rage,
And in the old, the corage dull and deed,
Of which the fire outward is best remeed,
To help by phisike where that nature failed,
I am expert, for both I have assailed.

I made the fire, and beaked me aboute,
Than tooke I drinke my spirites to comfort,
And armed me wel fro the colde theroute;
To cutte the winter night and make it short
I toke a queare, and left all other sport,
Writen by worthy Chaucer glorious,
Of faire Creseide, and lusty Troilus.

And there I found, after that Diomede
Received had that lady bright of hewe,
How Troilus nere out of his witte abrede,
And wepte sore, with visage pale of hewe:
For which wanhope his teares gan renewe,
While Esperus rejoysed him againe:
Thus while in joy he lived, and while in paine.

Of her behest he had great comforting,
Trusting to Troy that she wold make retour,
Which he desired most of al earthly thing,
For why she was his onely paramour:
But whan he saw passed both day and hour
Of her gainecome, in sorow can oppresse
His wofull herte, in care and hevinesse.

Of his distresse me needeth nat reherse,
For worthy Chaucer in that same booke,
In goodly termes, and in joly verse,
Compiled hath his eares, who wil looke:
To breke my sleepe another queare I tooke,
In which I founde the fatal destany
Of faire Creseide, which ended wretchedly.

Who wote if al that Chaucer wrate, was trew?
Nor I wote nat if this narracion
Be authorised, or forged of the newe,
Of some poete by his invencion,
Made to report the lamentacion,
And wofull end of this lusty Creseide,
And what distresse she was in or she deide.

Whan Diomede had al his appetite
And more fulfilled of this faire lady,
Upon another sette was all his delite,
And send to her a libel repudy,
And her excluded fro his company:
Than desolate she walked up and downe,
As some men saine, in the court as commune.

O fair Creseide, the floure and a per se
Of Troy and Grece, how were thou fortunate,
To chaunge in filth all thy feminite,
And be with fleshly lust so maculate,
And go among the Grekes early and late,
So giglotlike, taking thy foul pleasaunce?
I have pite thee should fall such mischaunce.

Yet neverthelesse, what ever men deme or say
In scornfull language of thy brutelnesse,
I shal excuse, as ferforth as I may,
Thy womanhed, thy wisedome and fairnesse:
The which fortune hath put to such distresse,
As her pleased, and nothing through the gilt
Of thee, through wicked langage to be spilt.

This faire lady on this wise destitute
Of al comfort and consolatioun,
Right prively without felowship or refute,
Disheuelde, passed out of the toun
A mile or two vnto a mansioun,
Bilded full gaie, wher her father Calcas
Which than among the Grekes dwelling was,

Whan her he saw, the cause he gan enquire
Of her comming: she said sighing full sore,
"Fro Diomede had gotten his desire,
He woxe wery and would of me no more."
Quod Calcas, "Doughter, weep thou nat therfore,
Paraventure al cometh for the best,
Welcome to me thou art full dere a gest."

This old Calcas, after the law was tho,
Was keper of the temple as a preest,
In which Uenus and her sonne Cupido
Were honoured, and this chambre was nest,
To which Creseide, with bale enewed in brest,
Used to passe, her praiers for to say,
While at the last vpon a solemne day,

As custome was, the people ferre and nere
Before the noone vnto the temple went,
With sacrifice devout in their manere,
But still Creseide heuie in her entent,
Into the church would nat her selfe present,
For giving of the people any deeming,
Of her expulse fro Diomede the king.

But passed into a secrete oratore,
Where she might wepe her wofull destinie,
Behind her backe she closed fast the dore,
And on her knees bare fel doune in hie,
Upon Uenus and Cupide angerly
She cried out, and saied in this wise,
"Alas that ever I made you sacrifice.

"Ye gave me ones a divine responsaile,
That I should be the floure of love in Troy,
Now am I made an vnworthy outwaile,
And al in care translated is my joy:
Who shal me gide, who shal me now conuoie,
Sith I fro Diomede, and noble Troilus
Am clene excluded, as abiect, odious?

"O false Cupide, none is to wite but thou
And the mother of love, that blind goddace,
Ye caused me vnderstand alway and trow
The seede of love was sowen on my face,
And aie grew grene through your sople grace;
But now alas, that seede with frost is slaine,
And I fro lovers left and all forlaine."

Whan was this said, doun in an extasie,
Rauished in spirite, in a dreame she fell,
And by apparaunce herde where she did lie,
Cupide the king tinging a siluer bell,
Which men might here fro Heven into Hell:
At whose sound before Cupide aperes
The seven planets discending fro their speres,

Whiche hath power of al thing generable,
To rule and stere by their great influence,
Weder and winde, and course variable:
And first of all Saturne gave his sentence,
Which gave to Cupide litel reverence,
But as a boistous chorle in his manere,
Came crabbedly with austrine loke and chere.

His face frounsed, his lere was like the lede,
His teeth chattered, and sheuered with the chin,
His eien drouped hole sonken in his heed,
Out at his nose the mildrop fast gan rin,
With lippes blo, and chekes leane and thin,
The iseickeles that fro his heer doun hong
Was wonder great, and as a speare as long.

Attour his belte his liart lockes laie,
Feltred vnfaire, over fret with frostes hoore,
His garment and his gate ful gay of graie,
His widdred wede fro him the wind out wore,
A boistous bowe within his honde he bore,
Under his girdle a fashe of felone flains,
Feddred with ise, and heeded with holstains.

Than Jupiter rigbt faire and amiable,
God of the sterres in the firmament,
And norice to all thing generable,
Fro his father Saturne farre different,
With burly face, and browes bright and brent,
Upon his heed a garlond wonders gaie,
Of flours faire, as it had been in Maie.

His voice was clere, as cristal was his eien,
As golden wier so glittering was his heare,
His garment and his gite ful gaie of grene,
With golden listes gilte on every geare,
A burly brande about his middle he beare,
And in his right hand he had a grounden spere,
Of his father, the wrothe fro vs to bere.

Next after him came Mars, the god of ire,
Of strife, debate, and all discensioun,
To chide and fight, as fierse as any fire,
In harde harnesse hewmonde and habergioun,
And on his haunch a rusty fel fauchoun,
And in his hand he had a rusty sword,
Writhing his face, with many angry word.

Shaking his brande, before Cupide he come
With reed visage, and grisly glowing eien,
And at his mouth a blubber stode of fome,
Like to a bore, whetting his tuskes kene,
Right tulsure like, but temperaunce in tene,
An horne blewe with many boustous bragge,
Which al this world with war hath made to wagge.

Than fair Phebus, lanterne and lampe of light,
Of man and beast, both fruit and florishing,
Tender norice, and banisher of night,
And of the world, causing by his moving
And influence, life in al earthly thing,
Without comfort of whom of force to nought
Must go die, that all this worlde hath wrought.

As king royall, he rode vpon a chare,
The which Phiton somtime gided vnright,
The brightnesse of his face whan it was bare,
Non might behold, for persing of his sight:
This golden carte with firy beames bright,
Foure yoked stedes full different of hewe,
Bout bait or tiring, through the spheres drewe.

The first was sord, with mane as reed as rose
Called Eoye into the Orient,
The second stede to name, hight Ethiose,
Whitely and pale, and somdele ascendent,
The third Perose, right hote and eke fervent,
The fourth was blacke, called Phlegone,
Which rolleth Phebus doun into the see.

Uenus was there present, that goddes gay,
Her sonnes quarrel to defend, and make
Her owne complaint, cladde in a nice aray
The one half greene, thother half sable blake
White heer as gold, kembet and shede abake,
But in her face seemed great variaunce,
While parfite truth, and whiles inconstaunce,

Under smiling she was dissimulate,
Provocative with blinkes amorous,
And sodainly chaunged and alterate,
Angry, as any serpent venomous:
Right pungitive with wordes odious,
Thus variaunt she was who liste take kepe,
With one eie laugh, and with the other wepe:

In tokening that all fleshly paramour,
Which Uenus hath in rule and governaunce,
Is somtime swete, somtime bitter and sour,
Right vnstable and ful of variaunce,
Minged with careful joy and false pleasaunce,
Now hote, now cold, now blith, now ful of wo,
Now grene as lefe, now widred and ago.

With boke in hand, than come Mercurious
Right eloquent and ful of rethoric,
With polite termes and delicious,
With penne and inke to report al redie,
Setting songes, and singing merely,
His hode was reed hecled attour his croun,
Like til a poete of the old fasioun.

Boxes he bare with fine electuares,
And sugred siropes for digestion,
Spices belonging to the potiquares,
With many holsome swete confection:
Doctor in phisike cledde in a scarlet goun,
And furred well as such one ought to be,
Honest and good, and nat a worde couth lie.

Next after him come lady Sinthia,
The last of all, and swiftest in her sphere,
Of colour blake, busked with hornes twa,
And in the night she listeth best tapere,
Hawe as the leed, of colour nothing clere,
For al the light she boroweth at her brother
Titan, for of her self she hath none other.

Her gite was gray and ful of spottes blake,
And on her brest a chorle painted full even,
Bearing a bushe of thornes on his bake,
Which for his theft might clime no ner the Heven:
Thus whan they gadred were the goddes seven,
Mercurius they chosed with one assent,
To be forespeker in the parliment.

Who had ben there and liking for to here
His faconde tonge and termes exquisite,
Of rethorike the practike he might lere,
In brefe sermon, a preignant sentence write:
Before Cupide valing his cappe a lite,
Sper is the cause of that vocacioun,
And he anon shewde his entencioun.

"Lo," (quod Cupide) "who wol blaspheme the name
Of his owne god, either in word or dede:
To all goddes he doeth both losse and shame
And should have bitter paines to his mede:
I saye this by yonder wretch Creseide,
The which through me was somtime flour of love;
Me and my mother she stately can reprove.

"Saying, of her great infelicite
I was the cause, and my mother Uenus
She called a blinde goddes and might nat se,
With sclaunder and defame injurious;
Thus her living vncleane and lecherous,
She would retorte in me and my mother,
To whom I shewde my grace above al other.

"And sithe ye are al sevon deficate,
Perticipant of divine sapience,
This great injury don to our hie estate,
Me think with pain we should make recompense;
Was never to goddes done such violence,
As wel for you as for my selfe I say,
Therfore go helpe to revenge I you pray."

Mercurius to Cupide gave answere
And said, "Sir king, my counsaile is that ye
Referre you to the blest planet here,
And take to him the lowest of degree,
The paine of Creseide for to modifie,
As god Saturne with him take Sinthia,"
"I am content," (quod he) "to take they twa."

Than thus proceded Saturne and the Mone,
Whan they the mater ripely had degest,
For the dispite to Cupide that she had done,
And to Uenus open and manifest,
In all her lyfe with payne to be oprest,
And turment sore, with sickenesse incurable,
And to all lovers be abhominable.

This doleful sentence Saturn toke in hand,
And passed doun where careful Creseide lay,
And on her heed he laide a frosty wande,
Than lawfully on this wise gan he say,
"Thy great fairenesse, and al thy beauty gay,
Thy wanton blood, and eke thy golden heere,
Here I exclude fro thee for evermeere.

"I chaunge thy mirthe into melancoly,
Which is the mother of all pensivenesse,
Thy moyster and thy hete, into colde and dry,
Thine insolence, thy play, and thy wantonnesse,
To great disease, thy pompe and thy richesse,
Into mortall nede and great penurie,
Thou suffre shalt, and as a begger die."

O cruel Saturne, froward and angry,
Harde is thy dome, and too malicious,
Of faire Creseide why hast thou no mercy,
Which was so swete, gentill and amorous?
Withdraw thy sentence and be gracious,
As thou were never, so sheweth through thy dede,
A wrekeful sentence given on Creseide.

Than Sinthia, whan Saturne past away,
Out of her seate discended doun blive,
And reed a bill on Creseide where she lay,
Containing this sentence diffinitive:
"Fro heale of body here I thee deprive,
And to thy sicknesse shal be no recure,
But in dolour thy dayes to endure.

"Thy christal yen menged with blood I make,
Thy voice so clere, vnpleasant heer and hace,
Thy lusty lere overspred with spotes blake,
And lumpes hawe appering in thy face,
Where thou comest eche man shall flie the place,
Thus shalt thou go begging fro hous to hous
With cuppe and clapper like a Lazarous."

This doolie dreame, this vgly visioun
Brought till an end, Creseide fro it awoke,
And all that court and convocation,
Uanished away: than rose she vp and toke
A polished glasse, and her shadow couth loke,
And whan she saw her visage so deformate,
If she in herte were wo, I ne wite God wate,

Weping full sore, " Lo what it is, (quod she)
With froward langage to move and stere
Our crabbed goddes, and so is seen on me;
My blaspheming now have I bought ful dere,
All yearthly joy and mirthe I set arere,
Alas this day, alas this wofull tide,
Whan I began with my goddes to chide."

Be this was sayd, a child came fro the hall
To warne Creseide the supper was redie,
First knocked at the doore, and eft couth cal,
" Madame, your father biddeth you cum in hie;
He hath marveile so long on grofe ye lie,
And saith your beades bethe to long somdele,
The goddes wote all your entent full wele."

(Quod she) " Faire child, go to my father dere
And pray him come to speake with me anon,"
And so he did, and sayd " Daughter, what chere?"
" Alas," (quod she) " father, my mirth is gon,"
" How so?" (quod he) and she can all expon,
As I have told, the vengeaunce, and the wrake,
For her trespas, Cupide on her couth take.

He looked on her vgly lepers face,
The which before was white as lely floure,
Wringing his hands, oft times sayd alace
That he had lived to see that wofull houre:
For he knew well that there was no socour
To her sicknesse, and that doubled his pain:
Thus was ther care inow betwixt hem twain.

Whan they togider mourned had ful lang,
(Quod Creseide) " Father, I would nat be kend,
Therfore in secrete wise ye let me gang
To yon hospitall at the toones end:
And thider some meate for charite me send,
To live vpon, for all mirthe in this yearth
Is fro me gone, such is my wicked wearth."

Whan in a mantill, and a bever hat,
With cuppe and clapper, wonder prively,
He opened a secrete gate and out thereat
Conveied her, that no man should espie,
There to a village halfe a mile thereby,
Delivered her in at the spittell hous,
And daily sent her part of his almous.

Sum knew her well, and sum had no knowlege
Of her, bicause she was so deformate,
With biles blake overspred in her visage,
And her fayre colour faded and alterate:
Yet they presumed for her hie regrate,
And stil mourning, she was of noble kin,
With bitter will there they tooke her in.

The day passed, and Phebus went to rest,
The cloudes blake overwheled all the skie,
God wote if Creseide were a sorrowfull gest,
Seing that vncouth fare and herborie:
But meate or drinke, she dressed her to lie
In a darke corner of the bous alone,
And on this wise weping she made her mone.

THE COMPLAINT OF CRESEIDE.

" O sorer of sorrowe sonken into care,
O caitife Creseide now and evermare,
Gon is thy joy and all thy mirth in yearth,
Of all blithnesse now art thou blake and bare
There is no salve may helpe thy sare,
Fell is thy fortune, wicked is thy werth,
Thy blisse is vanished and thy bale vnherde,
Under the great God if I graven ware,
Where men of Grece ne yet of Troie might herd.

" Where is thy chamber wantonly beseen,
With burly bedde and bankers brouded been,
Spices and wine to thy colatioun,
The cuppes all of gold and silver shene,
Thy swete meates served in plates clene,
With savery sauce of a good fashioun,
Thy gay garments with many goodly goun,
Thy plesaunt laune pinned with golden pene?
All is arere thy great royall renoun.

" Where is thy gardein with thy greces gay
And freshe floures, which the quene Floray
Had painted pleasauntly in every way,
Where thou were wont full merily in May
To walke, and take the dewe by it was day,
And heare the Merle and Mavise many one,
With ladies faire in carrolling to gone,
And see the royall renkes in their ray?

" This leper loge take for thy goodly boure,
And for thy bed, take now a bounche of stro,
For wailed wine and meates thou had tho,
Take mouled bread, pirate, and sider soure,
But cuppe and clapper is all now ago.

" My clere voice and my courtly carrolling,
Is ranke as roke, full hidous heer and hace
Deformed is the figure of my face,
To loke on it no people hath liking,
So sped in sight, I say with sore sighing
Lying emong the leper folke alas.

" O ladies faire of Troy and Grece, attend
My freile fortune, mine infelicite,
My great mischief, which no man can amend,
And in your mind a mirrour make of me:
As I am now paraventure that ye,
For all your might may come to the same end,
Or else worse, if any worse may be,
Beware therefore approches nere your end.

" Nought is your fairnesse but a fading floure,
Nought is your famous laude and hie honour,
But winde inflate in other mennes cares,
Your rosing redde to rotting shall retoure,
Exemple make of me in your memore:
Which of such thinges wofull witnes beares,
Al welth in yearth, as wind away it weares,
Beware therfore approches nere your hour."

Thus chiding with her drery disteny,
Weping, she woke the night fro end to end,
But all in vaine her dole, her carefull cry
Might not remedy, ne yet her mourning mend:
A leper lady rose, and to her wend,
And sayd, " Why spurnes thou again the wall,
To slea thy selfe, and mende nothing at all?

" Sith that thy weping but doubleth thy wo,
I counsaile thee make vertue of a nede,
Go learne to clappe thy clapper to and fro,
And learne after the lawe of lepers lede."
There was no bote, but forthwith than she yede
Fro place to place, while cold and hunger sore
Compelled her to be a ranke beggore.

That same time of Troy the garnisoun,
Which had the chieftain worthy Troilus
Through jeopardy of warre had striken doun,
Knightes of Grece in nomber marveilous,
With great triumph, and laude victorious,
Again to Troy right royally they rode,
The way where Creseide with the leper stode.

Seing that company come, al with o stevin
They gave a cry, and shoke cupps, " God spede,
Worthy lordes, for Goddes love of hevin,
To us leper, part of your almose dede :"
Than to hir cry noble Troilus toke hede,
Having pite, nere by the place gan pas,
Wher Creseide sat, nat weting what she was.

Than vpon him she kest vp both her iyen,
And with a blinke it come in til his thought,
That he sometime her face before had sein,
But she was in soch plite he knew her nought,
Yet than her loke into his minde he brought,
The swete visage, and amorous blenking,
Of faire Creseid, sometime his owne derling,

No wonder was, suppose in mind that he
Toke her figure so sone, and lo now why,
The idol of a thing in case may be
So depe enprinted in the fantasie,
That it deludeth the wittes outwardly,
And so apereth in forme and like estate,
Within the minde, as it was figurate.

A spark of love than til his hertecouth spring,
And kindeled his body in a fire,
With hote feuer, in swette, and trembling
Him tooke, while he was readie to exspire,
To beare his shield his brest began to tire,
Within a while he chaunged many a hewe,
And nevertheles nat one an other knew.

For knightly pite and memoriell
Of faire Creseide, a girdel gan he take,
A purse of gold and many a gaie iewell,
And in the skirt of Creseide doun gan shake :
Than rode away, and nat a word he spake,
Pensife in herte while he came to the toune,
And for great care oft sith almost fell doune.

The lepre folke to Creseide than couth draw,
To see the equall distributioun
Of the almose, but whan the gold they saw,
Ech one to other priuely gan roun,
And saied, " Yon lord hath more affectioun,
How ever it be, vnto yon Lazarous
Than to vs al, we know by his almous."

" What lord is yon," (quod she) " have ye no fele,
That doeth to vs so great humanite?"
" Yes," (quod a lepre man) " I know him wele
Sir Troilus it is, a knight gentle and free."
Whan Creseide vnderstood that it was hee,
Stiffer than stele there sterte a bitter stound
Throughout her herte, and fill doun to the ground.

Whan she, overcome with sighing sore and sad,
With many a carefull crie and cold atone,
" Now is my brest with stormy stoundes stad,
Wrapped in wo, wretchfull will of one,"
Than fell in swoun ful oft or she would fone,
And ever in her swouning cried she thus,
" O false Creseide, and true knight Troilus.

" Thy love, thy laude, and all thy gentlenesse,
I counted small in my prosperite,
So effated I was in wantonnesse,
And clambe vpon the fickell whele so hie,
All faith and love I promitted to thee,
Was in thy selfe fekell and furious,
O false Creseide, and true knight Troilus.

" For love of me thou kept countenaunce,
Honest and chast in conuersacion,
Of all women protectour and defence
Thou were, and helped their opinion;
My minde and fleshly foule affection
Was enclined to lustes lecherous,
Fie false Creseide, O true knight Troilus.

" Lovers, beware, and take good hede about
Whom that ye love, for whan ye suffre pain,
I let you wit there is right few throughout,
Whom ye may trust to have true love again,
Proue whan ye woll your labour is in vain,
Therefore I rede ye take them as ye find,
For they are sad as wedercocke in wind.

" Bicause I know the great vnstablenesse,
Brittle as glasse, vnto my self I say,
Trusting in other as great brutelnesse,
As inconstaunt, and as vntrue of fay:
Though some be true, I wot right few ar they;
Who findeth truth, let him his lady ruse,
None but my self as now I woll accuse."

Whan this was said, with paper she sat doun
And in this maner made her testament:
" Here I bequethe my corse and carioun,
With wormes and with toodes to be rent,
My cuppe, my clapper, and mine ornament,
And all my gold, these lepre folke shall have,
Whan I am dedde, to bury me in grave.

" This roiall ring set with this rubie redde,
Which Troilus in dowrie to me send,
To him again I leaue it whan I am dedde,
To make my careful death vnto him kend:
Thus I conclude shortly and make an end,
My spirit I leave to Diane where she dwels,
To walke with her in wast wodes and welles.

" O Diomede, thou hast both broche and belt,
Which Troilus gaue me, in tokening
Of his true love," and with thas worde she swelt,
And soone a leaper man toke off the ring,
Than buried her withouten tarying:
To Troilus forthwith the ring he bare,
And of Creseide the death he gan declare.

Whan he had heard her great infirmite,
Her legacie, and lamentacioun,
And how she ended in such poverte,
He swelt for wo and fell doune in a swoun,
For sorow his herte to brast was boun,
Sighing full sadly sayd, " I can no more,
She was vntrue, and wo is me therefore."

Some saith he made a tombe of marble gray,
And wrote her name and superscripcioun,
And layd it on her graue whereas she lay,
In golden letters, conteining this reasoun:
"Lo, faire ladies, Creseide of Troie toun,
Somtime counted the floure of womanhed,
Under this stone, late leper lieth dedde."

Now worthy women in this balade short,
Made for your worship and instruction,
Of charite I monish and exhort,
Minge nat your love with false disception:
Beare in your mind this sore conclusion
Of faire Creseide, as I have sayd before,
Sith she is dedde, I speake of her no more.

THE

LEGEND OF GOOD WOMEN.

For that some ladies in the court took offence at Chaucers large speeches against the untruth of women, the queen enjoyned him to compile this book in the commendation of sundry maidens and wives, who shewed themselves faithful to faithless men.

A THOUSAND times I have heard men tell,
That there is joy in Heaven, and pain in Hell,
And I accord it wele that it is so,
But nathelesse yet wote I wele also,
That there nis non dwelling in this countre,
That either hath in Heaven or in Hell ibe,
Ne may of it none other waies witten,
But as he heard sayed, or found it written,
For by assay there may no man it preve.
But God forbede but men should leve
Wel more thing than they have seen with iye,
Men shall nat wenen every thing a lie
But if himself it seeth, or els it dooth,
For God wote thing is never the lesse soth,
Though every wight ne may it not isee.
Bernarde the monke ne saugh all parde,
Than mote we to bookes that we find,
(Through which that old things ben in mind)
And to the doctrine of the old wise,
Yeve credence, in every skilful wise,
That tellen of the old appreued stories,
Of holines, of reignes, of victories,
Of love, of hate, and other sundry things,
Of which I may not make rehearsings:
And if that old bookes were away,
Ilorne were of all remembraunce the kay.
Well ought vs than, honouren and beleve
These bookes, there we han none other preve.
And as for me, though that I can but lite,
On bookes for to rede I me delite,
And to hem yeve I faith and full credence,
And in mine herte have hem in reverence
So hertely, that there is game none,
That fro my bookes maketh me to gone,
But it be seldome on the holy daie,
Save certainly, whan that the month of May
Is comen, and that I heare the foules sing,
And that the floures ginnen for to spring,
Farwell my booke, and my deuocion,
Now have I than eke this condicion,
That of all the floures in the mede,
Than love I most these floures white and rede,
Soch that men callen daisies in our toun,
To hem I have so great affectioun,
As I sayd erst, whan comen is the Maie,
That in my bedde there daweth me no daie,
That I nam vp and walking in the mede,
To seen this floure ayenst the Sunne sprede,
Whan it vp riseth early by the morrow,
That blisfull sight softeneth all my sorow,
So glad am I, whan that I haye presence
Of it, to done it all reverence,
As she that is of all floures the floure,
Fulfilled of all vertue and honoure,
And every ilike faire, and fresh of hewe,
And ever I love it, and ever ilike newe,
And ever shall, till that mine herte die,
All sweare I not, of this I woll not lie.
Therē loved no wight hotter in his life,
And whan that it is eve I renne blithe,
As sone as ever the Sunne ginneth west,
To seen this floure, how it woll go to rest,
For feare of night, so hateth she derkenesse,
Her chere is plainly spred in the brightnesse
Of the Sunne, for there it woll vnclose:
Alas that I ne had English rime, or prose
Suffisaunt, this floure to praise aright,
But helpeth ye, that han conning and might,
Ye lovers, that can make of sentement,
In this case ought ye be diligent,
To forthren me somewhat in my labour,
Whether ye been with the lefe or with the flour,
For well I wote, that ye han here beforne
Of making ropen, and had alway the corne,
And I come after, glening here and there,
And am full glad, if I may find an eare,
Of any goodly worde that ye han left,
And though it happen me to rehearsen eft,
That ye han in your freshe songes sayd,
Forbeareth me, and beth not euill apayd,
Sith that ye se, I doe it in the honour
Of love, and eke of service of the flour,
Whom that I serve, as I have wit or might,
She is the clerenesse and the very light,
That in this derke world me wint and ledeth
The herte within my sorowfull brest you dredeth,
And loveth so sore, that ye ben verily
The maistres of my wit, and nothing I,

My word, my workes, is knit so in your bonde
That as an harpe obeieth to the honde,
And make it soune after his fingering,
Right so mowe ye out of mine herte bring,
Soch voice, right as you list, to laugh or pain;
Be ye my guide, and lady souerain:
As to mine yearthly God, to you I call,
Both in this werke, and my sorowes all.
But wherefore that I spake to yeve eredence
To old stories, and done hem reverence,
And that men musten more thing bileve
That men may seen at iye or els preve,
That shall I sein, whan that I see my time,
I may nat all atones speake in rime;
My busie ghost, that thursteth alway new,
To seen this flour so yong, so fresh of hew,
Constrained me, with so gredy desire,
That in my herte I fele yet the fire,
That made me rise ere it were day,
And this was now the first morow of Maie,
With dreadfull herte, and glad deuocion
For to been at the resurrection
Of this floure, whan that it should vnclose
Again the Sunne, that rose as redde as rose,
That in the brest was of the beast that day,
That Angenores doughter ladde away:
And doune on knees anon right I me sette,
And as I could, this fresh floure I grette,
Kneeling alway, till it vnclosed was,
Upon the small, soft, swete gras,
That was with floures swete embrouded all,
Of such swetenesse, and soch odour over all,
That for to speake of gomme, herbe, or tree,
Comparison may not imaked be,
For it surmounteth plainly all odoures,
And of riche beaute of floures:
Forgotten had the yearth his poore estate
Of Winter, that him naked made and mate,
And with his sword of cold so sore greved;
Now hath the attempre sunne al that releved
That naked was, and clad it new again;
The small foules of the season fain,
That of the panter and the net been scaped,
Upon the fouler, that hem made awhaped
In Winter, and destroied had her brood,
In his dispite hem thought it did hem good
To sing of him, and in her song dispise
The foule chorle, that for his couetise,
Had him betraied, with his sophistrie,
This was her song, "The fouler we defie,
And all his craft:" and some songen clere,
Laies of love, that joy it was to here,
In worshipping and praysing of hir make,
And for the new blisfull Somers sake,
Upon the braunches full of blosmes soft,
In hir dilite, they tourned hem ful oft,
And songen, "Blissed be sainct Ualentine,
For on his day I chese you to be mine,
Withouten repenting mine herte swete,"
And therewithall hir bekes gonnen mete,
Yelding honour, and humble obeisaunce
To love, and didden hir other observaunce
That longeth vnto love, and vnto nature,
Constrewe that as you list, I do no cure:
And tho that had done vnkindnesse,
As doeth the tidife, for new fanglenesse,
Besought mercy of hir trespasing,
And humbly song hir repenting,
And sworen on the blosmes to be true,
So that hir makes would vpon hem rue,
And at the last maden hir acorde,
All found they Daunger for the time a lord,
Yet Pite, through his strong gentill might,
Foryave, and made Mercy passen right
Through Innocence, and ruled Curtesie:
But I ne cleape it nat innocence folie,
Ne false pite, for vertue is the meane,
As eticke sayth, in soch maner I meane.
And thus these foule, voide of all malice,
Acordeden to love, and laften vice
Of hate, and song all of one acorde,
"Welcome Sommer, our governour and lorde."
And Zephirus, and Flora gentelly,
Yave to the floures soft and tenderly,
Hir swote breth, and made hem for to sprede,
As god and goddesse of the flourie Mede,
In which me thoughte I might day by daie,
Dwellen alway, the joly month of Maie,
Withouten slepe, withouten meat or drinke;
Adowne full softly I gan to sinke,
And leaning on my elbow and my side,
The long day I shope me for to abide,
For nothing els, and I shall nat lie,
But for to looke vpon the daisie,
That well by reason men it call may
The daisie, or els the iye of the day,
The emprise, and floure of floures all,
I pray to God that faire mote she fall,
And all that loven floures, for her sake:
But nathelesse, ne wene nat that I make
In praising of the floure againe the lefe,
No more than of the corne againe the shefe:
For as to me nis lever none ne lother,
I nam withholden yet with never nother,
Ne I wot who serveth lefe, ne who the floure,
Well brouken they hir service or laboure,
For this thing is all of another tonne,
Of old storie, er soch thing was begonne.
Whan that the Sunne out the south gan west,
And that this floure gan close, and gan to rest,
For derknes of the night, the which she dred,
Home to mine house full swiftly I me sped
To gone to rest, and earely for to rise,
To seene this floure to sprede, as I devise,
And in a little herber that I have,
That benched was on turves fresh igrave,
I bad men shoulde me my couche make,
For deintie of the newe Sommers sake,
I bad hem strawen floures on my bedde;
Whan I was laid, and had mine iyen hedde,
I fell a slepe, and slept an houre or two,
Me met how I lay in the medow tho,
To seen this floure, that I love so and drede,
And from a ferre came walking in the Mede
The god of love, and in his hand a queene,
And she was clad in royall habite grene,
A fret of golde she had next her heere,
And vpon that a white croune she beare,
With flourons small, and I shall not lie,
For all the world right as a daisie
Ierouned is, with white leaves lite,
So were the florouns of her croune white,
For of o perle fine oriental,
Her white croune was imaked all,
For which the white croune above the grene
Made her like a daisie for to seme,
Considred eke her fret of gold above:
Iclothed was this mighty god of love
In silke embroided, full of grene greves,
In which a fret of redde rose leves,

The freshest sens the world was first begon;
His gilt heere was crouned with a son,
In stede of gold, for hevinesse and weight,
Therwith me thought his face shone so bright
That well vnnethes might I him behold,
And in his hand, me thought I saw him hold
Two firie dartes, as the gledes rede,
And angelike his winges saw I sprede:
And all be that men sain, that blind is he,
Algate me thought that he might se,
For sternely on me he gan behold,
So that his loking doeth mine herte cold,
And by the hand he held this noble queene,
Crouned with white, and clothed al in greene,
So womanly, so benigne, and so meke,
That in this worlde though that men wold seke,
Halfe her beaute should they not finde
In creature that formed is by kinde,
And therfore may I sain as thinketh me,
This song in praising of this lady fre.

Hide, Absolon, thy gilte tresses clere,
Hester, lay thou thy mekenesse all adoun,
Hide, Jonathas, all thy frendly manere,
Penelopee, and Marcia Catoun,
Make of your wifehode no comparisoun,
Hide your beauties, Isoude and Helein,
My lady cometh, that all this may distain.

Thy faire body let it not appere,
Lavine, and thou Lucrece of Rome toun,
And Polixene, that boughten love so dere,
And Cleopatras, with all thy passioun,
Hide your trouthe of love, and your renoun,
And thou Tisbe, that hast of love such pain,
My lady commeth, that all this may distain.

Hero, Dido, Laodomia, all ifere,
And Phillis, hanging for Demophoun,
And Canace, espied by thy chere,
Hipsiphile betrayed with Jasoun,
Maketh of your trouth neither boste ne soun,
Nor Hipermistre, or Ariadne, ye twain,
My lady cometh, that all this may distain.

This balade may full well isongen be,
As I have sayd erst, by my lady fre,
For certainly, all these mowe not suffice,
To apperen with my lady in no wise,
For as the Sunne woll the fire distain,
So passeth all my lady soverain,
That is so good, so faire, so debonaire,
I pray to God that ever fall her faire,
For nad comforte ben of her presence,
I had ben dead, withouten any defence,
For drede of Loves wordes, and his chere,
As whan time is, hereafter ye shall here.
Behind this god of love vpon the grene,
I saw coming of ladies nineteene,
In roiall habit, a full easie pace,
And after hem came of women such a trace,
That sens that God Adam had made of yerth,
The third part of mankinde, or the ferth,
Ne wende I nat by possibilite,
Had ever in this wide world ibe,
And true of love, these women were echon:
Now whether was that a wonder thing or non,
That right anon, as that they gonne espie
This floure, which that I clepe the daisie,
Full sodainly they stinten all at ones,
And kneled doune, as it were for the nones,
And songen with o voice, "Heale and honour
To trouth of womanhede, and to this flour,
That beareth our alderprise in figuring,
Her white crowne beareth the witnessing,"
And with that word, a compas environ,
They sitten hem ful softely adoun:
First sat the god of love, and sith his quene,
With the white croune, clad all in grene,
And sithen al the remnaunt by and by,
As they were of estate, full curtesly,
Ne nat a worde was spoken in the place,
The mountenance of a furlong way of space.
I kneling by this floure, in good entent
Abode to knowen what this people ment,
As still as any stone, till at the last
This god of love, on me his iyen cast,
And said, "Who kneleth there?" and I answerde
Unto his asking, whan that I it herde,
And sayd, "Sir it am I," and come him nere,
And salved him: (quod he) "What doest thou here,
So nigh mine owne floure, so boldly?
It were better worthy truely,
A worme to nighen nere my floure than thou."
"And why sir," (quod I) "and it like you?
"For thou" (quod he) "art therto nothing able,
It is my relike, digne and delitable,
And thou my fo, and all my folke werriest,
And of mine old servaunts thou missaiest,
And hindrest hem, with thy translation,
And lettest folke from hir devocion,
To serve me, and holdest it folie
To serve Love, thou mayst it nat denie,
For in plain text, withouten nede of glose,
Thou hast translated the Romaunt of the Rose,
That is an heresie ayenst my law,
And makest wise folke fro me withdraw;
And of Creseide, thou hast said as the list,
That maketh men to women lesse trist,
That ben as trewe as ever was any stele:
Of thine answere avise thee right wele,
For though thou renied hast my lay,
As other wretches have done many a day,
By seint Venus, that my mother is,
If that thou live, thou shalt repenten this,
So cruelly, that it shall well be sene."
Tho spake this lady, clothed all in greene
And saied, "God, right of your curtesie,
Ye mote herken if he can replie
Ayenst all this that ye have to him meved;
A God ne shulde nat be thus agreved,
But of his deite he shal be stable,
And there gracious and merciable:
And if ye nere a God that knowen all,
Than might it be as I you tellen shall,
This man to you may falsely ben accused,
That as by right him ought ben excused,
For in your court is many a losengeour,
And many a queinte totoler accusour,
That tabouren in your eares many a soun,
Right after hir imaginatioun,
To have your daliaunce, and for envie,
These ben the causes, and I shall nat lie,
Envie is lavender of the court alway,
For she ne parteth neither night ne day,
Out of the house of Cesar, thus saith Dant,
Who so that goeth algate she wol nat want.
"And eke peraunter for this man is nice,
He might done it, gessing no malice,

But for he vseth thinges for to make,
Him recketh nought of what mater he take,
Or him was boden make thilke twey,
Of some persone, and durst it nat withsey:
Or him repenteth vtterly of this,
He ne hath nat done so grevously amis,
To translaten that old clerkes writen,
As though that he of malice would enditen,
Dispite of Love, and had himselfe it wrought:
This sholde a rightwise lord have in his thought,
And nat be like tiraunts of Lombardie,
That han no reward but at tyrannie,
For he that king or lorde is naturell,
Him ought nat be tiraunt ne cruell,
As is a fermour, to done the harme he can,
He must thinke it is his liege man,
And is his tresour, and his gold in cofer,
This is the sentence of the philosopher:
A king to kepe his lieges in justice,
Withouten doute that is his office,
All woll he kepe his lordes in hir degree,
As it is right and skil, that they bee
Enhaunsed and honoured, and most dere,
For they ben halfe goddes in this world here,
Yet mote he done both right to poore and riche,
All be that hir estate be nat both iliche,
And have of poore folke compassion,
For lo, the gentill kinde of the lion,
For whan a flie offendeth him or biteth,
He with his taile away the flie smiteth,
Al easily, for of his gentrie
Him deineth nat to wreke him on a flie,
As doeth a curre, or els another beest;
In noble corage ought ben areest,
And waien every thing by equite,
And ever have regard vnto his owne degre:
For, sir, it is no maistrie for a lord
To dampne a man, without answere of word,
And for a lorde, that is full foule to vse;
And it so be, he may him nat excuse,
But asketh mercy with a dreadfull herte,
And profereth him, right in his bare sherte
To ben right at your owne judgement,
Than ought a God by short avisement,
Consider his owne honour, and his trespace,
For sith no cause of death lieth in this case,
You ought to ben the lightlier merciable,
Letteth your ire, and bethe somewhat tretable:
The man hath served you of his conninges,
And forthred well your law in his makinges,
All be it that he can nat well endite,
Yet hath he made leude folke delite
To serve you, in preising of your name,
He made the boke, that hight, the House of Fame,
And eke the Death of Blaunche the Duchesse,
And the Parliament of Foules, as I gesse,
And al the Love of Palamon and Arcite
Of Thebes, though the storie is knowen lite,
And many an himpne, for your holy daies,
That highten Balades, Rondels, Virelaies:
And for to speake of other holinesse,
He hath in prose translated Boece,
And made the Life also of Saint Cecile:
He made also, gone is a great while,
Origenes vpon the Maudelaine:
Him ought now to have the lesse paine,
He hath made many a ley, and many a thing.

"Now as ye be a God, and eke a king,
I your Alceste, whilom queue of Trace,
I aske you this man right of your grace,
That ye him never hurt in al his live,
And he shal swearen to you, and that blive,
He shal never more agilten in this wise,
But shal maken, as ye woll devise,
Of women trewe in loving al hir life,
Where so ye woll, of maiden or of wife,
And forthren you as much as he misseide,
Or in the Rose, or eles in Creseide."

The god of love answerde her thus anon,
"Madame, (quod he) "it is so long agon,
That I you knew, so charitable and trewe,
That never yet, sens the world was newe,
To me ne found I better none than ye,
If that I woll save my degree:
I may nor woll nat werne your request,
Al lieth in you, doth with him as you lest.

"I al foryeve withouten lenger space,
For who so yeveth a yefte or doth a grace,
Do it betime, his thanke shall be the more,
And demeth ye what ye shal do therfore.

"Go thanke now my lady here," (quod he.)
I rose, and doun I set me on my knee,
And said thus: "Madame, the God above
For yelde you that the god of love
Have maked me his wrath to foryeve,
And grace so long for to live,
That I may know sothely what ye be,
That have me holpen, and put in this degre:
But trewly I wende, as in this caas
Nought have a gilte, ne done to love trespas,
For why? a trewe man withouten drede
Hath nat to parten with a theves dede.

"Ne a trewe lover ought me nat to blame,
Though that I speke a false lover some shame:
They ought rather with me for to hold,
For that I of Creseide wrote or told,
Or of the rose, what so mine author ment,
Algate God wotte it was mine entent
To forthren trouth in love, and it cherice,
And to ben ware fro falsenesse and fro vice,
By which ensample, this was my mening."

And she answerde, "Let be thine arguing,
For love ne wol not counterpleted be,
Ne right ne wrong, and lerne that of me:
Thou hast thy grace, and hold the right thereto:
Now woll I saine what penance thou shalt do
For thy trespace, vnderstand it here:
Thou shalt while that thou livest yere by yere,
The most partie of thy time spende,
In making of a glorious legende,
Of good women, maidenes, and wives,
That weren trewe in loving al hir lives,
And tell of false men that hem betraien,
That al hir life ne do nat but assaien
How many women they may done a shame,
For in your world that is now hold a game:
And though thee like nat a lover be,
Speke wel of love, this penance yeve I thee,
And to the god of love I shal so pray,
That he shal charge his servaunts by any way,
To forthren thee, and wel thy labour quite,
Go now thy waie, this penaunce is but lite:
And whan this boke is made, yeve it the quene
On my behalfe, at Eltham, or at Shene."
The god of love gan smile, and than he said:
"Wost thou," (quod he) "where this be wife or maid,
Or queene, or countesse, or of what degree,
That hath so littell penaunce yeven thee,
That hast deserved sore for to smart,
But pite renneth sone in gentle herte:

That maist thou sene, she kitheth what she is."
And I answerde, " Naie, sir, so have I blis,
No more, but that I see well she is good."
" That is a trewe tale by mine hood,"
(Quod Love) " and thou knowest wel parde,
If it be so that thou avise the:
Hast thou nat in a booke in thy cheste,
The great goodnesse of the quene Alceste,
That turned was into a daiesie,
She that for her husband chese to die,
And eke to gone to Hell, rather than he,
And Hercules rescued her parde,
And brought her out of Hel againe to blis?"
And I answerde againe, and said " Yes,
Now know I her, and is this good Alceste,
The daiesie, and mine owne hertes reste?
Now fele I well the goodnesse of this wife,
That both after her death, and in her life,
Her great bounte doubleth her renoun,
Wel hath she quit me mine affectioun,
That I have to her floure the daiesie,
No wonder is though Jove her stellifie,
As telleth Agaton, for her great goodnesse,
Her white corowne beareth of it witnesse:
For all so many vertues had she,
As smal florounes in her corowne be,
In remembraunce of her, and in honour,
Cibilla made the daiesie and the floure,
I crowned al with white, as men may se,
And Mars yave to her a corowne reed parde,
In stede of rubies set among the white:"
Therewith this quene woxe reed for shame alite,
Whan she was praysed so in her presence,
Than said Love, "A full great negligence
Was it to thee, that ilke time thou made,
(Hide Absolon thy tresses) in balade,
That thou forget in thy songe to sette,
Sith that thou art so greatly in her dette,
And wost well that kalender is she
To any woman, that woll lover be:
For she taught all the craft of trewe loving,
And namely of wifehode the living,
And all the bondes that she ought keepe;
Thy litel witte was thilke time a sleepe:
But now I charge thee vpon thy life,
That in thy legende make of this wife,
Whan thou hast other smale imade before:
And fare now well, I charge thee no more,
But er I go, thus much I will the tell,
Ne shal no trewe lover come in Hell.
" These other ladies sitting here a rowe,
Ben in my balade, if thou const hem know,
And in thy bokes, al thou shalt hem find,
Have hem now in thy legende al in mind,
I meane of hem that ben in thy knowing,
For here ben twenty thousand mo sitting
Than thou knowest, good women all,
And trewe of love, for ought that may befall:
Make the metres of hem as the lest,
I mote gone home, the Sunne draweth west,
To Paradis, with all this companie,
And serve alway the fresh daiesie.
At Cleopatras I woll that thou begin,
And so forth, and my love so shalt thou win,
For let see now what man that lover be,
Wol done so strong a paine for love as she.
I wote well that thou maist nat all it rime,
That suche lovers did in hir time:
It were too long to reden and to here,
Suffiseth me thou make in this maniere,
That thou reherce of al her life the great,
After these old authours listen for to treat,
For who so shall so many a story tell,
Sey shortely or he shall to long dwell:"
And with that worde my bookes gan I take,
And right thus on my legende gan I make.

THUS ENDETH THE PROLOGUE.

HERE BEGINNETH

THE LEGENDE OF CLEOPATRAS

QUEENE OF EGYPT.

After the death of Ptholome the king,
That all Egypt had in his governing,
Reigned his queene Cleopatras,
Till on a time befel there such a caas,
That out of Rome was sent a senatour,
For to conqueren realmes and honour,
Unto the toune of Rome, as was vsaunce,
To have the world at her obeisaunce,
And soth to say, Antonius was his name,
So fil it, as fortune him ought a shame,
Whan he was fallen in prosperite,
Rebel vnto the toune of Rome is he,
And over al this, the suster of Cesare
He left her falsely, er that she was ware,
And would algates han another wife,
For which he toke with Rome and Cesar strife.
Nathelesse, forsoth this ilke senatour,
Was a full worthy gentill werriour,
And of his deth it was ful great damage,
But Love had brought this man in such a rage
And him so narow bounden in his laas,
And all for the love of Cleopatras,
That al the world he set at no value,
Him thought there was nothing to him so due,
As Cleopatras, for to love and serve,
Him thought that in armes for to sterve
In the defence of her, and of her right.
This noble quene, eke loved so this knight,
Through his desert, and for his chevalrie,
As certainly, but if that bokes lie,
He was of person, and of gentilnesse,
And of discretion, and of hardinesse,
Worthy to any wight that liven may,
And she was faire, as is the rose in Maie:
And, for to maken shorte is the best,
She woxe his wife, and had him as her lest.
The wedding and the feast to devise,
To me that have itake such emprise,
And so many a storie for to make,
It were to longe, lest that I should slake
Of thing that beareth more effect and charge,
For men may overlade a ship or barge,
And forthy, to effect than woll I skippe,
And al the remnaunt I woll let it slippe.
Octavian, that wood was of this dede,
Shope him an hooste on Antony to lede,
Al vtterly for his distruction,
With stoute Romaines, cruell as lion;
To ship they went, and thus I let hem saile.
Antonius was ware, and woll nat faile
To meten with these Romaines, if he may,
Toke eke his rede, and both vpon a day
His wife and he, and all his host forth went
To ship anone, no lenger they ne stent,

And in the see it happed hem to mete;
Up goeth the trumpe, and for to shoute and shete,
And painen hem to set on with the Sunne,
With grisly sown out goeth the great gunne,
And hertely they hurtlen in all at ones,
And fro the top doune cometh the great stones,
In goeth the grapenel so full of crokes,
Among the ropes ran the shering hokes,
In with the polaxe preaseth he and he,
Behind the maste beginneth he to flee,
And out againe, and driveth him over borde,
He sticketh him vpon his speares orde,
He rent the saile with hookes like a sith,
He bringeth the cup, and biddeth hem be blith,
He poureth peesen vpon the hatches slider,
With pottes full of lime, they gone togider,
And thus the longe day in fight they spend,
Till at the last, as every thing hath end,
Antony is shent, and put him to the flight,
And all his folke to go, that best go might,
Fleeth eke the quene, with all her purple saile,
For strokes which that went as thicke as haile,
No wonder was, she might it nat endure:
And whan that Antony saw that aventure,
" Alas" (quod he) " the day that I was borne,
My worship in this day thus have I lorne,"
And for dispaire out of his wit he start,
And rofe himselfe anon throughout the herte,
Ere that he ferther went out of the place:
His wife, that could of Cesar have no grace,
To Egipt is fled, for drede and for distresse,
But herkeneth ye that speken of kindnesse.
Ye men that falsely swearen many an oth,
That ye woll die, if that your love be wroth,
Here may ye seene of women such a trouth.
This woful Cleopatra had made such routh,
That there nis tonge none that may it tell,
But on the morow she woll no lenger dwell,
But made her subtill werkmen make a shrine
Of all the rubies and the stones fine
In all Egipt that she coulde espie,
And put full the shrine of spicerie,
And let the corse enbaume, and forth she fette
This dead corse, and in the shrine it shette,
And next the shrine a pit than doth she grave,
And all the serpentes that she might have,
She put hem in that grave, and thus she seid:
" Now love, to whom my sorowfull herte obeid,
So ferforthly, that fro that blisfull hour
That I you swore to ben all freely your,
I meane you, Antonius my knight,
That never waking in the day or night,
Ye nere out of mine hertes remembraunce,
For wele or wo, for carole, or for daunce,
And in my selfe this covenaunt made I tho,
That right such as ye felten wele or wo,
As ferforth as it in my power lay,
Unreprovable vnto my wifehood aye,
The same would I felen, life or death,
And thilke covenaunt while me lasteth breath
I woll fulfill, and that shall well be seene,
Was never vnto her love a truer queene:"
And with that word, naked with full good herte,
Among the serpents in the pit she start,
And there she chese to have her burying.
Anone the neders gonne her for to sting,
And she her death receiueth with good chere,
For love of Antony that was her so dere.
And this is storiall, sooth it is no fable:
Now ere I find a man thus true and stable,
And wolt for love his death so freely take,
I pray God let our hedes never ake.

THE

LEGEND OF TISBE OF BABILON.

At Babiloine whylome fill it thus,
The whiche toun the queen Simiramus
Let dichenal about, and walles make
Full hie, of harde tiles well ibake:
There were dwelling in this noble toun,
Two lordes, which that were of great renoun,
And woneden so nigh vpon a grene,
That ther nas but a stone wal hem between,
As oft in great tounes is the wonne:
And sothe to saine, that one man had a sonne,
Of all that lond one of the lustiest,
That other had a doughter, the fairest
That estward in the world was tho dwelling;
The name of everiche, gan to other spring,
By women that were neighbours aboute,
For in that countre yet withouten doute,
Maidenes ben ikept for ielousie
Ful straite, lest they didden some folie.
This yonge man was cleped Piramus,
Thisbe hight the maide, (Naso saith thus)
And thus by report was hir name ishove,
That as they woxe in age, so woxe hir love:
And certaine, as by reason of hir age,
Ther might have ben betwixt hem mariage,
But that hir fathers nolde it nat assent,
And bothe in love ilike sore they brent,
That none of all hir friendes might it lette,
But prively sometime yet they mette
By sleight, and spaken some of hir desire,
As wrie the glede and hotter is the fire,
Forbid a love, and it is ten times so wode.
This wal, which that bitwixt hem both stode,
Was cloven atwo, right fro the top adoun,
Of old time, of his foundatioun,
But yet this clift was so narrow and lite
It was nat seene, dere inough a mite,
But what is that, that love cannot espie?
Ye lovers two, if that I shall not lie,
Ye founden first this little narrow clift,
And with a sound, as soft as any shrift,
They let hir wordes through the clifte pace,
And tolden, while that they stoden in the place,
All hir complaint of love, and all hir wo,
At every time whan they durst so.
On that one side of the wall stood he,
And on that other side stood Tisbe,
The sweet soune of other to receive,
And thus hir wardeins would they disceive,
And every daie this wall they would threte,
And wish to God that it were doun ibete,
Thus wold they sain, " Alas, thou wicked wall,
Through thine enuie thou vs lettest all,
Why nilt thou cleave, or fallen all atwo,
Or at the least, but thou wouldest so,
Yet wouldest thou but ones let vs mete,
Or ones that we might kissen swete,
Than were we cured of our cares cold,
But nathelesse, yet be we to thee hold,

In as much as thou suffrest for to gone,
Our words through thy lime and eke thy stone,
Yet ought we with thee ben well apaid."
And whan these idle wordes weren said,
The cold wall they wouldden kisse of stone,
And take hir leave, and forth they wolden gone,
And this was gladly in the eventide,
Or wonder erly, least men it espide.
And long time they wrought in this manere,
Till on a day, whan Phebus gan to clere,
Aurora with the stremes of her hete,
Had dried vp the dew of herbes wete,
Unto this clift, as it was wont to be,
Come Piramus, and after come Tisbe,
And plighten trouthe fully in hir faie,
That ilke same night to steale awaie,
And to beguile hir wardeins everychone,
And forth out of the citie for to gone,
And for the fieldes ben so brode and wide,
For to mete in o place at o tide,
They set markes, hir meetings should be
There king Ninus was grauen, vnder a tree,
For old painems, that idolles heried,
Useden tho in fields to ben buried,
And fast by his grave was a well,
And shortely of this tale for to tell,
This couenaunt was affirmed wonder fast,
And long hem thought that the Sonne last,
That it nere gone vnder the see adoun.
This Tisbe hath so great affectioun,
And so great liking Piramus to see,
That whan she saw her time might be,
At night she stale away full prively,
With her face iwimpled subtelly,
For all her friends (for to save her trouth)
She hath forsake alas, and that is routh,
That ever woman woulde be so trew,
To trusten man, but she the bet him knew:
And to the tree she goeth a full good pace,
For love made her so hardy in this case,
And by the well adoun she gan her dresse,
Alas, than commeth a wild lionesse
Out of the wood, withouten more arrest,
With bloody mouth, strangling of a beast,
To drinken of the well there as she sat,
And whan that Tisbe had espied that,
She rist her vp, with a full drery herte,
And in a caue, with dreadfull foot she start,
For by the Moone she saw it well withall.
And as she ran, her wimple let she fall,
And toke none hede, so sore she was a whaped,
And eke so glad that she was escaped,
And that she sat, and lurketh wonder still:
Whan that this lionesse hath dronke her fill,
About the well gan she for to wind,
And right anon the wimple gan she find,
And with her bloody mouth it all to rent,
Whan this was done, no lenger she ne stent,
But to the wood her way than hath she nome.
And at the last this Piramus is come,
But all too long (alas) at home was hee,
The Moone shone, men might well isee,
And in his way, as that he come full fast,
His eyen to the ground adoun he cast,
And in the sonde, as he beheld adoun,
He saw the steppes brode of a lioun,
And in his herte he suddainly agrose,
And pale he wext, therwith his herte arose,
And nere he came, and found the wimple torne,
" Alas" (quod he) " the day that I was borne,
This o night woll both vs lovers slee,
How should I asken mercy of Tisbee,
Whan I am he that have you slaine, alas,
My bidding hath you slaine in this caas,
Alas, to bidde a woman gone by night
In place thereas perill fallen might,
And I so slow, alas I ne had be
Here in this place, a furlong way ere ye,
Now what lion that is in this forrost,
My body mote he rente, or what beast
That wild is, gnawen mote he mine herte,"
And with that word he to the wimple start,
And kist it oft, and wept on it full sore,
And said, " Wimple, alas there nis no more,
But thou shalt feele as well the blood of me,
As thou hast felt the bleeding of Tisbe:"
And with that word he smote him to the herte,
The blood out of the woundes as broad start,
As water, whan the conduit broken is.
Now Tisbe, which that wist nat this,
But sitting in her drede, she thought thus,
" If it so fall out that my Piramus
Be comen hither, and may me nat ifind,
He may me holden false, and eke vnkind,"
And out she commeth, and after him gan espien,
Both with her herte, and with her eien,
And thought, " I woll him tellen of my drede,
Both of the lionesse and of my dede."
And at the last her love than hath she found,
Beating with his heeles on the ground,
All bloody, and therewithall abacke she start,
And like the wawes, quappe gan her herte,
And pale as boxe she woxe, and in a throw
Avised her, and gan him well to know,
That it was Piramus her herte dere.
Who could write whiche a deadly chere
Hath Tisbe now, and how her haire she rent,
And how she gan her selfe to turment,
And how she lieth and swouneth on the ground,
And how she wept of teares full his wound,
How medleth she his blood with her complaint,
How with her blood her selven gan she paint,
How clippeth she the red corse, alas,
How doth this wofull Tisbe in this caas,
How kisseth she his frosty mouth so cold:
" Who hath don this? and who hath ben so bold
To sleen my lefe? o speake Piramus,
I am thy Tisbe, that thee calleth thus,"
And therwithall she lifteth vp his head.
This wofull man that was nat fully dead,
Whan that he herd the name of Tisbe crien,
On her he cast his heavy deadly eyen,
And doun againe, and yeeldeth vp the ghost.
Tisbe rist vp, without noise or bost,
And saw her wimple and his empty sheath,
And eke his swerd, that him hath done to death,
Than spake she thus, "Thy woful hand" (quod she)
" Is strong ynough in such a werke to me,
For love shall yeve me strength and hardinesse,
To make my wound large ynough I gesse,
I woll thee followen dead, and I woll be
Felaw, and cause eke of thy death," (quod she)
" And though that nothing save the death only,
Might thee fro me depart trewly,
Thou shalt no more departe now fro me
Than fro the death, for I woll go with thee.
" And now ye wretched jelous fathers our,
We that weren whylome children your,
We praien you, withouten more enuie,
That in o grave we moten lie,

Sens love hath brought vs to this pitous end,
And right wise God, to every lover send,
That loveth trewly, more prosperite
Than ever had Piramus and Tisbe,
And let no gentill woman her assure,
To putten her in such an aventure,
But God forbid but that a woman can
Ben as true and loving as a man,
And for my part I shall anon it kithe:"
And with that word, his swerde she tooke swithe,
That warme was of her loves blood, and hote,
And to the herte she her selven smote.
And thus are Tisbe and Piramus ago,
Of true men I find but few mo
In all my bookes, save this Piramus,
And therefore have I spoken of him thus;
For it is deintie to vs men to find
A man that can in love be true and kind.
Here may ye seene, what lover so he be,
A woman dare, and can as well as he.

THE LEGEND OF DIDO,

QUEENE OF CARTAGE.

Glory and honour, Virgile Mantuan,
Be to thy name, and I shall as I can
Follow thy lanterne, as thou goest beforne,
How Eneas to Dido was forsworne,
In thine Eneide, and Naso woll I take
The tenour and the great effects make,
Whan Troy brought was to destruction
By Grekes sleight, and namely by Sinon,
Faining the horse offred vnto Minerue,
Thrugh which that many a Troian must sterve,
And Hector had after his death apered,
And fire so wood, it might nat ben stered,
In all the noble toure of Ilion,
That of the citie was the cheefe dungeon,
And all the country was so low ybrought,
And Priamus the king fordone and nought,
And Eneas was charged by Venus
To flien away, he tooke Ascanius
That was his son, in his right hand and fled,
And on his backe he bare and with him led
His old father, cleped Anchises,
And by the way his wife Creusa he lees,
And mokell sorrow had he in his mind,
Ere that he coulde his fellawship find:
But at the last, whan he had hem found,
He made him redy in a certaine stound,
And to the sea full fast he gan him hie,
And saileth forth with all his companie
Towards Itaile, as would destinee:
But of his aventures in the see,
Nis nat to purpose for to speke of here,
For it accordeth nat to my matere,
But as I said, of him and of Dido
Shall be my tale, till that I have do.
So long he sailed in the salt see,
Till in Libie vnneth arriued he,
So was he with the tempest all to shake,
And whan that he the haven had itake,
He had a knight was called Achatees,
And him of all his fellowship he chees,
To gone with him, the country for tespie,
He tooke with him no more companie,
But forth they gon, and left his ships ride,
His feere and he, withouten any guide.
So long he walketh in this wildernesse,
Till at the last he met an hunteresse,
A bow in hond, and arrowes had she,
Her clothes cutted were vnto the knee,
But she was yet the fairest creature
That ever was iformed by nature,
And Eneas and Achates she gret,
And thus she to hem spake, whan she hem met.
"Saw ye" (quod she) "as ye han walked wide,
Any of my sustren walke you beside,
With any wild bore or other beast,
That they have hunted into this forrest,
Itucked vp with arrowes in her caas?"
"Nay sothly lady" (quod this Eneas)
"But by thy beautie, as it thinketh me,
Thou mightest never yearthly woman be,
But Phebus suster art thou, as I gesse,
And if so be that thou be a goddesse,
Have mercy on our labour and our wo."
"I nam no goddesse soothly" (quod she tho)
For maidens walken in this country here,
With arrows and with bow, in this manere:
This is the realme of Libie there ye been,
Of which that Dido lady is and queen,"
And shortly told all the occasion
Why Dido came into that region,
Of which as now me listeth nat to rime,
It nedeth nat, it nere but losse of time,
For this is all and some, it was Venus
His owne mother, that spake with him thus,
And to Cartage she bade he should him dight,
And vanished anon out of his sight.
I could follow word for word Vergile,
But it would lasten all to long while.
This noble queen, that cleped was Dido,
That whylom was the wife of Sicheo,
That fairer was than the bright Sunne,
This noble toun of Carthage hath begunne,
In which she reigneth in so great honour,
That she was hold of all quenes flour,
Of gentillesse, of freedome, and of beaute,
That well was him that might her ones se,
Of kings and lordes so desired,
That all the world her beautie had ifired,
She stood so well in every wights grace.
Whan Eneas was come vnto the place,
Unto the maister temple of all the toun,
There Dido was in her deuotioun,
Full prively his way than hath he nome:
Whan he was in the large temple come,
I cannot saine, if that it be possible,
But Venus had him maked invisible,
Thus sayth the booke, withouten any lees.
And whan this Eneas and Achates
Hadden in this temple ben over all,
Than found they depainted on a wall,
How Troy and all the land destroyed was,
"Alas that I was borne" (quod Eneas)
"Through the world our shame is kid so wide,
Now it is painted vpon every side:
We that weren in prosperite,
Ben now disclaundred, and in such degre,
No lenger for to liven I ne kepe,"
And with that word he brast out for to wepe,
So tenderly that routh it was to seene.
This fresh lady, of the citie queen,
Stood in the temple, in her estate roiall,
So richely, and eke so faire withall,

So yong, so lustie, with her eyen glade,
That if that God that Heaven and yearth made,
Would have a love, for beauty and goodnesse,
And womanhede, trouth, and semelinesse,
Whom should he loven but this lady swete?
There nis no woman to him halfe so mete:
Fortune, that hath the world in governaunce,
Hath sodainly brought in so new a chaunce,
That never was there yet so frened a caas,
For all the company of Eneas,
Which that we wend have lorne in the see,
Arrived is nought ferre fro that citee,
For which the greatest of his lords, some
By aventure ben to the citie come
Unto that same temple for to seke
The queene, and of hir socour her beseke,
Such renome was ther sprong of her goodnes.
And whan they had tolde all hir distresse,
And all hir tempest and all hir hard caas,
Unto the queene appeared Eneas,
And openly beknew that it was he,
Who had joy than, but his meine,
That hadden found hir lord, hir governour.
The quene saw they did him such honour,
And had heard of Eneas, ere tho,
And in her herte had routh and wo,
That ever such a noble man as he
Shall ben disherited in such degre,
And saw the man, that he was like a knight,
And suffisaunt of person and of might,
And like to ben a very gentilman,
And well his words he beset can,
And had a noble visage for the nones,
And formed well of brawne and of bones,
And after Venus had such fairenesse,
That no man might be halfe so faire I gesse,
And well a lord him semed for to be,
And for he was a straunger, somewhat she
Liked him the bet, as God doe bote,
To some folke often new thing is sote,
Anon her herte hath pitee of his wo,
And with pitie, love came also,
And thus for pitie and for gentilnesse,
Refreshed must he ben of his distresse.
She said, certes, that she sorry was,
That he hath had such perill and such caas,
And in her friendly speech, in this manere
She to him spake, and sayd as ye may here,
"Be ye nat Venus sonne and Anchises,
In good faith, all the worship and encrees
That I may goodly done you, ye shall have,
Your ships and your meine shall I save,"
And many a gentle word she spake him to,
And commaunded her messengers to go
The same day withouten any faile
His ships for to seeke and hem vitaile,
Full many a beast she to the ships sent,
And with the wine she gan hem to present,
And to her roiall paleis she her sped,
And Eneas she alway with her led.
What nedeth you the feastes to discrive,
He never better at ease was in live,
Full was the feast of deinties and richesse,
Of instruments, of song, and of gladnesse,
And many an amorous looking and devise.
This Eneas is come to Paradise
Out of the swolowe of Hell and thus in joy
Remembreth him of his estate in Troy,
To dauncing chambers full of paraments,
Of rich beds, and of pavements,
This Eneas is ledde after the meat,
And with the queene whan that he had seat,
And spices parted, and the wine agon,
Unto his chamber was he lad anon
To take his ease, and for to have his rest
With all his folke, to done what so him lest.
Ther nas courser well ibridled none,
Ne stede for the justing well to gone,
Ne large palfrey, easie for the nones,
Ne jewell fret full of rich stones
Ne sackes full of gold, of large wight,
Ne rubie none that shineth by night,
Ne gentill hauten faukon hereonere,
Ne hound for hart, wild bore, or dere,
Ne cup of gold, with floreins new ibette,
That in the lond of Libie may ben gette,
That Dido ne hath Eneas it isent,
And all is payed, what that he hath spent.
Thus can this honorable queene her gests call,
As she that can in freedome passen all.
Eneas sothly eke, without lees,
Hath sent to his shippe by Achates
After his sonne, and after rich things,
Both scepter, clothes, broches, and eke rings,
Some for to weare, and some to present
To her, that all these noble things him sent,
And bad his sonne how that he should make
The presenting, and to the quene it take.
Repaired is this Achates againe,
And Eneas full blisfull is and faine,
To seene his yong sonne Ascanius,
For to him it was reported thus,
That Cupido, that is the god of love,
At prayer of his mother high above,
Had the likenesse of the child itake,
This noble queene enamoured for to make
On Eneas: but of that scripture
Be as he may, I make of it no cure,
But soth is this, the queen hath made such chera
Unto this child, that wonder was to here,
And of the present that his father sent,
She thanked him oft in good entent.
Thus is this queen in pleasaunce and joy,
With all these new lustie folke of Troy,
And of the deeds hath she more enquired
Of Eneas, and all the story lered
Of Troy, and all the long day they tway
Entendeden for to speake and for to play,
Of which there gan to breden such a fire,
That silly Dido hath now such desire
With Eneas her new guest to deale,
That she lost her hew and eke her heale.
Now to theffect, now to the fruit of all,
Why I have told this story, and tellen shall.
Thus I begin, it fell vpon a night,
Whan that the Mone vpreised had her light,
This noble queene vnto her rest went,
She sighed sore, and gon her selfe tourment,
She walketh, waloweth, and made many brayd,
As done these lovers, as I have heard sayd,
And at the last, vnto her suster Anne
She made her mone, and right thus spake she than.
"Now dere suster mine, what may it be
That me agasteth in my dreme" (quod she)
"This ilke new Troian is so in my thought,
For that me thinketh he is so well iwrought,
And eke so likely to ben a man,
And therwith so mikell good he can,
That all my love and life lieth in his cure,
Have ye nat heard him tell his aventure?

" Now certes Anne, if that ye rede me,
I woll faine to him iwedded be,
This is the effect, what should I more seine,
In him lieth all, to do me live or deine."
Her suster Anne, as she that coud her good,
Said as her thought, and somdele it withstood,
But hereof was so long a sermoning,
It were to long to make rehearsing:
But finally, it may not be withstonde,
Love woll love, for no wight woll it wonde.
The dawning vp rist out of the see,
This amorous quene chargeth her meine,
The nettes dresse, and speres brode and kene,
In hunting woll this lustie fresh quene,
So pricketh her this new jolly wo,
To horse is all her lustie folke igo,
Unto the court the houndes ben ibrought,
And vp on courser swift as any thought,
Her yong knights heven all about,
And of her women eke an huge rout,
Upon a thicke palfray, paper white,
With saddle redde, embrouded with delite,
Of gold the barres, vp enbossed high,
Sate Dido, all in gold and perrey wrigh,
And she is faire as is the bright morrow,
That healeth sicke folkes of nights sorrow:
Upon a courser, startling as the fire,
Men might tourne him with a little wire.
But Eneas, like Phebus to devise,
So was he fresh arrayed in his wise,
The fomie bridle, with the bitte of gold,
Governeth he right as himselfe hath would,
And forth this noble queene, this lady ride
On hunting, with this Troian by her side,
The herd of hartes founden is anon,
With " Hey go bet, pricke thou, let gon let gon,
Why nill the lion comen or the beare,
That I might him ones meten with this spear,"
Thus saine this yong folke, and vp they kill
The wild hartes, and have hem at hir will.
Emong all this, to romblen gan the Heven,
The thunder rorod with a grisly steven,
Doun come the rain, with haile and sleet so fast,
With Heavens fire, that made so sore agast
This noble queene, and also her meine,
That eche of hem was glad away to flie,
And shortly, fro the tempest her to save,
She fled her selfe into a little cave,
And with her went this Eneas also,
I not with hem if there went any mo,
The authour maketh of it no mention:
And here began the deepe affection
Betwixt hem two, this was the first morrow
Of her gladnesse, and ginning of her sorrow,
For there hath Eneas ikneled so,
And told her all his hurt and all his wo,
And sworne so deepe to her to be true,
For wele or wo, and chaunge for no new,
And as a false lover so well can plaine,
That silly Dido rewed on his paine,
And toke him for husbond, and became his wife
For evermore, while that hem last life,
And after this whan that the tempest stent
With mirth out as they came, home they went.
The wicked fame vp rose, and that anon,
How Eneas hath with the queene igon
Into the cave, and demed as hem list:
And whan the king (that Yarbas hight) it wist,
As he that had her loved ever his life,
And woed her to have her to his wife,
Such sorrow as he hath maked, and such chere,
It is a routh and pitie for to here,
But as in love, alday it happeth so,
That one shall laughen at anothers wo,
Now laughed Eneas, and is in joy,
And more richesse than ever was in Troy.
O silly woman, full of innocence,
Full of pitie, of truth, and continence,
What maked you to men to trusten so?
Have ye such routh vpon hir fained wo,
And have such old ensamples you beforne?
See ye nat all how they ben forsworne,
Where see ye one, that he ne hath laft his lefe,
Or ben vnkind, or done her some mischefe,
Or pilled her or bosted of his dede,
Ye may as well it seene, as ye may rede.
Take hede now of this great gentilman,
This Troian, that so well her please can,
That faineth him so true and obeising,
So gentill, and so privie of his doing,
And can so well done all his obeysaunce
To her, at feasts and at daunce,
And whan she goeth to temple, and home again,
And fasten till he hath his lady sein,
And bearen in his devises for her sake,
Not I nat what, and songs would he make,
Justen, and done of armes many things,
Send her letters, tokens, brooches, and rings.
Now herkneth how he shal his lady serve:
There as he was in perill for to sterve
For hunger and for mischefe in the see,
And desolate, and fled fro his countree,
And all his folke with tempest all to driven,
She hath her body and eke her realme yeven
Into his hond, there she might have been
Of other land than of Cartage a queen,
And lived in joy inough, what would ye more.
This Eneas, that hath thus deepe iswore,
Is wearie of his craft within a throw,
The hote earnest is all overblow,
And prively he doeth his ships dight,
And shapeth him to steale away by night.
This Dido hath suspection of this,
And thought well that it was al amis,
For in his bed he lieth a night and siketh,
She asketh him anon, what him misliketh,
" My dere herte which that I love most."
" Certes" (quod he) " this night my fathers ghost
Hath in my slepe me so sore tourmented,
And eke Mercury his message hath presented,
That needes to the conquest of Itaile
My destinie is soone for to saile,
For which me thinketh, brosten is mine herte:"
Therwith his false teares out they start,
And taketh her within his armes two.
" Is that in earnest" (quod she) " woll ye so,
Have ye nat sworne, to wife me to take,
Alas, what woman woll ye of me make?
I am a gentlewoman, and a queen,
Ye woll not fro your wife thus foule fleen,
That I was borne alas, what shall I do?"
To tellen in short, this noble queen Dido
She seeketh hallowes, and doth sacrifise,
She kneeleth, crieth, that routh is to devise,
Coniureth him, and profereth him to be
His thrall, his servaunt, in the best degre,
She falleth him to foot, and sowneth there,
Discheuile with her bright gilt heere,
And sayth, " Have mercy, let me with you ride,
These lordes, which that wonnen me beside,

Woll me destroyen only for your sake:
And ye woll me now to wife take,
As ye have sworne, than woll I yeve you leve
To slaen me with your swerd now sone at eve,
For than yet shall I dien as your wife,
I am with child, and yeve my child his life,
Mercy lord, have pitie in your thought."
But all this thing availeth her right nought,
And as a traitour forthe gan to saile
Toward the large countrey of Itaile,
And thus hath he laft Dido in wo and pine,
And wedded there a ladie hight Lavine,
A cloth he laft, and eke his sword standing,
Whan he fro Dido stale in her sleeping,
Right at her beds head, so gan he hie,
Whan that he stale away to his nauie.
Which cloth, whan sillie Dido gan awake,
She hath it kist full oft for his sake,
And said, " O sweet cloth, while Jupiter it lest,
Take my soule, vnbind me of this vnrest,
I have fulfilled of fortune all the course,"
And thus alas, withouten his socourse,
Twentie time iswouned hath she than,
And whan that she vnto her suster Anne
Complained had, of which I may not write,
So great routh I have it for to endite,
And bad her norice and her sustren gone
To fetchen fire, and other things anone,
And sayd that she would sacrifie,
And whan she might her time well aspie,
Upon the fire of sacrifice she start,
And with his sword she rofe her to the herte:
But as mine authour saith, yet this she seide,
Or she was hurt, beforne or she deide,
She wrote a letter anon, and thus began.
" Right so" (quod she) " as the white swan
Ayenst his death beginneth for to sing,
Right so to you I make my complaining,
Not that I trow to getten you againe,
For well I wote it is all in vaine,
Sens that the gods ben contrarious to me,
But sin my name is lost through you" (quod she)
" I may well lese a word on you or letter,
Albeit I shall be never the better,
For thilke wind that blew your ship away,
The same wind hath blow away your fay,"
But who so woll all this letter have in mind,
Rede Ovide, and in him he shall it find.

THE

LEGEND OF HIPSIPHILE AND MEDEA.

Thou root of false lovers, duke Jason,
Thou sleer, devourer, and confusion
Of gentlewomen, gentle creatures,
Thou madest thy reclaiming and thy lures
To ladies of thy scathliche apparaunce,
And of thy words farsed with pleasaunce,
And of thy fained trouth, and thy manere,
With thine obeisaunce and humble chere,
And with thine counterfeited paine and wo,
There other falsen one, thou falsed two,
O oft swore thou that thou wouldest die
For love, whan thou ne feltest maladie,
Save foule delite, which thou callest love,
If that I live, thy name shall be shove
In English, that thy deceit shall be know,
Have at thee Jason, now thine honor is blow,
But certes, it is both routh and wo,
That love with false lovers werketh so,
For they shall have well better love and chere
Than he that hath bought love full dere,
Or had in armes many a bloodie boxe,
For ever as tender a capon eateth the foxe,
Though he be fals, and hath the foule betraied,
As shall the good man that therefore paied,
Although he have to the capon skill and right,
The false foxe woll have his part at night.
On Jason this ensample is well iseene,
By Hipsiphile and Medea the queene.
In Thessalie, as Ovide telleth vs,
There was a knight, that hight Peleus,
That had a brother, which that hight Eson,
And whan for age he might vnnethes gon,
He yave to Peleus the governing
Of al his reign, and made him lord and king,
Of which Eson, this Jason getten was,
That in his time in all that land there nas
Nat such a famous knight of gentillesse,
Of freedome, of strength, and of lustinesse,
After his fathers death he bare him so,
That there nas none that list ben his fo,
But did him all honour and companie,
Of which this Peleus hath great envie,
Imagining, that Jason might be
Enhaunsed so, and put in such degre,
With love of lordes of his regioun,
That from his reigne he may be put adoun,
And in his wit a night compassed he
How Jason might best destroyed be,
Withouten slaunder of his compasment:
And at the last he tooke avisement,
That to send him into some ferre countre,
There as this Jason may destroyed be,
This was his wit, all made he to Jason
Great chere of looke, and of affection,
For drede least his lords it espide,
So fell it, as fame ronneth wide,
There was such tiding over all, and such loos,
That in an isle, that called was Colcos,
Beyond Troy eastward in the see,
That there was a ram, that men might see,
That had a flees of gold, that shone so bright,
That no where was there such another sight,
But it was kept alway with a dragoun,
And many other marvailes vp and doun,
And with two buls maked all of bras,
That spitten fire, and much thing there was,
But this was eke the tale nathelees,
That who so would winnen thilke flees,
He must both, or he it winnen might,
With the buls and the dragon fight.
And king Otes lord was of that isle,
This Peleus bethought vpon this while,
That he his nephew Jason would exhort,
To sailen to that lond, him to disport,
And sayd, " Nephew, if it might bee,
That such worship might fall thee,
That thou this famous treasure might win,
And bring it my region within,
It were to me great pleasaunce and honour,
Than were I hold to quite thy labour,
And all thy costes I woll my selfe make,
And chose what folke thou wolt with thee take,
Let see now, darste thou taken this voyage."
Jason was yong, and lustie of corage,
And vndertooke to done this ilke emprise,
Anon Argus his ships gan devise.

With Jason went the strong Hercules,
And many another, that he with him ches,
But who so asketh, who is with him gon,
Let him rede Argonanticon,
For he woll tell a tale long ynough.
Philoctetes anon the saile vp drough,
Whan the wind was good, and gan him hie
Out of his countrey, called Thessalie,
So long they sayled in the salt see,
Till in the isle of Lemnon arrived hee,
All be this nat rehearsed of Guido,
Yet saieth Ovide in his Epistles so,
And of this isle lady was and quene,
The faire yong Hipsiphile the shene,
That whylom Thoas doughter was the king.
Hipsiphile was gone in her playing,
And roming on the clevis by the see,
Under a banke anone espied she
Where lay the ship, that Jason gan arrive:
Of her goodnesse adoune she sendeth blive,
To weten, if that any straunge wight
With tempest thider were iblow anight,
To done him succour, as was her vsaunce,
To furtheren every wight, and done pleasaunce
Of very bountie, and of courtesie.
This messenger adoune him gan to hie,
And found Jason and Hercules also,
That in a cogge to lond were igo,
Hem to refreshen, and to take the aire.
The morning attempre was and faire,
And in hir way this messenger hemmette,
Full cunningly these lordes two he grette,
And did his message, asking hem anon
If that they were broken, or ought wo begon,
Or had need of lodesmen or vitaile,
For succour they should nothing faile,
For it was vtterly the queenes will.
Jason answerde meekely and still:
"My lady" (quod he) "thanke I hertely
Of her goodnesse, vs needeth truly
Nothing as now, but that we weary be,
And come for to play out of the see,
Till that the wind be better in our way."
This lady romeih by the cliffe to play
With her meine, endlong the strond,
And findeth this Jason and this other stond
In speaking of this thing, as I you told.
This Hercules and Jason gan behold
How that the queen it was, and faire her grete,
Anone right as they with this lady mete,
And she tooke heed, and knew by hir manere,
By hir array, by wordes, and by chere,
That it were gentill men of great degree,
And to the castle with her leadeth she
These straunge folk, and doth hem great honour,
And asketh hem of travaile and of labour
That they have suffred in the salt see,
So that within a day two or three
She knew by the folke that in his ships be,
That it was Jason full of renomee,
And Hercules, that had the great loos,
That soughten the aventures of Colcos,
And did hem honour more than before.
And with hem dealed ever longer the more,
For they ben worthy folke withouten lees,
And namely most she spake with Hercules,
To him her herte bare, he should be
Sadde, wise, and true, of words avisee,
Withouten any other affeetion
Of love, or any other imagination.

This Hercules hath this Jason praised,
That to the Sunne he hath it vp raised,
That halfe so true a man there nas of love
Under the cope of Heaven, that is above,
And he was wise, hardie, secret, and riche,
Of these iii points, there nas none him liche,
Of freedome passed he, and lustie head,
Alf tho that liven, or ben dead,
Thereto so great a gentill man was he,
And of Thessalie likely king to be,
There nas no laeke, but that he was agast
To love, and for to speake shamefast,
Him had lever himselfe to murder and die,
Than that men should a lover him espie,
As would God that I had iyeve
My blood and flesh, so that I might live
With the bones, that he had aught where a wife
For his estate, for such a lustie life
She shoulden lede with this lustie knight,
And all this was compassed on the night
Betwixt him Jason, and this Hercules,
Of these two here was a shreud lecs,
To come to house vpon an innocent,
For to bedote this queene was hir entent:
And Jason is as coy as is a maid,
He looketh pitously, but naught he sayd
But freely yave he to her counsailers
Yefts great, and to her officers,
As would God that I leaser had and time,
By processe, all his wrong for to rime:
But in this house, if any false lover be,
Right as himselfe now doth, right so did he,
With faining, and with every subtill dede,
Ye get no more of me, but ye woll rede
Thoriginall, that telleth all the caas,
The sooth is this, that Jason wedded was
Unto this queene, and tooke of her substaunce
What so him list, vnto his purveyaunce,
And vpon her begate children two,
And drough his saile, and saw her never mo:
A letter sent she him certaine,
Which were too long to writen and to saine,
And him reproveth of his great vntrouth,
And praieth him on her to have some routh,
And on his children two, she sayd him this,
That they be like of all thing iwis
To Jason, save they couth nat beguile,
And prayd God, or it were long while,
That she that had his herte ireft her fro,
Must finden him vntrue also:
And that she must both her children spill,
And all tho that suffreth him his will:
And true to Jason was she all her life,
And ever kept her chast, as for his wife,
Ne never had she joy at her harte,
But died for his love of sorrowes smart.
To Colcos come is this duke Jason,
That is of love devourer and dragon,
As matire appeteth forme alway,
And from forme to forme it passen may,
Or as a well that were bottomles,
Right so can Jason have no pees,
For to desiren through his appetite,
To done with gentlewomen his delite,
This is his lust, and his felicite,
Jason is romed forth to the citie,
That whylome cleped was Jasonicos,
That was the master toune of all Colcos,
And hath itold the cause of his comming
Unto Otes, of that countrey king,

Praying him that he must done his assay
To get the fleece of gold, if that he may,
Of which the king assenteth to his boone,
And doth him honour, as it is doone,
So ferforth, that his doughter and his heire,
Medea, which that was so wise and faire,
That fairer saw there never man with eie,
He made her done to Jason companie
At meat, and sitte by him in the hall.
Now was Jason a seemely man withall,
And like a lord, and had a great renoun,
And of his looke as royall as a lioun,
And godly of his speech, and famillere,
And coud of love all the craft and art plenere
Withouten booke, with everiche observaunce,
And as fortune her ought a foule mischaunce,
She woxe enamoured vpon this man.
"Jason," (quod she) "for ought I see or can,
As of this thing, the which ye ben about,
Ye and your selfe ye put in much dout,
For who so woll this aventure atcheve,
He may nat wele asterten as I leve,
Withouten death, but I his helpe be,
But nathelesse, it is my will," (quod she)
"To forthren you, so that ye shall nat die,
But turnen sound home to your Thessalie."
"My right lady," (quod this Jason) "tho,
That ye have of my death or my wo
Any regard, and done me this honour,
I wot well, that my might, ne my labour,
May nat deserve it my lives day,
God thanke you, there I ne can ne may,
Your man am I, and lowely you beseech
To ben my helpe, withouten more speech,
But certes for my death shall I not spare."
Tho gan this Medea to him declare
The perill of this case, fro point to point
Of his batayle, and in what desioint
He mote stonde, of which no creature
Save only she, ne might his life assure:
And shortly, right to the point for to go,
They ben accorded fully betwixt hem two,
That Jason shall her wedde, as true knight,
And terme yset to come soone at night
Unto her chambre, and make there his othe
Upon the goddes, that he for lefe or lothe
Ne shulde her never falsen night ne day,
To ben her husband whyle he live may,
As she that from his deth him saved here,
And her vpon at night they mete yfere,
And doth his othe, and gothe with her to bedde,
And on the morow vpward he him spedde,
For she hath taught him how he shall nat faile
The flees to winne, and stinten his bataile,
And saved him his life, and his honour,
And gate him a name, as a conquerour,
Right through the sleight of her enchantment,
Now hath Jason the flese, and home is went
With Medea, and treasours fell great wonne,
But vnwist of her father she is gonne
To Thessalie, with duke Jason her lefe,
That afterward hath broght her to mischeife,
For as a traytour he is from her go,
And with her left yong children two,
And falsely hath betraied her, alas,
And ever in love a chefe traytour he was,
And wedded yet the thirde wife anon,
That was the doughter of king Creon,
This is the meede of loving and guerdon,
That Medea received of duke Jason
Right for her trouth, and for her kindnesse,
That loved him better than her selfe I gesse,
And left her father, and her heritage,
And of Jason this is the vassalage,
That in his dayes nas never none yfound
So false a lover, going on the ground,
And therfore in her letter thus she said,
First whan she of his falsenesse him vpbraid:
"Why liked thee my yellow haire to see,
More than the bounds of mine honestie?
Why liked me thy youth and thy fairenesse,
And of thy tong the infinite graciousnesse?
O baddest thou in thy conquest dead ybe,
Ful mikel vntrouth had there diede with thee."
Well can Ovide her letter in verse endite.
Which were as now too long for to write.

THE

LEGEND OF LUCRECE OF ROME.

Now mote I saine thexiling of kings
Of Rome, for hir horrible doings
Of the last king Tarquinius,
As saith Ovid, and Titus Liuivs,
But for that cause tell I nat this storie,
But for to praysen, and drawen in memorie
The very wife, the very Lucresse,
That for her wifehood, and her stedfastnesse,
Nat only that the paines her commend,
But that cleped is in our legend
The great Austyn, that hath compassioun
Of this Lucrece that starfe in Rome toun,
And in what wise I woll but shortly treat,
And of this thing I touch but the great.
When Ardea besieged was about
With Romanes, that full sterne were and stout,
Full long lay the siege, and little wroughten,
So that they were halfe idle, as hem thoughten,
And in his play Tarquinius the yong,
Gan for to yape, for he was light of tong,
And said, that "it was an idle life,
No man did there no more than his wife,
And let vs speke of wives that is best,
Praise every man his owne as him lest,
And with our speech let vs ease our herte."
A knight (that hight Collatin) vp stert,
And sayd thus, "Nay, sir, it is no nede
To trowen on the word, but on the dede:
I have a wife," (quod he) "that as I trow
Is holden good of all that ever her know,
Go we to Rome to night, and we shull see."
Tarquinius answerde, "That liketh mee."
To Rome they be comen, and fast hem dight
To Colatins house, and downe they light,
Tarquinius, and eke this Colatine,
The husbond knew the eftens well and fine,
And full prively into the house they gone.
Nor at the gate porter was there none,
And at the chamber dore they abide:
This noble wife sate by her beds side
Discheueled, for no mallice she ne thought,
And soft wooll sayth Liuie, that she wrought,
To kepe her from slouth and idlenesse,
And bad her servaunts done hir businesse,
And asketh hem, "What tidings heren ye?
How sayth men of the siege, how shall it be?

God would the wals were fallen adoun,
Mine husbond is too long out of this toun,
For which drede doth me sore to smert,
Right as a sword it stingeth to mine herte,
Whan I thinke on this or of that place,
God save my lord, I pray him for his grace:"
And therwithall so tenderly she gan weepe,
And of her werke she tooke no more keepe,
But meekely she let her eyen fall,
And thilke semblant sate her well withall,
And eke her teares full of heavinesse,
Embelessed her wifely chastnesse.
Her countenaunce is to her herte digne,
For they acordeden in deed and signe,
And with that word her husbond Collatin,
Or she of him was ware, came stertling in,
And said, "Drede thee nat, for I am here,"
And she anone vp rose, with blisfull chere,
And kissed him, as of wives is the wonne.
Tarquinius, this proud kings sonne
Conceived hath her beautie and her chere,
Her yellow haire, her bountie, and her manere,
Her hew, her words, that she hath complained,
And by no craft her beautie was nat fained,
And caught to this lady such desire,
That in his herte he brent as any fire,
So woodly, that his wit was all forgotten,
For well thought he she should nat be gotten,
And aye the more he was in dispaire,
The more coveiteth, and thought her faire,
His blind lust was all his coveiting.
On morrow, whan the bird began to sing,
Vnto the siege he commeth full prively,
And by himselfe he walketh soberly,
The image of her recording alway new,
Thus lay her hair, and thus fresh was her hew,
Thus sate, thus span, this was her chere,
Thus fair she was, and this was her manere:
All this conceit his herte hath new itake,
And as the see, with tempest all to shake,
That after whan the storme is all ago,
Yet woll the water quappe a day or two,
Right so, though that her forme were absent,
The pleasaunce of her forme was present,
But nathelesse, nat pleasaunce, but delite,
Or an vnrightfull talent with dispite,
"For maugre her, she shall my lemman be:
Hap helpeth hardy man alway," (quod he)
"What end that I make, it shall be so,"
And girt him with his sword, and gan to go,
And he forthright, till to Rome he come,
And all alone his way that he hath nome,
Unto the house of Colatin full right,
Doun was the Sunne, and day hath lost his light,
And in he come, vnto a privie halke,
And in the night full theefely gan he stalke,
Whan every wight was to his rest brought,
Ne no wight had of treason such a thought,
Whether by window, or by other gin,
With swerd ydraw, shortly he commeth in
There as she lay, this noble wife Lucresse,
And as she woke, her bedde she felt presse:
"What beast is that,"(quod she) "that wayeth thus?
"I am the kings sonne Tarquinius,"
(Quod he) "but and thou crie, or any noise make,
Or if thou any creature awake,
By thilke God, that formed man of live,
This swerd through thine herte shall I rive,"
And therwithall vnto her throte he stert,
And set the swerd all sharpe on her herte:
No word she spake, she hath no might therto,
What shall she saine, her wit is all ago,
Right as whan a wolfe findeth a lamb alone,
To whom shall she complaine or make mone:
What, shall she fight with an hardy knight,
Well wote men a woman hath no might:
What, shall she crie, or how shall she astert,
That hath her by the throte, with sword at herte?
She asketh grace, and said all that she can.
"No wolt thou nat," (quod this cruell man)
"As wisely Jupiter my soule save,
I shall in thy stable slea thy knave,
And lay him in thy bed, and loud crie,
That I thee find in such avoutrie,
And thus thou shalt be dead, and also lese
Thy name, for thou shalt nat chese."
This Romans wives loveden so her name
At thilke time, and dreden so the shame,
That what for fere of slander, and drede of death
She lost both at ones wit and breath,
And in a swough she lay, and woxe so dead,
Men mighten smite off her arme or head,
She feleth nothing, neither foule ne faire.
Tarquinius, that art a kings heire,
And shouldest as by linage and by right
Done as a lord, and a very knight,
Why hast thou done dispite to chivalrie?
Why hast thou done thy lady villanie?
Alas, of thee this was a villanous dede,
But now to the purpose, in the story I rede,
Whan he was gon, and this mischaunce is fall,
This lady sent after her friendes all,
Father, mother, and husbond, all ifere,
And discheveled with her haire clere,
In habite such as women vsed tho
Unto the burying of hir frends go,
She sate in hall, with a sorowfull sight,
Her friends asken what her aylen might,
And who was dead, and she sate aye weeping,
A word for shame ne may she forth out bring,
Ne vpon hem she durst nat behold,
But at the last of Tarquiny she hem told
This rufull case, and all this thing horrible,
The wo to tell were impossibie
That she and all her friends make at ones,
All had folkes hertes ben of stones,
It might have maked hem vpon her rew,
Her herte was so wifely and so trew,
She said, that for her gilt ne for her blame
Her husbond should nat have the foule name,
That would she nat suffren by no way:
And they answerde all vnto her fay,
That they foryave it her, for it was right,
It was no gilt, it lay nat in her might,
And saiden her ensamples many one,
But all for naught, for thus she said anone:
"Be as be may," (quod she) "of forgiving,
I will nat have no forgift for nothing,"
But prively she cought forth a knife,
And therwithall she raft her selfe her life,
And as she fell adowne she cast her looke,
And of her clothes yet heed she tooke,
For in her falling yet she had a care,
Least that her feet or such things lay bare,
So well she loved cleannesse, and eke trouth,
Of her had all the towne of Rome routh,
And Brutus hath by her chast blood swore,
That Tarquin should ybanished be therfore,
And all his kinne, and let the people call,
And openly the tale he told hem all,

And openly let carry her on a bere
Through all the town, that men may see and here
The horrible deed of her oppressioun,
Ne never was there king in Rome toun
Sens thilke day, and she was holden there
A saint, and ever her day yhallowed dere,
As in hir law: and thus endeth Lucresse
The noble wife, Titus beareth witnesse:
I tell it, for she was of love so trew,
Ne in her will she chaunged for no new,
And in her stable herte, sadde and kind,
That in these women men may all day find
There as they cast hir herte, there it dwelleth,
For well I wote, that Christ himselfe telleth,
That in Israel, as wide as is the lond,
That so great faith in all the lond he ne fond,
As in a woman, and this is no lie,
And as for men, looke ye such tyrannie
They doen all day, assay hem who so list,
The truest is full brothell for to trist.

THE

LEGEND OF ARIADNE OF ATHENS.

Judge infernall Minos, of Crete king,
Now commeth thy lot, thou commest on the ring,
Nat for thy sake only written is this storie,
But for to clepe ayen vnto memorie,
Of Theseus the great vntrouth of love,
For which the gods of Heaven above
Ben wroth, and wrath have take for thy sinne,
Be red for shame, now I thy life beginne.

Minos, that was the mighty king of Crete,
That had an hundred cities strong and grete,
To schoole hath sent his sonne Androgeus
To Athens, of the which it happed thus,
That he was slaine, learning phylesophie,
Right in that citie, nat but for envie.

The great Minos, of the which I speke,
His sonnes death is come for to wreke,
Alcathoe he besieged hard and long,
But nathelesse, the walles be so strong,
And Nisus, that was king of that cite,
So chivalrous, that little dredeth he,
Of Minos or his hoast tooke he no cure,
Till on a day befell an aventure,
That Nisus doughter stood vpon the wall,
And of the siege saw the manner all:
So happed it, that at scarmishing,
She cast her herte vpon Minos the king,
For his beautie, and his chevalrie,
So sore, that she wende for to die.
And shortly of this processe for to pace,
She made Minos winnen thilke place,
So that the citie was all at his will,
To saven whom him list, or eles spill,
But wickedly he quit her kindnesse,
And let her drench in sorrow and distresse,
Nere that the gods had of her pite,
But that tale were too long as now for me.
Athenes wan this king Minos also,
As Alcathoe, and other townes mo,
And this the effect, that Minos hath so driven
Hem of Athenes, that they mote him yeven
Fro yere to yere her owne children dere
For to be slaine, as ye shall after here.

This Minos hath a monster, a wicked best,
That was so cruell, that without areest,
Whan that a man was brought into his presence,
He would him eat, there helpeth no defence:
And every third yeare withouten dout,
They casten lotte, as it came about,
On rich and poore, he must his sonne take,
And of his childe he must present make
To Minos, to save him or to spill,
Or let his beast devour him at his will.
And this hath Minos done right in dispite,
To wreke his sonne was set all his delite,
And make hem of Athenes his thrall
Fro yere to yere, while he liven shall.
And home he saileth whan this toun is won,
This wicked custome is so long yron,
Till of Athenes king Egeus
Mote senden his owne sonne Theseus,
Sens that the lotte is fallen him vpon
To ben devoured, for grace is there non.
And forth is ladde this wofull yong knight
Unto the country of king Minos full of might,
And in a prison fettred fast is he,
Till the time he should yfreten be.

Well maist thou wepe, O wofull Theseus,
That art a kings sonne, and damned thus,
Me thinketh this, that thou art depe yhold
To whom that saved thee fro cares cold,
And now if any woman helpe thee,
Well oughtest thou her servaunt for to bee,
And ben her true lover yere by yere,
But now to come ayen to my matere.

The tome, there this Theseus is throw,
Down in the bottome derk, and wonder low,
Was joyning to the wall of a foreine,
Longing vnto the doughtren tweine
Of Minos that in hir chambers grete
Dwelten above the maister strete
Of the towne, in joy and in sollas:
Not I nat how it happed percaas,
As Theseus complained him by night,
The kings doughter, that Ariadne hight,
And eke her suster Phedra, herden all
His complaint, as they stood on the wall,
And looked vpon the bright Moone,
Hem list nat to go to bed so soone:
And of his wo they had compassion,
A kings sonne to be in such prison,
And ben devoured, thought hem great pite:
Than Ariadne spake to her suffer free,
And said: "Phedra lefe suster dere,
This wofull lords sonne may ye nat here,
How pitously he complaineth his kin,
And eke his poore estate that he is in?
And guiltlesse, certes now it is routh,
And if ye woll assent, by my trouth,
He shall ben holpen, how so that we do."

Phedra answerde, "Iwis me is as wo
For him, as ever I was for any man,
And to his helpe the best rede I can,
Is, that we done the gailer prively
To come and speke with vs hastely,
And done this wofull man with him to come,
For if he may this monster overcome,
Than were he quit, there is none other boot,
Let vs well taste him at his herte root,
That if so be that he a weapon have,
Where that he his life dare kepe or save,
Fighten with this fiend, and him defend,
For in the prison, here as he shall discend,

Ye wote well, that the beast is in a place
That is not derke, and hath roume and eke space
To welde an axe, or swerde; staffe, or knife,
So that me thinketh he should save his life,
If that he be a man, he shall do so:
And we shall make him balles eke also
Of wexe and towe, that whan he gapeth fast,
Into the beestes throte he shall hem cast,
To sleke his honger, and encomber his teeth,
And right anon whan that Theseus seeth
The beest acheked, he shall on him leepe
To sleen him, or they comen more to keepe:
This weapen shal the gailer, or that tide,
Full prively within the prison hide:
And for the house is crencled to and fro,
And hath so queint waies for to go,
For it is shapen as the maseis wrought,
Thereto have I a remedy in my thought,
That by a clewe of twine, as he hath gon,
The same way he may returne anon,
Folowing alway the threde, as he hath come,
And whan this beest is overcome,
Than may he flien away out of this stede,
And eke the gailer may he with him lede,
And him avaunce at home in his countre,
Sens that so great a lords sonne is he."
This is my rede, if that ye dare it take:
What shold I lenger sermon of it make,
The gailer cometh, and with him Theseus,
Whan these things ben accorded thus.
Downe sate Theseus vpon his knee,
"The right lady of my life," (quod he)
"I sorowfull man, ydamned to the deth
Fro you, whiles that me lasteth breth,
I wol nat twinne, after this aventure,
But in your service, thus I woll endure,
That as a wretch vnknow, I woll you serve
For evermore, till that mine herte sterve,
Forsake I woll at home mine heritage,
And as I said, ben of your court a page,
If that ye vouchsafe that in this place,
Ye graunt me to have soche a grace,
That I may have nat but my meate and drinke,
And for my sustinaunce yet woll I swinke,
Right as you list, that Minos ne no wight,
Sens that he saw me never with eyen sight,
Ne no man else shall me espie,
So slily, and so well I shal me grie,
And me so wel diffigure, and so low,
That in this world there shall no man me know,
To have my life, and to have presence
Of you, that done to me this excellence,
And to my father shall I sende here,
This worthy man, that is your gaylere,
And him so guerdon, that he shall well be
One of the greatest men of my countre,
And if I durst saine, my lady bright,
I am a kings sonne and eke a knight
As wold God, if that it might be,
Ye weren in my countrey all thre,
And I with you, to beare you companie,
Than shuld ye sene if that I thereof lie,
And if that I profer you in lowe manere,
To ben your page, and serven you right here,
But I you serve as lowly in that place,
I pray to Mars to yeve me soch grace,
That shames death on me there mote fall,
And death and poverte to my frends all,
And that my sprite by night mote go,
After my death, and walke to and fro,
That I mote of traitour have a name,
For which my sprit mote go, to do me shame,
And if I clayme ever other degree,
But ye vouchsafe to yeve it mee,
As I have said, of shames death I dey;
And mercy, lady, I can naught eise sey."
A semely knight was this Theseus to see,
And yonge, but of twenty yere and three,
But who so had ysene his countenance,
He wold have wept, for routh of his penance:
For which this Ariadne in this manere,
Answerde to his profre and to his chere.
"A kings sonne, and eke a knight," (quod she)
"To ben my servaunt in so lowe degree,
God shilde it, for the shame of women all,
And lene me never soch a case befall,
And sende you grace, and sleight of herte also
You to defend, and knightly to sleen your foe,
And lene hereafter I may you find
To me, and to my suster here so kind,
That I ne repent nat to yeve you life,
Yet were it better I were your wife,
Sith ye ben as gentill borne as I,
And have a realme nat but fast by,
Than that I suffred your gentillesse to sterve,
Or that I let you as a page serve,
It is no profite, as vnto your kinrede,
But what is that, that man woll nat do for dred,
And to my suster sith that it is so,
That she mote gone with me, if that I go,
Or els suffre death as wel as I,
That ye vnto your sonne as trewly,
Done her be wedded, at your home coming,
This is the finall end of all this thing,
Ye swere it here, vpon all that may be sworne?"
"Ye lady mine," (quod he) "or els to torne
Mote I be with the Minotaure or to morrow,
And haveth here of mine herte blood to borow,
If that ye woll, if I had knife or speare,
I would it letten out, and thereon sweare,
For than at erste, I wot ye would me leve,
By Mars, that is chiefe of my beleve,
So that I might liven, and nat faile
To morow for to taken my bataile,
I nolde never fro this place flie,
Till that ye should the very profe se,
For now, if that the soth I shall you say,
I have loved you full many a day,
Though ye ne wist nat, in my countre,
And aldermost desired you to see,
Of any earthly living creature,
Upon my truth I sweare and you assure,
This seven yere I have your servaunt be,
Now have I you, and also have ye me,
My dere herte, of Athenes duchesse."
This lady smileth at his stedfastnesse,
And at his hertely wordes, and at his chere,
And to her suster said in this manere:
"And sothly suster mine," (quod she)
"Now be we duchesses both I and ye,
And sikerde to the regals of Athenes,
And both hereafter likely to be queenes,
And saved fro his death a kings sonne,
As ever of gentill women is the wonne,
To save a gentil man, enforth his might,
In honest cause, and namely in his right,
Me thinketh no wight ought vs herof blame,
Ne bearen vs therefore an yvel name,"
And shortly of this mater for to make,
This Theseus of her hath leave ytake,

And every point was performed in dede,
As ye have in this covenaunt herde me rede,
His wepen, his clewe, his thing that I have said,
Was by the gailer in the house ylaid,
There as the Minotaure hath his dwelling,
Right fast by the dore, at his entring,
And Theseus is lad vnto his dethe,
And forth vnto this Minotaure he gethe,
And by the teaching of this Adriane,
He overcame this beest, and was his bane,
And out he cometh by the clewe againe
Ful prively, whan he this beest hath slaine,
And the gailer gotten hath a barge,
And of his wives treasure gan it charge,
And toke his wife, and eke her suster free,
And by the gailer, and with hem al three
Is stole away out of the lond by night,
And to the countre of Enupie him dight,
There as he had a frende of his knowing,
There feesten they, there daunsen they and sing,
And in his armes hath this Adriane,
That of the beest hath kept him fro his bane,
And get him there a noble barge anone,
And of his countrey folke a ful great wone,
And taketh his leave, and homeward saileth hee,
And in an yle, amidde the wilde see,
There as there dwelt creature none,
Save wild beestes, and that full many one,
He made his shippe a londe for to sette,
And in that yle halfe a day he lette,
And said, that on the londe he must him rest.
His mariners have done right as him lest,
And for to tell shortly in this caas,
Whan Ariadne his wife a slepe was,
For that her suster fayrer was than she,
He taketh her in his honde, and forth goeth he
To ship, and as a traitour stale away,
While that this Ariadne a slepe lay,
And to his countrey warde he sailed blive,
A twenty divel way, the winde him drive,
And found his father drenched in the see.
Me liste no more to speke of him parde,
These false lovers, poison be hir bane.
But I wol turne againe to Adriane,
That is with slepe for werinesse ytake,
Ful sorowfully her herte may awake.
Alas, for thee mine herte hath pite,
Right in the dawning awaketh she,
And gropeth in the bed, and fond right nought:
"Alas," (quod she) "that ever I was wrought,
I am betrayed," and her heere to rent,
And to the stronde barefote fast she went,
And cried: "Theseus mine herte swete,
Where be ye, that I may nat with you mete?
And might thus with beestes ben yslaine."
The halow rockes answerde her againe,
No man she saw, and yet shone the Moone,
And hie vpon a rocke she went soone,
And sawe his barge sayling in the see,
Cold woxe her herte, and right thus said she:
"Meker then ye find I the beestes wilde."
Hath he nat sinne, that he her thus begilde?
She cried, "O turne againe for routhe and sinne,
Thy barge hath nat all his meine in,"
Her kerchefe on a pole sticked she,
Ascaunce he should it well yse,
And him remembre that she was behind.
And turne againe, and on the stronde her find.
But all for naught, his way he is gone,
And downe she fel a swowne on a stone,
And up she riste, and kissed in all her care
The steppes of his feete, there he hath fare,
And to her bed right thus she speketh tho:
"Thou bed," (quod she) "that hast received two,
Thou shalt answere of two, and not of one,
Where is the greater parte, away gone?
"Alas, wher shal I wretched wight b come?
For though so be that bote none here come,
Home to my countrey dare I nat for drede,
I can my selfe in this case nat rede."
What should I tell more her complaining,
It is so long, it were an heavy thing?
In her epistle, Naso telleth all,
But shortly to the end tell I shall,
The goddes have her holpen for pite,
And in the signe of Taurus men may see,
The stones of her crowne shine clere,
I will no more speake of this matere,
But thus this false lover can begile
His trew love, the divel quite him his wile.

THE

LEGEND OF PHILOMENE.

Thou yever of the formes, that hast wrought
The fayre world, and bare it in thy thought
Eternally, er thou thy werke began,
Why madest thou vnto the slaunder of man,
Or all be that it was not thy doing,
As for that end to make soch a thing,
Why suffredest thou that Tereus was bore,
That is in love so false and so forswore,
That fro this world vp to the first Heven,
Corrumpeth, whan that folke his name neven?
And as to me, so grisly was his dede,
That whan that I this foule storie rede,
Mine iyen wexen foule, and sore also,
Yet lasteth the venime of so longe ago,
That enfecteth him that wolde behold
The storie of Tereus, of which I told,
Of Trace was he lord, and kin to Marte
The cruel god that stante with blody darte,
And wedded had he with blisfull chere
King Pandionis faire doughter dere,
That hight Progne, floure of her countre,
Though Juno list not at the feast be,
Ne Himeneus, that god of wedding is,
But at the feast ready ben iwis,
The furies three, with all hir mortall bronde,
The oule all night above the balkes wonde,
That prophete is of wo, and of mischaunce.
This revell, full of song, and full of daunce,
Last a fourtenight, or little lasse,
But shortly of this storie for to passe,
(For I am weary of him for to tell)
Five yere his wife and he togither dwell,
Till on a day she gan so sore long
To seene her suster, that she saw not long,
That for desire she nist what to say,
But to her husbond gan she for to pray
For Gods love, that she mote ones gone
Her suster for to seene, and come ayen anone,
Or else but she mote to her wend,
She praied him that he would after her send:
And this was day by day all her prayere,
With al humblesse of wifehood, word and chere.

This Tereus let make his ships yare,
And into Grece himselfe is forth ifare,
Unto his father in law gan he pray,
To vouchsafe, that for a moneth or tway,
That Philomene his wives suster might
On Progne his wife but ones have a sight,
" And she shall come to you again anon
My selfe with her, I will both come and gon,
And as my hertes life I will her kepe."
This old Pandion, this king gan wepe
For tendernesse of herte, for to leve
His doughter gon, and for to yeve her leve,
Of all this world he loved nothing so,
But at the last, leave hath she to go,
For Philomene with salt teares eke
Gan of her father grace to beseke,
To seene her suster, that her longeth so,
And him enbraceth, with her armes two,
And there also yong and faire was she,
That whan that Tereus saw her beaute,
And of array, that there was none her liche,
And yet of beautie was she to so riche,
He cast his fierie herte vpon her so,
That he woll have her, how so that it go,
And with his wiles kneled, and so praied,
Till at the last Pandion thus saied.
" Now sonne," (quod he) " that art to me so dere,
I thee betake my yong doughter dere,
That beareth the key of all mine hertes life,
And grete well my doughter, and thy wife,
And yeve her leave sometime for to pley,
That she may seen me ones or I deie."
And sothly he hath made him riche feast,
And to his folke, the most and eke the least,
That with him came: and yave him yefts great,
And him conveieth through the master streat
Of Athenes, and to the sea him brought,
And tourneth home, no malice he ne thought.
The ores pulleth forth the vessell fast,
And into Trace arriveth at the last,
And vp in to a forest he her led,
And to a cave prively he him sped,
And in this darke cave, if her lest
Or list nought, he had her for to rest,
Of which her herte agrose, and saied thus:
" Where is my suster, brother Tereus?"
And therewithall she wept tenderly,
And quoke for feare, pale and pitiously,
Right as the lambe, that of the wolfe is bitten,
Or as the culver, that of the egle is smitten,
And is out of his clawes forth escaped,
Yet it is aferde, and a waped,
Lest it be hent eftsones: so sate she,
But vtterly it may none other be,
By force hath this traitour done a deede,
That he hath reft her of her maidenhede,
Maugre her head, by strength and by his might.
Lo here a deede of men, and that aright.
She crieth " Suster," with full loude steven,
And " Father dere, helpe me God in Heven:"
All helpeth not, and yet this false thefe,
Hath done this lady yet a more mischefe,
For feare lest she should his shame crie,
And done him openly a villanie,
And with his sweard her tong of kerfe he,
And in a castell made her for to be,
Full prively in prison evermore,
And kept her to her vsage and to his store,
So that she ne might never more astarte.
O sely Philomene, wo is in thine herte,
Huge been thy sorowes, and wonder smart,
God wreke thee, and sende thee thy bone,
Now is time I make an end sone,
This Tereus is to his wife icome,
And in his armes hath his wife inome,
And pitiously he wept, and shoke his hedde,
And swore her, that he found her suster dedde,
For which this selie Progne hath soch wo,
That nigh her sorowfull herte brake a two.
And thus in teares let I Progne dwell,
And of her suster forth I woll you tell.
This wofull lady learned had in youth,
So that she worken and enbrauden couth,
And weaven in stole the rade vore,
As it of women hath be woved yore,
And sothly for to saine, she hath her fill
Of meate and drinke, of clothing at her will,
And couthe eke rede well inough and endite,
But with a penne she could not write,
But letters can she weave to and fro,
So that by the yere was all ago,
She had woven in a flames large,
How she was brought fro Athens in a barge,
And in a cave how that she was brought,
And all the thing that Tereus wrought,
She wave it wel, and wrote the storie above,
How she was served for her susters love.
And to a man a ring she yave anon,
And praied him by signes for to gon
Unto the queene, and bearen her that clothe,
And by signe swore many an othe,
She should him yeve what she getten might.
This man anon vnto the quene him dight,
And toke it her, and all the maner told,
And whan that Progne hath this thing behold,
No worde she spake, for sorow and eke for rage,
But fained her to gon on pilgrimage
To Baccus temple, and in a little stound
Her dombe suster sitting hath she found
Weeping in the castell her selfe alone,
Alas the wo, constraint, and the mone
That Progne vpon her dombe suster maketh,
In armes everich of hem other taketh,
And thus I let hem in hir sorow dwell,
The remnaunt is no charge to tell,
For this is all and some, thus was she served
That never agilt, ne deserved
Unto this cruell man, that she of wist.
Ye may beware of men if that you list,
For all be that he woll not for shame
Doen as Tereus, to lese his name,
Ne serve you as a murtherer or a knave,
Full little while shull ye trew him have,
That wol I sain, al were he now my brother,
But it so be that he may have another.

THE

LEGENDE OF PHILLIS.

By prove, as well as by aucthorite,
That wicked fruicte commeth of a wicked tree,
That may ye find, if that it liketh you,
But for this end, I speake this as now,

To tell you of false Demophon,
In love a falser heard I never non,
But it were his father Theseus,
God for his grace fro soch one kepe vs,
Thus these women praien, that it here,
Now to the effect tourne I of my matere.
Destroied is of Troie the citee,
This Demophon came sayling in the see
Toward Athenes, to his paleis large,
With him came many a ship, and many a barge
Full of folke, of which full many one
Is wounded sore, and sieke, and wo begone,
And they have at the seige long ilaine,
Behind him came a winde, and eke a raine,
That shofe so sore, his saile might not stonde,
Him were lever than all the world a londe,
So hunted him the tempest to and fro,
So darke it was, he could no where go,
And with a wave brusten was his stere,
His ship was rent so lowe, in such manere,
That carpenter could it not amende,
The see by night as any torche brende,
For wood, and posseth him vp and doun,
Till Neptune hath of him compassioun,
And Thetis, Chorus, Triton, and they all,
And maden him vp a londe to fall,
Wherof that Phillis lady was and queene,
Lycurgus doughter, fairer vnto seene
Than is the floure again the bright Sonne,
Unneth is Demophon to londe iwonne,
Weake and eke werie, and his folke forpined
Of werinesse, and also enfamined,
And to the death he was almost idriven,
His wise folke consaile have him yeven,
To seken helpe and succour of the queene,
And loken what his grace might bene,
And maken in that lande some chevesaunce,
And kepen him fro wo, and fro misehaunce,
For sicke he was, and almost at the death,
Unneth might he speake, or draw breath,
And lieth in Rhodopeia him for to rest,
Whan he may walk, him thought it was best
Unto the countrey to seeken for succour,
Men knew him wele, and did him honour,
For at Athenes duke and lord was he,
As Theseus his father hath ibe,
That in his time was great of renoun,
No man so great in all his regioun,
And like his father of face and of stature,
And false of love, it came him of nature,
As doth the foxe Renarde, the foxes sonne,
Of kind he could his old father wonne
Without lore, as can a drake swimme
Whan it is caught, and carried to the brimme:
This honorable queen Phillis doth him chere,
Her liketh well his sporte and his manere,
But I am agroted here beforne,
To write of hem that in love been forsworne,
And eke to haste me in my legende,
Which to performe, God me grace sende,
Therfore I passe shortly in this wise,
Ye have well heard of Theseus the gise,
In the betraiyng of faire Adriane,
That of her pite kept him fro his bane,
At short wordes, right so Demophon,
The same way, and the same pathe hath gon
That did his false father Theseus,
For vnto Phillis hath he swome thus,
To wedden her, and her his trouth plight,
And piked of her all the good he might,
Whan he was hole and sound, and had his rest,
And doth with Phillis what so that him lest,
As well I could, if that me list so,
Tellen all his doing to and fro.
He sayd to his countrey mote him saile,
For there he would her wedding apparaile,
As fill to her honour, and his also,
And openly he tooke his leave tho,
And to her swore he would not sojourne,
But in a month again he would retourne,
And in that londe let make his ordinaunce,
As very lorde, and tooke the obeisaunce,
Well and humbly, and his shippes dight,
And home he goeth the next way he might,
For vnto Phillis yet came he nought,
And that hath she so harde and sore ibought,
Alas, as the storie doth us record,
She was her owne death with a corde,
Whan that she saw that Demophon her traied.
But first wrote she to him, and fast him praied
He would come, and deliver her of pain,
As I rehearse shall a worde or twain,
Me liste not vouchsafe on him to swinke,
Dispenden on him a penne full of ynke,
For false in love was he, right as his sire,
The Devill set hir soules both on a fire,
But of the letter of Phillis woll I write,
A worde or twain, although it be but lite.
"Thine hostesse" (quod she) "O Demophon,
Thy Phillis, which that is so wo begon,
Of Rhodopeie, vpon you mote complain,
Over the terme set betwixt vs twain,
That ye ne holden forward, as ye sayd:
Your ancre, which ye in our haven layd,
Hight vs, that ye would comen out of doubt,
Or that the Moone ones went about,
But times fower, the Moone hath hid her face
Sens thilke day ye went fro this place,
And fower times light the world again,
But for all that, yet shall I sothly sain,
Yet hath the streme of Scython not brought
From Athenes the ship, yet came it nought,
And if that ye the terme reken would,
As I or other true lovers doe should,
I plain not (God wot) before my day."
But al her letter writen I ne may,
By order, for it were to me a charge,
Her letter was right long, and therto large,
But here and there, in rime I have it layd
There as me thought that she hath wel sayd.
She sayd, "The sailes commeth not again,
Ne to the word there nis no fey certain,
But I wot why ye come not" (quod she)
"For I was of my love to you so fre,
And of the goddes that ye have swore,
That hir vengeaunce fall on you therfore,
Ye be not suffisaunt to beare the pain,
To moche trusted I, well may I sain,
Upon your linage, and your faire tong,
And on your teares falsely out wrong,
How coud ye wepe so by craft?" (quod she)
"May there soche teares fained be?
"Now certes if ye would have in memory,
It ought be to you but little glory,
To have a selie maide thus betrayed,
To God" (quod she) "pray I, and oft have prayed,
That it be now the greatest price of all,
And most honour that ever you shall befall,
And whan thine old auncetors painted bee,
In which men may hir worthinesse see,

Than pray I God, thou painted be also,
That folke may reden, forth by as they go.
" Lo this is he; that with his flattery
Betraied hath, and done her villany,
That was his true love, in thought and drede.
" But sothly of o point yet may they rede,
That ye been like your father, as in this,
For he begiled Ariadne iwis,
With such an arte, and such subtelte,
As thou thy selves hast begiled me:
As in that poinct, although it be not feire,
Thou folowest certain, and art his heire.
But sens thus sinfully ye me begile,
My body mote ye sene, within a while
Right in the haven of Athenes fleeting,
Withouten sepulture and buriyng,
Though ye been harder than is any stone."
And whan this letter was forth sent anone,
And knew how brotell and how fals he was,
She for dispaire fordid her selfe, alas,
Such sorow hath she, for she beset her so.
Beware ye women of your subtill fo,
Sens yet this day men may ensample se,
And trusteth now in love no man but me.

THE

LEGENDE OF HYPERMESTRE.

In Grecen whilom were brethren two
Of which that one was called Danno,
That many a son hath of his body wonne,
As such false lovers ofte conne.
Emong his sonnes all there was one,
That aldermost he loved of everychone,
And whan this child was borne, this Danao
Shope him a name, and called him Lino,
That other brother called was Egiste,
That was of love as false as ever him liste,
And many a daughter gate he in his life,
Of which he gate upon his right wife,
A doughter dere, and did her for to call,
Hypermestra, yongest of hem all,
The which child of her nativite,
To all good thewes borne was she,
As liked to the goddes or she was borne,
That of the shefe she should be the corne,
The werdes that we clepen destine,
Hath shapen her, that she must needes be
Pitous, sad, wise, true as stele,
And to this woman it accordeth wele.
For though that Uenus yave her great beaute,
With Jupiter compowned so was she,
That conscience, trouth, and drede of shame,
And of her wifehode for to kepe her name,
This thought her was felicite as here,
And reed Mars, was that time of the yere
So feble, that his malice is him raft,
Repressed hath Uenus his cruell craft,
And what with Uenus, and other oppression
Of houses, Mars his venime is a don,
That Hypermestre dare not handle a knife,
In malice, though she should lese her life,
But nathelesse, as Heaven gan tho turne,
Two bad aspectes hath she of Saturne,
That made her to die in prison,
And I shall after make mencion,
Of Danao and Egistes also,
And though so be that they were brethren two,
For thilke tyme nas spared no linage,
It liked hem to maken mariage
Betwixt Hypermestre, and him Lino,
And casten soch a day it shall be so,
And full accorded was it vterly,
The aray is wrought, the time is fast by,
And thus Lino hath of his fathers brother,
The doughter wedded, and ech of hem hath other,
The torches brennen, and the lamps bright
The sacrifice been full ready dight,
Thensence out of the fire reketh soote,
The floure, the leefe, is rent vp by the roote,
To maken garlandes and crounes hie,
Full is the place of sound of minstralcie,
Of songes amourous of mariage,
As thilke tyme was the plain vsage,
And this was in the paleis of Egiste,
That in his hous was lord, right as him liste,
And thus that day they driven to an end,
The frendes taken leve, and home they wend,
The night is come, the bride shall go to bed,
Egiste to his chamber fast him sped,
And prively let his doughter call,
Whan that the house voided was of hem all,
He looked on his doughter with glad chere,
And to her spake, as ye shall after here.
" My right doughter, tresour of mine herte,
Sens first that day, that shapen was my shert,
Or by the fatall suster had my dome,
So nie mine herte never thing ne come,
As thou Hapermestre, doughter dere,
Take hede what thy father sayth thee here,
And werke after thy wiser ever mo,
For alderfirst doughter I love thee so,
That all the world to me nis halfe so lefe,
Ne nolde rede thee to thy mischefe,
For all the good vnder the cold Mone,
And what I meane, it shall be said right sone,
With protestacion, as sain these wise,
That but thou doe, as I shall thee devise,
Thou shalt ba ded, by him that all bath wrought,
At short wordes thou ne scapest nought
Out of my paleis, or that thou be deed,
But thou consent, and werke after my reed,
Take this to the fearfull conclusioun."
This Hypermestre cast her iyen doun,
And quoke as doth the leefe of ashe grene,
Deed wext her hew, and like ashen to sene,
And sayd: " Lord and father all your will,
After my might, God wote I will fulfill,
So it be to me no confusion."
" I nill" (quod he) " have none excepcion,"
And out he caught a knife, as rasour kene,
" Hide this" (quod he) " that it be not isene,
And whan thine husbond is to bed go,
While that he slepeth cut his throte atwo,
For in my dreme it is warned me,
How that my nevewe shall my bane be,
But which I not, wherfore I woll be siker,
If thou say nay, we two shall have a biker,
As I have sayd, by him that I have sworn."
This Hipermestre hath nigh her wit forlorn,
And for to passen harmelesse out of that place,
She graunted him, there was none other grace:
And withall a costrell taketh he tho
And sayd, " Hereof a draught or two,
Yeve him drinke, whan he goeth to rest,
And he shal slepe as long as ever thee lest,

The narcotikes and apies been so strong,
And go thy way, lest that him thinke to long."
Out cometh the bride, and with full sobre chere,
As is of maidens oft the manere,
To chamber brought with revel and with song,
And shortly, leste this tale be to long,
This Lino and she beth brought to bed,
And every wight out at the doore him sped,
The night is wasted, and he fell aslepe,
Full tenderly beginneth she to weepe,
She rist her vp, and dredfully she quaketh,
As doth the braunch, that Zephirus shaketh,
And husht were all in Aragone that citee,
As cold as any frost now wexeth shee,
For pite by the herte strained her so,
And drede of death doth her so moche wo,
That thrise doune she fill, in soche a were,
She riste her vp, and stakereth here and there,
And on her hands fast looketh she,
" Alas, shall mine hands bloudie be,
I am maide, and as by my nature,
And by my semblaunt, and by my vesture,
Mine hands been not shapen for a knife,
As for to reve no man fro his life,
What devill have I with the knife to do?
And shall I have my throte corve a two?
Than shall I blede alas, and be shende,
And nedes this thing mote have an ende,
Or he or I mote nedes lese our life,
Now certes" (quod she) " sens I am his wife,
And hath my faith, yet is bette for me
For to be dedde, in wifely honeste,
Than be a traitour living in my shame,
Be as be may, for earnest or for game,
He shall awake, and rise and go his way
Out at this gutter er that it be day:"
And wept full tenderly vpon his face,
And in her armes gan him to embrace,
And him she joggeth, and awaketh soft,
And at the window lepe he fro the loft,
Whan she hath warned him, and done him bote:
This Lino swift was and light of foote,
And from her ran a full good paas.
This selie woman is so weake, alas
And helplesse, so that er she ferre went,
Her cruell father did her for to hent,
Alas Lino, why art thou so vnkind,
Why ne hast thou remembred in thy mind,
And taken her, and led her forth with thee,
For whan she saw that gone away was hee,
And that she might not so fast go,
Ne folowen him, she sate doune right tho,
Untill she was caught, and fettred in prison
This tale is sayd for this conclusion.

HERE ENDETH THE LEGENDE OF GOOD WOMEN.

GOODLY BALLADE OF CHAUCER.

Mother of nosture, best beloved of all,
And freshe floure, to whom good thrift God sende,
Your child if it luste you me so to call,
All be I vnable my selfe so to pretende,
To your discrecion I recommende
Mine herte and al, with every circumstance,
All wholly to be vnder your governaunce.

Most desire I, and have and ever shal,
Thing, which might your hertes ease amend:
Have me excused, my power is but small,
Nathelesse of right ye ought to commend
My good will, which faine would entend
To do you service, for all my suffisaunce
Is holly to be vnder your governaunce.

Meulx vn, in herte, which never shall apall,
Aie freshe and new, and right glad to dispend
My time in your service, what so befall,
Beseching your excellence to defend
My simplenesse, if ignoraunce offend
In any wise, sith that mine affiaunce,
Is holly to been vnder your governaunce.

Daisie of light, very ground of comfort,
The Sunnes doughter (ye hight) as I rede,
For whan he westreth, farwell your disport,
By your nature anone right for pure drede,
Of the rude night, that with his boistous wede
Of darkenesse, shadoweth our emispere,
Than closen ye, my lives ladie dere.

Dauning the day, to his kind resort,
And Phebus your father, with his streames rede,
Adorneth the morrow, consuming the sort
Of mistie cloudes, that woulden overlede
True humble hertes, with hir mistie hede,
Nere comfort a daies, whan iyen clere,
Disclose and sprede my lives ladie dere.

Ie vouldray: but great God disposeth
And maketh casuyl by his providence,
Soch thing, as mans frele wit purposeth,
All for the best, if that your conscience
Not grutche it, but in humble pacience
It receive: for God saith without fable,
A faithful herte ever is acceptable.

Cautels who so vseth gladly, gloseth,
To eschewe soch it is right high prudence,
What ye sayd ones, mine herte opposeth,
That my writing yapes in your absence,
Pleased you moch better than my presence:
Yet can I more, ye be not excusable,
A faithfull heste ever is acceptable.

Quaketh my penne, my spirit supposeth,
That in my writing ye find woll some offence,
Min herte welkneth thus sone, anon it riseth,
Now hotte, now colde, and eft in feruence:
That misse is, is caused of negligence,
And not of malice, therefore beth merciable,
A faithfull herte ever is acceptable,

LENUOYE.

Forth complaint, forth lacking eloquence,
Forth little letter of enditing lame,
I have besought my ladies sapience,
Of thy behalfe, to accept in game,
Thine inabilitie, doe thou the same:
Abide have more yet: *ie serve Jouesse,*
Now forth I close thee *in holy Uenus name,*
Thee shall vnclose my hertes governeresse.

THE BOOK COMMONLY ENTITLED,

CHAUCER'S DREAM.

By the person of a mourning knight sitting under an oak, is meant John of Gaunt, duke of Lancaster, greatly lamenting the death of one whom he entirely loved, supposed to be Blanch the dutchess.

I HAVE great woonder by this light,
How I liue, for day ne night
I may not sleepe welnigh nought,
I haue so many an idle thought,
Purely for default of sleepe,
That by my trouth I take no keepe
Of nothing, how it commeth or gothe,
To me nis nothing lefe nor lothe,
All is yliche good to me,
Joy or sorrow, where so it be:
For I haue feeling in nothing,
But as it were a mased thing,
All day in point to fall adoun,
For sorrowfull imaginaicoun
Is alway wholly in my mind.
And well ye wote, against kind
It were to liuen in this wise,
For nature would not suffise,
To none earthly creature,
Not long time to endure
Without sleepe, and be in sorrow:
And I ne may ne night ne morrow
Sleepe, and this melancolie
And drede I haue for to die,
Defaut of sleepe and heauinesse
Hath slaine my spirit of quickenesse,
That I haue lost all lustyhead,
Such fantasies ben in mine head,
So I not what is best to do:
But men might aske me why so
I may not sleepe, and what me is.
But nathelesse, who aske this,
Leseth his asking truely,
My seluen cannot tell why
The sooth, but truly as I gesse,
I hold it be a sickenesse
That I haue suffred this eight yere,
And yet my boot is neuer the nere:
For there is phisicien but one,
That may me heale, but that is done:
Passe we ouer vntill eft,
That will not be, mote needs be left,
Our first matter is good to keepe.
So whan I saw I might not sleepe,
Now of late this other night
Upon my bed I sate vpright,
And bade one reach me a booke,
A romaunce, and he it me tooke
To rede, and drive the night away:
For me thought it better play,
Than either at chesse or tables.
And in this booke were written fables,
That clerkes had in old time,
And other poets put in rime,
To rede, and for to be in mind,
While men loued the law of kind.
This booke ne spake but of such things,
Of queenes liues, and of kings,
And many other things smale.
Among all this I found a tale,
That me thought a wonder thing.
This was the tale: There was a king
That hight Seys, and had a wife,
The best that might beare life,
And this queene hight Alcione.
So it befell, thereafter soone
This king woll wenden ouer see:
To tellen shortly, whan that he
Was in the see, thus in this wise,
Such a tempest gan to rise,
That brake her mast, and made it fall,
And cleft her ship, and dreint hem all,
That neuer was found, as it tels,
Bord, ne man, ne nothing els.
Right thus this king Seys lost his life.
Now for to speake of Alcione his wife:
This lady that was left at home,
Hath wonder that the king ne come
Home, for it was a long terme:
Anon her herte began to yerne,
And for that her thought euermo
It was not wele, her thought so,
She longed so after the king,
That certes it were a pitous thing
To tell her heartely sorrowfull life,
That she had, this noble wife,
For him, alas! she loued alderbest,
Anon she sent both east and west
To seeke him, but they found him nought.
"Alas" (quod she) "that I was wrought,
Whether my lord my love be dead,
Certes I nill neuer eat bread,
I make a vow to my God here,
But I mowe of my lord here."
Such sorrow this lady to her tooke,
That truly I that made this booke,
Had such pitie and such routh
To rede her sorrow, that by my trouth
I farde the worse all the morrow
After, to thinken on her sorrow.
So whan this lady coud here no word,
That no man might find her lord,
Full oft she swowned, and said "Alas,"
For sorrow full nigh wood she was,
Ne she coud no rede but one,
But downe on knees she sate anone,
And wept, that pitie were to here.
"A mercy sweet lady dere"
(Quod she) to Juno her goddesse,
"Helpe me out of this distresse,
And yeve me grace my lord to see
Soone, or wete where so he bee,
Or how he fareth, or in what wise,
And I shall make you sacrifice,
And holly yours become I shall,
With good will, body, herte, and all;
And but thou wolt this, lady swete,
Send me grace to slepe and mete
In my sleepe some certain sweuen,
Where through that I may know euen
Whether my lord be quicke or dead."
With that word she hing downe the head,
And fell in a swowne, as cold as stone;
Her women caught her up anone,
And brought her in bed all naked,
And she forweped and forwaked,

Was weary, and thus the dead sleepe
Fell on her, or she tooke keepe,
Through Juno, that had heard her boone,
That made her to sleepe soone,
For as she praide, right so was done
Indeed, for Juno right anone
Called thus her messengere
To do her erraund, and he come nere,
Whan he was come, she had him thus.
"Go bet" (quod Juno) "to Morpheus,
"Thou knowest him well the god of sleepe,
Now vnderstand well, and take keepe,
Say thus on my halfe, that hee,
Go fast into the great see,
And bid him that on all thing
He take up Seis body the king,
That lieth full pale, and nothing rody,
Bid him creepe into the body,
And do it gone to Alcione
The queene, there she lieth alone,
And shew her shortly, it is no nay,
How it was dreint this other day,
And do the body speake right so,
Right as it was wonted to do,
The whiles that it was aline,
Go now fast, and hye thee blithe."
This messenger tooke leue and went
Upon his way, and neuer he stent
Till he came to the darke valley,
That stant betweene rockes twey,
There neuer yet grew corne ne gras,
Ne tree, ne naught that aught was,
Beast ne man, ne naught els,
Saue that there were a few wels
Came renning fro the cliffes adowne,
That made a deadly sleeping sowne,
And rennen downe right by a caue,
That was under a rocke ygraue,
Amid the valley wonder deepe,
There these goddes lay asleepe,
Morpheus and Eclympasteire,
That was the god of sleepes heire,
That slept, and did none other werke.
This caue was also as derke
As Hell pitte, ouer all about,
They had good leyser for to rout,
To vye who might sleepe best,
Some hing hir chin vpon hir brest,
And slept vpright hir head yhed,
And some lay naked in hir bed,
And slept whiles their daies last.
This messenger come renning fast,
And cried "Ho, ho, awake anone,"
It was for nought, there heard him none,
"Awake" (quod he) "who lieth there,"
And blew his horne right in hir ear,
And cried "Awaketh wonder hye."
This god of sleepe, with his one eye
Cast vp, and asked "Who clepeth there,"
"It am I" (quod this messengere)
Juno bade thou shouldest gone,
And told him what he should done,
As I have told you here before,
It is no need rehearse it more,
And went his way whan he had saide:
Anone this god of slepe abraide
Out of his sleepe, and gan to go,
And did as he had bidde him do,
Tooke vp the dead body soone,
And bare it forth to Alcione

His wife the queene, there as she lay,
Right even a quarter before day,
And stood right at her beds fete,
And called her right as she hete
By name and said: "My sweet wife
Awake, let be your sorrowfull life,
For in your sorrow there lyeth no rede,
For certes sweet love I am but dede,
Ye shall me never on live ysee.
But good sweet herte looke that yee
Bury my body, for such a tide
Ye mowe it find the see beside,
And farewell sweet, my worlds blisse,
I pray God your sorrow lisse,
Too little while our blisse lasteth."
With that her eyen vp she casteth,
And saw naught: "Alas" (quod she) for sorrow,
And died within the third morrow.
But what she said more in that swowe,
I may not tell it you as now,
It were too long for to dwell,
My first mattere I will you tell,
Wherefore I haue told you this thing,
Of Alcione, and Seis the king.
For thus much dare I say wele,
I had be dolven every dele,
And dead, right through defaut of sleepe,
If I ne had red, and take kepe
Of this tale next before,
And I will tell you wherefore,
For I ne might for bote ne bale
Sleepe, or I had redde this tale
Of this dreint Seis the king,
And of the gods of sleeping.
Whan I had red this tale wele,
And overlooked it everydele,
Me thought wonder if it were so,
For I had never heard speake or tho
Of no gods, that coud make
Men to sleepe, ne for to wake,
For I ne knew never God but one,
And in my game I said anone,
And yet me list right euill to ply,
Rather than that I should dey
Through defaut of sleeping thus,
I would giue thilke Morpheus,
Or that goddesse dame Juno,
Or some wight els, I ne rought who,
To make me slepe, and haue some rest,
I will giue him the alther best
Yeft, that ever he abode his liue,
And here onward, right now as blive,
If he woll make me sleepe alite,
Of downe of pure doues white,
I woll yeve him a featherbed,
Raied with gold, and right well cled,
In fine blacke sattin doutremere,
And many a pillow, and euery bere,
Of cloth of raines to slepe on soft,
Him there not need to turne oft,
And I woll yeve him all that fals
To his chamber and to his hals,
I woll do paint with pure gold,
And tapite hem full manyfold,
Of one sute this shall he haue,
If I wist where were his caue,
If he can make me sleepe soone,
As did the goddesse, queene Alcione,
And thus this ilke god Morpheus
May win of me mo fees thus

Than ever he wan: and to Juno,
That is his goddesse, I shall so do,
I trowe that she shall hold her paid.
I had vneth that word ysaid,
Right thus as I have told you,
That suddainly I nist how,
Such a lust anone me tooke
To sleepe, that right vpon my booke
I fell a sleepe, and therewith even
Me mette so inly such a sweven,
So wonderfull, that never yet
I trowe no man had the wit
To conne well my sweven rede.
No, not Joseph without drede,
Of Egypt, he that rad so,
The kinges meting Pharao,
No more than coud the least of vs.
Ne nat scarcely Macrobeus,
He that wrote all the avision
That he met of king Scipion,
The noble man the Affrican,
Such meruailes fortuned than,
I trowe arede my dreames euen,
Lo thus it was, this was my sweven.
Me thought thus, that it was May,
And in the dawning there I lay,
Me met thus in my bed all naked,
And looked forth for I was waked,
With smale foules a great hepe,
That had afraied me out of my slepe,
Through noise and sweetnesse of hir song,
And as me met, they sat among
Upon my chamber roofe without
Upon the tyles over all about.
And eueriche song in his wise
The most solemne seruise
By note, that ever man I trow
Had heard, for some of hem song low,
Some high, and all of one accord,
To tell shortly at o word,
Was never heard so sweet steven,
But it had be a thing of Heven,
So merry a sowne, so sweet entunes,
That certes for the towne of Tewnes
I nolde, but I had heard hem sing,
For all my chamber gan to ring,
Through singing of hir ermony,
For instrument nor melody
Was no where heard, yet halfe so swete,
Nor of accord halfe so mete,
For there was none of hem that fained
To sing, for ech of hem him pained
To find out many crafty notes,
They ne spared nat hir throtes,
And sooth to saine, my chamber was
Full well depainted, and with glas
Were all the windowes well yglased
Full clere, and nat an hole ycrased,
That to behold it was great joy,
For holly all the story of Troy
Was in the glaising ywrought thus,
Of Hector, and of king Priamus,
Of Achilles, and of king Laomedon,
And eke of Medea and Jason,
Of Paris, Heleine, and of Lavine,
And all the wals with colours fine
Were paint, both text and glose,
And all the Romaunt of the Rose,
My windowes weren shit echone,
And through the glasse the Sunne shone
Upon my bed with bright bemes,
With many glad gldy stremes,
And eke the welkin was so faire,
Blew, bright, clere was the aire,
And full attempre, for sooth it was,
For neyther too cold ne hote it nas,
Ne in all the welkin was no cloud.
And as I lay thus wonder loud
Me thought I heard a hunt blow
Tassay his great horne, and for to know
Whether it was clere, or horse of sowne.
And I heard going both vp and downe
Men, horse, hounds, and other thing,
And all men speake of hunting,
How they would slee the hart with strength,
And how the hart had vpon length
So much enbosed, I not now what.
Anon right whan I heard that,
How that they would on hunting gone,
I was right glad, and vp anone
Tooke my horse, and forth I went
Out of my chamber, I neuer stent
Till I come to the field without,
There ouertooke I a great rout
Of hunters and eke forresters,
And many relaies and limers,
And highed hem to the forrest fast,
And I with hem, so at the last
I asked one lad, a lymere,
" Say, fellow, who shall hunt here"
(Quod I) and he answered ayen,
" Sir, the emperour Octonyen"
(Quod he) " and is here fast by."
" A gods halfe, in good time" (quod I)
Go we fast, and gan to ride,
Whan we come to the forrest side,
Euery man did right soone,
As to hunting fell to done.
The maister hunt, anone fote hote
With his horne blew three mote
At the vncoupling of his houndis,
Within a while the hart found is
Ihallowed, and rechased fast
Long time, and so at the last
This hart rouzed and stale away
Fro all the hounds a preuie way.
The hounds had ouershot him all,
And were vpon a default yfall,
Therewith the hunt wonder fast
Blew a forloyn at the last,
I was go walked fro my tree,
And as I went, there came by me
A whelpe, that fawned me as I stood,
That had yfollowed, and coud no good,
It came and crept to me as low,
Right as it had me yknow,
Held downe his head, and joyned his eares,
And laid all smooth downe his heares.
I would haue caught it anone,
It fled, and was fro me gone,
As I him followed, and it forth went
Downe by a floury greene it went
Full thicke of grasse, full soft and sweet,
With floures fele faire vnder feet,
And little vsed, it seemed thus,
For both Flora, and Zepherus,
They two, that make floures grow,
Had made hir dwelling there I trow,
For it was on to behold,
As though the earth enuy wold

To be gayer than the heuen,
To have mo floures such seuen,
As in the welkin sterres be,
It had forget the pouerte
That winter, through his cold morrowes
Had made it suffer, and his sorrowes
All was foryeten, and that was seene,
For all the wood was woxen greene,
Sweetnesse of dewe had made it waxe.
It is no need eke for to axe
Where there were many greene greues,
Or thicke of trees, so full of leues,
And euery tree stood by himselue
Fro other, well tenne foot or twelue,
So great trees, so huge of strength,
Of fortie or fiftie fadome length,
Cleane without bowe or sticke,
With crops brode, and eke as thicke,
They were not an inch asunder,
That it was shadde over all vnder,
And many an hart and many an hind
Was both before me and behind,
Of fawnes, sowers, buckes, does,
Was full the wood, and many roes,
And many squirrels, that sete
Full high vpon the trees and ete,
And in hir manner made feasts:
Shortly, it was so full of beasts,
That though Argus the noble countour
Sate to recken in his countour,
And recken with his figures ten,
For by tho figures newe all ken,
If they be craftie, recken and number,
And tell of euery thing the number,
Yet should he faile to recken even
The wonders me met in my sweven:
But forth I romed right wonder fast
Downe the wood, so at the last
I was ware of a man in blacke,
That sate, and had yturned his backe
To an oke, an huge tree:
"Lord," thought I, "who may that bee,
What eyleth him to sitten here,"
Anon right I went nere,
Than found I sitte, even vpright,
A wonder welfaring knight,
By the manner me thought so,
Of good mokell, and right yong thereto,
Of the age of foure and twentie yere,
Upon his beard but little heere,
And he was clothed all in blacke.
I stalked even vnto his backe,
And there I stood as still as ought,
The sooth to say, he saw me nought,
For why he hing his head adowne,
And with a deadly sorrowfull sowne,
He made of rime ten verses or twelue,
Of a complaint to himselue,
The most pitie, the most routh
That ever I heard, for by my trouth
It was great wonder that nature
Might suffer any creature
To have such sorrow, and he not ded:
Full pitous pale, and nothing red,
He said a lay, a manner song,
Without note, without song,
And was this, for full well I can
Rehearse it, right thus it began.
"I have of sorrow so great wone,
That joy get I neuer none,
Now that I see my lady bright,
Which I haue loved with all my might,
Is fro me dead, and is agone,
And thus in sorrow left me alone;
Alas, Death, what eyleth thee,
That thou noldest have taken me,
Whan that thou tooke my lady swete,
Of all goodnesse she had none mete,
That was so faire, so fresh, so free,
So good, that men may well see."
Whan he had made thus his complaint,
His sorrowfull herte gan fast faint,
And his spirits woxen dead,
The blood was fled for pure dread
Down to his herte, to maken him warme,
For well it feeled the herte had harme,
To wete eke why it was adrad
By kind and for to make it glad,
For it is member principall
Of the body, and that made all
His hew chaunge, and wexe greene
And pale, for there no blood is seene
In no manner limme of his.
Anon therewith, whan I saw this,
He farde thus euill there he sete,
I went and stood right at his fete,
And grette him, but he spake nought,
But argued with his owne thought,
And in his wit disputed fast,
Why, and how his life might last,
Him thought his sorrowes were so smart,
And lay so cold vpon his herte.
So through his sorrow and holy thought,
Made him that he heard me nought,
For he had welnigh lost his mind,
Though Pan, that men clepeth god of kind,
Were for his sorrowes never so wroth.
But at the last, to faine right sooth,
He was ware of me, how I stood
Before him and did off my hood,
And had ygret him, as I best coud
Debonairly, and nothing loud,
He said, "I pray thee be not wroth,
I heard thee not, to saine the sooth,
Ne I saw the not, sir, truly."
"Ah, good sir, no force" (quod I)
"I am right sorry, if I haue ought
Distroubled you out of your thought,
Foryeve me, if I haue misse take."
"Yes, thamends is light to make"
(Quod he) "for there lithe none thereto;
There is nothing missaide, nor do."
Lo how geodly spake this knight,
As it had be another wight,
And made it neyther tough ne queint,
And I saw that, and gan me acqueint
With him, and found him so tretable,
Right wonder skilfull and reasonable,
As me thought, for all his bale,
Anon right I gan find a tale
To him, to looke where I might ought
Haue more knowledging of his thought.
"Sir" (quod I) "this game is done,
I holde that this hart be gone,
These hunts can him no where see."
"I do no force thereof" (quod he)
"My thought is thereon neuer adele,"
"By our lord" (quod I) "I trow you wele,
Right so me thinketh by your chere,
But, sir, o thing woll ye here,

Me thinketh in great sorrow I you see,
But certes, sir, if that ye
Would aught discure me your wo,
I would, as wise God helpe me so,
Amend it, if I can or may,
Ye mowe prove it by assay,
For by my trouth, to make you hole,
I woll do all my power whole,
And telleth me of your sorrowes smart,
Paraunter it may ease your herte,
That semeth full sicke vnder your side."
With that he looked on me aside,
As who saith nay, that nill not be.
"Graunt mercy good friend" (quod he)
"I thanke thee, that thou wouldest so,
But it may neuer the rather be do,
No man may my sorrow glade,
That maketh my hew to fall and fade,
And hath my vnderstanding lorne,
That me is wo that I was borne,
May nought make my sorrowes slide,
Not all the remedies of Ovide,
Ne Orpheus god of melodie,
Ne Dedalus, with his playes slie,
Ne heale me may no phisicien,
Nought Ipocras, ne Galien,
Me is wo that I liue houres twelue,
But wo so woll assay hemselue,
Whether his herte can haue pite
Of any sorrow let him see me,
I wretch that death hath made all naked
Of all the blisse that ever was maked,
Iwroth, werste of all wights,
That hate my dayes, and my nights,
My life, my lustes, be me loth,
For all fare and I be wroth,
The pure death is so full my fo,
That I would die, it will not so,
For whan I follow it, it will flie,
I would have him, it nill not me,
This is pain without reed,
Alway dying, and be not deed,
That Tesiphus that lieth in Hell,
May not of more sorrow tell,
And who so wist all, by my trouth,
My sorrow, but he had routh
And pitie of my sorrows smart,
That man hath a fiendly herte:
For whoso seeth me first on morrow,
May saine he hath met with sorrow,
For I am sorrow, and sorrow is I,
Alas, and I will tell thee why,
My sorrow is tourned to plaining,
And all my laughter to weeping,
My glad thoughts to heauinesse,
In trauaile is mine idlenesse,
And eke my rest, my wele is wo,
My good is harme, and euermo
In wrath is tourned my playing,
And my delite into sorrowing,
Mine heale is tourned into sicknesse,
In drede is all my sikernesse,
To derke is turned all my light,
My witte is foly, my day is night.
My loue is hate, my slepe wakying,
My mirth and meales is fastyng,
My countenaunce is nicete,
And all abawed, where so I be,
My peace pleding, and in werre
Alas, how might I fare werre.

"My boldnesse is turned to shame,
For false Fortune hath played a game
At the chesse with me, alas the while,
The trayteresse false and full of gyle,
That al behoteth, and nothing halte,
She gothe vpright, and yet she halte,
That baggeth foule, and loketh fayre,
The dispitous debonaire,
That scorneth many a creature,
An ydole of false purtraiture
Is she, for she woll sone wryen,
She is the monstres heed ywryen,
As filth, ouer ystrowed with floures,
Her most worship and her floures
To lyen, for that is her nature,
Without faith, lawe, or mesure
She false is, and euer laughing
With one eye, and that other weping,
That is brought vp, she set al downe:
I liken her to the scorpiowne,
That is a false flattering beest,
For with his head he maketh feest,
But all amid his flatering,
With his taile he will sting
And enuenim, and so will she:
She is the enuious Charite,
That is aye false, and semeth wele,
So turneth she her false whele
About, for it is nothing stable,
Now by the fire, now at table,
Full many one hath she thus yblent,
She is play of enchauntment,
That seemeth one, and is not so
The false thefe, what hath she do,
Trowest thou, by our Lord, I will thee say,
At the chesse with me she gan to play,
With her false draughtes full diuers
She stale on me, and toke my fers,
And whan I sawe my fers away,
Alas I couth no lenger play,
But said, farewell sweet ywis,
And farewell all that euer there is:
Therewith Fortune said, checke here,
And mate in the mid point of the checkere,
With a pawne errant, alas,
Full craftier to play she was
Than Athalus, that made the game
First of the chesse, so was his name:
But God wolde I had ones or twise,
Iconde, and know the jeoperdise,
That coude the Greke Pythagores,
I shulde haue plaide the bet at ches,
And kept my fers the bet thereby,
And though whereto, for trewly
I holde that wishe not worthe a stre,
It had be neuer the bet for me,
For Fortune can so many a wyle,
There be but few can her begile,
And eke she is the lasse to blame,
My selfe I wolde haue do the same,
Before God, had I been as she,
She ought the more excused be,
For this I say yet more thereto,
Had I be God, and might haue do,
My will, whan she my fers caught,
I wold haue drawe the same draught:
For also wise, God giue me reste,
I dare well swere, she toke the best,
But through that draught I haue lorne
My blisse, alas that I was borne,

For euermore I trowe trewly,
For all my will, my lust wholly
Is turned, but ye, what to done,
By our Lorde it is to die sone:
For nothing I leaue it nought,
But live and die, right in this thought.
For there nys planet in firmament,
Ne in ayre ne in erth none element,
That they ne yeue me a yeft echone,
Of weping whan I am alone:
For whan that I aduise me wele,
And bethinke me euerydele,
How that there lieth in rekening,
In my sorrow for nothing,
And how there liueth no gladnesse
May glad me of my distresse,
And how I haue lost suffisaunce
And thereto I haue no pleasaunce:
Than may I say, I haue right nought,
And whan al this falleth in my thought,
Alas, than am I ouercome,
For that is done, is not come
I haue more sorrow than Tantale."
And I herde him tell this tale
Thus pitously, as I you tell
Unneth might I lenger dwell:
It did mine herte so much wo.
"A good sir" (quod I) "say nat so,
Haue some pitie on your nature,
That fourmed you to creature,
Remembreth you of Socrates,
For he counted not three strees
Of nought that Fortune coude do.
"No" (quod he) "I can not so,"
"Why good sir, yes parde" (quod I)
"Ne say not so for truely,
Though ye had lost the feerses twelue
And ye for sorrow murdred your selue,
Ye should be dampned in this caas,
By as good right as Medea was,
That slough her children for Jason,
And Phillis also for Demophon
Hing her selfe, so welaway
For he had broke his tearme day
To come to her: another rage
Had Dido, the quene eke of Cartage,
That slough her selfe, for Eneas
Was false, which a foole she was:
And Ecquo died, for Narcissus
Nolde nat loue her, and right thus
Hath many another folly done,
And for Dalida died Sampsone,
That slough himselfe with a piliere,
But there is no man aliue here
Would for her feeres make this wo."
"Why so" (quod he) "it is not so,
Thou wotest full little what thou menest,
I haue lost more than thou wenest:"
"How may that be" (quod I)
"Good sir, tell me all holly,
In what wise, how, why and wherefore,
That ye haue thus your blisse lore?"
"Blithely" (quod he) "come sit doun,
I tell thee vpon a conditioun,
That thou shalt holly with all thy wit
Doe thine entent to hearken it."
"Yes sir:"—"Swere thy trouth thereto,
"Gladly do than hold here to,"
"I shall right blithely, so God me saue,
Holly with all the wit I haue,
Here you as well as I can:"
"A goddes halfe" (quod he) and began.
"Sir" (quod he) "sith first I couth
Haue any manner wit fro youth,
Or kindly vnderstanding,
To comprehend in any thing
What Loue was, in mine owne wit,
Dredelesse I haue euer yet
Be tributarie, and yeue rent
To Loue holly, with good entent.
And through pleasaunce become his thrall,
With good will, body, herte, and all,
All this I put in his seruage,
As to my lord, and did homage,
And full deuoutly I praide him tho,
He should beset mine herte so,
That it pleasaunce to him were,
And worship to my lady dere.
"And this was long, and many a yere
(Ere that mine herte was set o where)
That I did thus, and nist why,
I trowe it came me kindely,
Paraunter I was thereto most able,
As a white wall, or a table,
For it is ready to catch and take
All that men will therein make,
Whether so men will portrey or paint,
Be the werkes neuer so queint.
"And thilke time I fared right so,
I was able to haue learned tho,
And to haue conde as well or better
Paraunter either art or letter,
But for loue came first in my thought,
Therefore I forgate it naught,
I chees loue to my first craft,
Therefore it is with me laft,
For why, I tooke it of so yong age,
That mallice had my courage
Not that time turned to nothing,
Through too mokell knowledging,
For that time youth my maistresse
Gouerned me in idlenesse,
For it was in my first youth,
And tho full little good I couth,
For all my werkes were flitting
That time, and all my thought varying,
All were to me yliche good,
That knew I tho, but thus it stood.
"It happed that I came on a dey
Into a place, there that I sey
Truly the fairest companie
Of ladies, that euer man with eie
Had seene togither in o place,
Shall I clepe it hap, either grace,
That brought me there, not but Fortune,
That is to lien full commune,
The false tratieresse peruerse,
God would I could clepe her werse,
For now she worcheth me full wo,
And I woll tell soone why so.
"Amongs these ladies thus echone,
Sooth to saine, I saw one
That was like none of the rout,
For I dare swere, without dout,
That as the summers Sunne bright
Is fairer, clerer, and hath more light
Than any other plannet in Heuen,
The Moone, or the sterres seuen,
For all the world so had she
Surmounten hem all of beaute,

Of maner, and of comlinesse,
Of stature, and of well set gladnesse,
Of goodly heed, and so wel besey,
Shortly what shall I more sey,
By God and by his holowes twelue,
It was my swete, right all her selue,
She had so stedfast countenaunce,
So noble porte, and maintenaunce:
And Loue, that well harde my bone,
Had espied me thus sone,
That she full soone in my thought,
As helpe me God so was I cought
So sodainly, that I ne toke
No maner counsaile, but at her loke,
And at mine herte, for why her eyen
So gladly I trowe mine herte seyne,
That purely tho, mine owne thought,
Said, it were better serue her for nought,
Than with another to be wele,
And it was soth, for euery dele,
I will anone right tell thee why.
" I sawe her daunce so comely,
Carol and sing so swetely,
Laugh, and play so womanly,
And looke so debonairly,
So goodly speke and so freendly:
That certes I trowe that euermore,
Nas sene so blisfull a tresore:
For every heer on her heed,
Sothe to say it was not reed,
Ne neither yelowe ne browne it nas,
Me thought most like gold it was,
And which eyen my lady had,
Debonaire, good, glad, and sad,
Simple, of good mokel, not to wide,
Thereto her loke nas not aside,
Ne ouertwhart, but beset so wele,
It drewe and tooke vp euerydele
All that on her gan behold,
Her eyen semed anone she wold
Haue mercy, folly wenden so,
But it was neuer the rather do,
It nas no counterfeted thing,
It was her owne pure loking:
That the goddesse dame Nature,
Had made hem open by measure,
And close, for were she neuer so glad,
Her looking was not folish sprad,
Ne wildely, though that she plaid,
But euer me thought her eyen said,
By God my wrath is al foryeue.
Therewith her list so well to liue,
That dulnesse was of her adrad,
She nas to sobre ne to glad,
In all things more measure,
Had neuer I trowe creature,
But many one with her loke she herte,
And that sate her full litel at herte:
For she knew nothing of hir thought,
But whether she knew, or knew it nought,
Algate she ne rought of hem a stree,
To get her loue no nere nas he
That woned at home, than he in Inde,
The formest was alway behinde,
But good folke ouer all other,
She loved as man may his brother,
Of which loue she was wonder large,
In skilfull places that bere charge,
But which a visage had she thereto,
Alas my herte is wonder wo,
That I ne can discriuen it,
Me lacketh both English and wit.
For to vndo it at the full,
And eke my spirites bene so dull
So great a thing for to deuise,
I haue not wit that can suffise
To comprehend her beaute,
But thus much I dare sain, that she
Was white, rody, fresh, and lifely hewed,
And euery day her beaute newed,
And nigh her face was alderbest,
For certes Nature had soch lest,
To make that faire, that truly she
Was her chiefe patron of beaute,
And chiefe ensample of all her werke
And monster: for be it never so derke,
Me thinketh I see her euer mo,
And yet more ouer, though all tho
That euer liued, were now a liue,
Ne would haue found to discriue
In all her face a wicked signe,
For it was sad, simple, and benigne.
" And soch a goodly swete spech,
Had that swete, my lines lech,
So frendely, and so well ygrounded
Upon all reason, so well ifounded,
And so tretable to all good,
That I dare swere well by the rood,
Of eloquence was neuer fonde
So swete a sowning faconde,
Ne trewer tonged, ne scorned lasse,
Ne bet coude heale, that by the masse,
I durst sweare though the pope it songe,
That there was neuer yet through her tonge,
Man ne woman greatly harmid,
As for her, was all harme hid:
Ne lasse flattering in her worde,
That purely her simple recorde,
Was found as trewe as any bond,
Or trouth of any mans hond.
" Ne chide she could neuer a dele,
That knoweth all the world ful wele,
But such a fairenesse of a necke,
Had that swete, that bone nor brecke
Nas there none seen, that misse satte,
It was white, smoth, streight, and pure flatte,
Without hole or canel bone,
And by seming, she had none.
" Her throte, as I haue now memorie,
Semed as a round toure of yuoire,
Of good greatnesse, and not to grete,
And faire white she hete,
That was my ladies name right,
She was thereto faire and bright,
She had not her name wrong,
Right faire shoulders, and body long
She had, and armes euer lith
Fattish, fleshy, nat great therewith,
Right white hands, and nailes rede,
Round brestes, and of good brede
Her Lippes were, a streight flatte backe,
I knew on her none other lacke,
That all her limmes nere pure sewing,
In as ferre as I had knowing,
Thereto she could so well play
What that her list, that I dare say
That was like to torch bright,
That euery man may take of light
Ynough, and it hath neuer the lesse
Of maner and of comelinesse.

" Right so farde my lady dere,
For euery wight of her manere
Moght catche ynough, if that he wold
If he had eyen her to behold,
For I dare sweare well, if that she
Had among tenne thousand be,
She wolde haue be at the beste,
A chefe myrrour of all the feste,
Though they had stonde in a rowe,
To mens eyen, that could haue knowe,
For where so men had plaide or waked,
Me thought the felowship as naked
Without her, that I saw ones,
As a crowne without stones,
Trewly she was to mine eye,
The solein fenix of Arabie,
For there liueth neuer but one,
Ne such as she, ne know I none:
To speake of goodnesse, trewly she
Had as moch debonairte,
As euer had Hester in the Bible,
And more, if more were possible,
And soth to sayne, therewithall
She had a witte so generall,
So whole enclined to all good,
That al her witte was sette by the rood,
Without malice, vpon gladnesse,
And thereto I sawe never yet a lesse
Harmefull, than she was in doyng,
I say not that she ne had knowyng
What harme was, or els she
Had could no good, so thinketh me,
And trewly, for to speake of trouth,
But she had had, it had be routh
Thereof she had so moch her dele,
And I dare saine, and swere it wele,
That Trouth himselfe, ouer al and al,
Had chose his maner principall
In her, that was his resting place,
Thereto she had the most grace,
To haue stedfast perseueraunce,
And easy attempre gouernaunce,
That euer I knew, or wist yet,
So pure suffraunt was her wit,
And reason gladly she vnderstood,
It folowed wel, she could good,
She used gladly to do wele,
These were her maners euery dele.
" Therewith she loued so wel right,
She wrong do would to no wight,
No wight might do her no shame,
She loued so wel her own name.
" Her lust to hold no wight in hond,
Ne be thou siker, she wold not fond,
To holde no wight in balaunce,
By halfe word ne by countenaunce,
But if men wold vpon her lye,
Ne sende men into Walakie,
To Pruise, and to Tartarie,
To Alisaundrie, ne into Turkie,
And bidde him fast, anone that he
Go hoodlesse into the drie see,
And come home by the Carrenare.
" And sir, be now right ware,
That I may of you here saine,
Worship, or that ye come againe.
" She ne vsed no soch knackes smale,
But therfore that I tell my tale,
Right on this same I haue said,
Was wholly all my loue laid,
For certes she was that swete wife,
My suffisaunce, my lust, my life,
Mine hope, mine heale, and all blesse,
My worlds welfare, and my goddesse,
And I wholy hers, and euery dele."
" By our Lorde" (quod I) " I trowe you wele,
Hardly, your loue was wel beset,
I not how it might haue do bet."
" Bet, ne not so wel" (quod he)
" I trowe sir" (quod I) " parde."
" Nay leue it wel:"—" Sir so do I,
I leue you wel, that trewly
You thought that she was the best,
And to behold, the alderfairest,
Who so had loked her with your eyen?"
" With mine, nay all that her seyen,
Said and swore it was so,
And though they ne had, I would tho
Haue loued best my lady free,
Though I had had al the beaute
That euer had Alcibiades,
And al the strength of Hercules,
And thereto had the worthinesse
Of Alisaunder, and all the richesse
That euer was in Babiloine,
In Cartage, or in Macedoine,
Or in Rome, or in Niniue,
And thereto also hardy be,
As was Hector, so haue I joy,
That Achilles slough at Troy,
And therefore was he slayne also
In a temple, for both two
Were slaine, he and Antilegius,
And so saith Dares Fregius,
For loue of Polixena,
Or ben as wise as Minerua,
I would euer, without drede
Haue loued her, for I must nede.
" Nede? Nay trewly I gabbe now,
Nought nede, and I woll tellen how,
For of good will mine herte it wold,
And eke to loue her, I was holde,
As for the fayrest and the best,
She was as good, so haue I rest,
As euer was Penelope of Greece,
Or as the noble wife Lucrece,
That was the best, he telleth thus
The Roman Titus Liuius,
She was as good, and nothing like,
Though hir stories be autentike,
Algate she was as trewe as she.
" But wherefore that I tell thee,
Whan I first my lady sey,
I was right yong, soth to sey,
And full great need I had to lerne,
Whan mine herte wolde yerne,
To loue it was a great emprise,
But as my wit wolde best suffise,
After my yong childely wit,
Without drede I beset it,
To loue her in my best wise
To do her wurship, and the seruise
That I coude tho, by my trouth
Without faining, eyther slouth,
For wonder faine I wolde her see,
So mokell it amended mee,
That whan I sawe her amorowe,
I was warished of all my sorowe
Of all day after, till it were eue,
Me thought nothing might me greue,

Were my sorowes neuer so smert,
And yet she set so in mine herte,
That by my trouth, I nold nought
For all this world, out of my thought
Leaue my lady, no trewly."
" Now by my trouth sir" (quod I)
" Me thinketh ye haue such a chaunce,
As shrift, without repentaunce."
" Repentaunce, nay fie" (quod he)
" Shuld I now repent me
To loue, nay certes than were I welf
Worse than was Achitofell,
Or Antenor, so haue I joy,
The traitour that betrayed Troy:
Or the false Ganelion,
He that purchased the traison
Of Rouland, and of Oliuere;
Nay, while I am a liue here,
I nil foryet her never mo."
" Now good sir," (quod I tho)
Ye haue well told me here before,
It is no need to reherse it more,
How ye saw her first, and where,
But would ye tell me the manere,
To her which was your first speche,
Thereof I would you beseche,
And how she knew first your thought,
Whether ye loved her or nought,
And telleth me eke, what ye have lore,
I herde you tell her here before,
Ye said, thou notest what thou meanest,
I have lost more than thou weenest:
What losse is that" (quod I tho)
" Nil she not love you, is it so?
Or have ye ought done amis,
That she hath lefte you, is it this?
For Goddes love tell me all."
" Before God" (quod he) " and I shall,
I say right as I have said,
On her was all my love laid,
And yet she nist it not never a dele,
Not longe time, leve it wele,
For by right siker, I durst nought
For all this world tell her my thought,
Ne I wolde have wrothed her trewly,
For wost thou why, she was lady
Of the body that had the herte.
And whoso hath that may not asterte.
" But for to keepe me fro ydlenesse,
Trewly I did my businesse
To make songes, as I best coude.
And oft time I song hem loude,
And made songes, this a great dele,
Although I coude nat make so wele
Songes, ne knew the arte al,
As coude Lamekes son, Tubal,
That found out first the arte of songe,
For as his brothers hamers ronge,
Upon his anvelt vp and downe,
Thereof he toke the first sowne,
" But Grekes saine of Pithagoras,
That he the first finder was
Of the art, Aurora telleth so,
But thereof no force of hem two,
Algates songes thus I made,
Of my feling, mine herte to glade:
And lo this was aither first,
I not where it were the werst.
" Lord it maketh mine herte light,
Whan I thinke on that swete wight,
That is so semely one to se,
And wish to God it might so be
That she wold hold me for her knight,
My lady that is so fayre and bright.
" Now have I told thee, soth to say,
My first song: vpon a day,
I bethought me what wo
And sorowe that I suffred tho,
For her, and yet she wist it nought,
Ne tell her durst I not my thought:
Alas thought I, I can no rede,
And but I tell her, I am but dede,
And if I tel her, to say right soth
I am a dradde she woll be wroth,
Alas, what shall I than do.
In this debate I was so wo,
Me thought mine herte brast a twain,
So at the last, sothe for to saine,
I bethought me that Nature,
Ne formed never in creature,
So much beauty trewly
And bounty, without mercy.
" In hope of that, my tale I tolde,
With sorowe, as that I never sholde,
For nedes, and maugre mine heed
I must have tolde her, or be deed:
I not well how that I began,
Full yvell reherce it I can,
And eke as helpe me God withall,
I trow it was in the dismall,
That was the ten woundes of Egipt,
For many a word I overskipt
In my tale for pure fere,
Lest my wordes misse set were,
With sorowfull herte, and woundes dede,
Soft and quaking for pure drede,
And shame, and stinting in my tale,
For ferde, and mine hew al pale,
Full oft I wexte both pale and reed,
Bowing to her I hing the heed,
I durst not ones loke her on,
For wit, manner and all was gone,
I said: Mercy, and no more,
It nas no game, it sate me sore.
" So at the last soth to saine,
Whan that mine herte was com againe,
To tell shortly all my speech,
With hole herte I gan her beseech
That she wolde be my lady swete,
And swore, and hertely gan her hete,
Ever to be stedfast and trewe,
And love her alway freshly newe,
And never other lady have,
And all her worship for to save,
As I best coude, I sware her this,
For yours is all that ever there is,
For evermore, mine herte swete,
And never to false you, but I mete
I nyl, as wise God helpe me so.
" And whan I had my tale ydo,
God wote she acompted not a stre
Of all my tale, so thought me,
To tell shortly right as it is
Trewly her answere it was this,
I can not now well countrefete
Her wordes, but this was the grete
Of her answere, she said nay
All vtterly: alas that day,
The sorow I suffered and the wo,
That trewly Cassandra that so

Bewayled the destruction
Of Troy, and of Illyon,
Had never such sorow as I tho,
I durst no more say thereto,
For pure feare, but stale away,
And thus I lived full many a day,
That trewly I had no need,
Ferther than my beddes heed,
Never a day to seche sorrow,
I found it ready every morrow,
For why I loved in no gere.
" So it befell another yere,
I thought ones I would fonde,
To doe her know, and understonde.
My wo, and she well understood,
That I ne wilned thing but good,
And worship, and to keepe her name,
Over all things, and drede her shame,
And was so busie her to serve,
And pitie were that I should sterve,
Sith that I wilned no harme iwis.
" So whan my lady knew all this,
My lady yave me all holly,
The noble yeft of her mercy,
Saving her worship by all ways,
Dredelesse, I mene none other ways,
And therewith she yave me a ring,
I trowe it was the first thing,
But if mine herte was awaxe
Glad that it is no need to axe.
" As helpe me God, I was as blive
Raised, as fro death to live,
Of all happes the alderbest,
The gladdest and the most at rest,
For truely that swete wight,
Whan I had wrong, and she the right,
She would alway so goodly
Foryeve me so debonairly,
In all my youth, in all chaunce,
She tooke in her gouernaunce,
Therewith she was alway so true,
Our joy was ever iliche newe,
Our hertes were so even a paire,
That never nas that one contrarie
To that other, for no wo
For soth iliche they suffred tho.
O blisse, and eke o sorow bothe,
Ilich they were both glad and wrothe,
All was vs one, without were,
And thus we lived full many a yere,
So well, I can not tell how."
" Sir" (quod I) " where is she now ?"
" Now" (quod he) and stinte anone,
Therewith he woxe as dedde as stone,
And saied, " Alas, that I was bore,
That was the losse, that here before
I tolde thee that I had lorne,
" Bethinke thee how I said here beforne,
Thou woste full litle what thou menest,
I have loste more than thou wenest.
" God wote alas, right that was she."
" Alas sir how, what may that be ?"
" She is dedde :"—" Nay."—" Yes by my trouth,"
" Is that your losse, by God it is routhe."
And with that worde right anone,
They gan to strake forth, all was done
For that time, the hart huntyng.
With that me thought that this kyng,
Gan homeward for to ride,
Unto a place was there beside,
Which was from vs but a lite,
A long castell with walles white,
By sainct Johan, on a rich hill,
As me mette, but thus it fill.
Right thus me mette, as I you tell,
That in the castell there was a bell,
As it had smitte houres twelue,
Therewith I awoke my selue,
And found me lying in my bedde,
And the booke that I had redde,
Of Alcione and Seis the kyng,
And of the goddes of sleping,
Ifound it in mine hond full even,
Thought I, this is so queint a sweven,
That I would by processe of tyme,
Fond to put this sweven in ryme,
As I can best, and that anon,
This was my sweven, now it is done.

EXPLICIT.

My master, &c. whan of Christ our king,
Was asked, what is troth or sothfastnesse,
He not a worde answerde to that asking,
As who saith, no man is all true, I gesse:
And therefore, though I hight to expresse
The sorrow and wo that is in mariage,
I dare not writen of it no wickednesse,
Lest I my selfe fall eft in soche dotage.

I woll not say how that it is the chaine
Of Sathanas, on which he knaweth ever,
But I dare saine were he out of his paine,
As by his will he would be bounden never,
But thilke doted foole, that eft hath lever
Ichayned be, than out of prison crepe,
God let him never fro his wo discever,
Ne no man him bewayle, though he wepe.

*

But yet lest thou doe worse, take a wife,
Bet is to wedde, than brenne in worse wise.
But thou shalt have sorow on thy flesh thy life,
And ben thy wives thrale, as sain these wise,
And if that holy writ may not suffice,
Experience shall thee teach, so may happe,
Take the way leuer to be taken in frise,
Than eft to fall of wedding in the trappe.

This little writte, prouerbes or figures,
I sende you, take keepe of it I rede,
Unwise is he, that can no wele endure,
If thou be siker, put thee not in drede,
The Wife of Bathe, I pray you that ye rede
Of this matter that we have on honde,
God graunt you your lyfe freely to lede
In fredome, for foule is to be bonde.

EXPLICIT.

THE

ASSEMBLY OF FOWLS.

All fowls are gathered before nature on S. Valentines day, to chuse their makes. A formell eagle, being belov'd of three tercels, requireth

a years respite to make her choice: upon this trial, *qui bien aime tard oublie:* he that loveth well, is slow to forget.

The lyfe so short, the craft so long to lerne,
Thassay so hard, so sharpe the conquering,
The dreadful joy, alway that flit so yerne,
All this mean I by Love, that my feeling
Astonieth with his wonderful werkyng,
So sore I wis, that whan I on him think,
Naught wete I wel, whether I flete or sink.

For all be that I know not Love in dede,
Ne wot how that he quiteth folke hir hire,
Yet happeth me full oft in bookes rede
Of his myracles, and of his cruell ire,
There rede I well, he woll be lorde and sire:
I dare not say his strokes be sore,
But God save soch a lorde, I can no more.

Of vsage, what for lust and what for lore,
On bookes rede I of, as I you told,
But wherfore speake I all this? naught yore
Agon, it happed me to behold
Upon a booke was iwritten with letters old,
And therevpon a certain thing to lerne,
The long day, full fast I radde and yerne.

For out of the old fieldes, as men saith,
Commeth al this new corne fro yere to yere,
And out of old bookes, in good faith,
Commeth all this new science that men lere;
But now to purpose, as of this mattere,
To rede forth it gan me so delite,
That all that day, me thought it but a lite.

This booke of which I make mencion,
Entitled was right thus, as I shall tell,
Tullius, of the dreame of Scipion:
Chapiters seven it had, of Heaven and Hell,
And Yearth, and soules that therein dwell,
Of which as shortly as I can it treate,
Of his sentence I woll you saine the greate.

First telleth it, whan Scipion was come
In Affricke, how he meteth Massinisse,
That him for joy, in armes hath inome,
Than telleth he her speach and all the blisse,
That was betwixt hem til the day gan misse,
And how his auncester Affrikan so dere,
Gan in his slepe that night til him appere.

Than telleth it, that from a sterrie place,
How Affrikan hath him Cartage shewed,
And warned him before of all his grace,
And said him, what man lered eyther leude,
That loveth common profite well itheude,
He should into a blisfull place wend,
There as the joy is without any end.

Than asked he, if folke that here been dede
Have life, and dwelling in another place?
And Affrikan said Ye, without any drede,
And how our present lives space,
Ment but a maner death, what way we trace,
And rightfull folke, shull gon after they die
To Heaven, and shewed him the Galaxie.

Than shewed he him, the little Yerth that here is
To regard of the Heavens quantite,
And after shewed he hym the nine speris,
And after that the melodie heard he,
That commeth of thilke speres thrise three,
That welles of musicke been and melodie
In this world here, and cause of armonie.

Than said he him, sens Earth was so lite,
And full of tourment, and of hard grace,
That he ne should him in this world delite:
Than told he him, in certain yeres space,
That every sterre should come into his place,
There it was first, and all should out of mind,
That in this world is done of all mankind.

Than prayed him Scipion, to tell him all
The way to come into that Heaven blisse,
And he said: "First know thy selfe immortall,
And loke aie busely, that thou werche and wisse,
To common profite, and thou shalt not misse
To come swiftly vnto that place dere,
That full of blisse is, and of soules clere.

"And breakers of the law, soth to saine,
And likerous folke, after that they been dede,
Shall whirle about the world, alway in paine
Till many a world be passed out of drede,
And than foryeven all hir wicked dede,
Than shullen they come to that blisfull place,
To which to comen, God send thee grace."

The day gan failen, and the darke night,
That reveth beastes from hir businesse,
Beraft me my book for lacke of light,
And to my bedde I gan me for to dresse,
Fulfilled of thought and busie heauinesse,
For both I had thyng, which that I nold,
And eke I ne had that thing that I wold.

But finally my spirite at last,
For weary of my labour all that day,
Tooke rest, that made me to slepe fast,
And in my sleepe I met, as that I say,
How Affrikan, right in the selfe aray
That Scipion him saw, before that tide,
Was come, and stode right at my beds side.

The wearie hunter sleeping in his bedde,
The wood ayen his mind goeth anone,
The judge dremeth, how his plees be spedde,
The carter dremeth, how his cartes gone,
The rich of gold, the knight fight with his fone,
The sicke mette he drinketh of the tonne,
The lover mette he hath his lady wonne.

Can I not saine, if that the cause were,
For I had radde of Affrikan beforne,
That made me to mete that he stood there,
But thus said he: "Thou hast thee so wel borne
In looking of mine old booke all to torne,
Of which Macrobie raught not a lite,
That some dele of thy labour would I quite."

Citherea, thou blisful lady swete,
That with thy fire brond, dauntest whan the lest
That madest me this sweven for to mete,
Be thou my helpe in this, for thou maist best,
As wisely as I seigh the north northwest,
Whan I began my sweven for to write,
So yeve me might to rime it and endite.

This aforesaid Affrikan me hent anone,
And forthwith him to a gate brought,
Right of a parke, walled with grene stone,
And over the gate, with letters large iwrought,
There were verse ywritten as me thought
On either halfe, of full great difference,
Of which I shall you say the playne sentence:

" Through me men gon into the blisful place
Of hertes heale and dedly wounds cure,
Through me men gon into the well of grace,
There grene and lusty May shall ever endure,
This is the way to all good auenture,
Be glad thou reader, and thy sorow off cast,
All open am I, passe in and spede thee fast."

" Through me men gon" (than spake the other side)
" Unto the mortall strokes of the speare,
Of which disdaine and danger is the gide,
There never tree shall fruit ne leaves beare,
This streme you ledeth to the sorowful were,
There as the fish in pryson is all dry,
The eschewing is onely the remedy."

These verses of gold and asure ywritten weare,
Of which I gan astonied to behold,
For with that one encreased all my feare,
And with that other gan my herte to bold,
That one me het, that other did me cold,
No wit had I for errour for to chese,
To enter or flie, or me to save or lese.

Right as betwene adamants two,
Of even weight, a peece of yron set
Ne hath no might to move to ne fro,
For what that one may hale that other let,
So fared I, that I nist where me was bet
To entre or leave, till Affrikan my gide,
Me hent and shove in at the gates wide.

And said, " It standeth written in thy face,
Thine errour, though thou tell it not me,
But dread thee not to come into this place,
For this writing is nothing meant by thee,
Ne by none, but he Loves servaunt bee,
For thou of love hast lost thy tast I gesse,
As sicke man hath, of swete and bitternesse.

" But natheles, although thou be dull,
That thou canst not doe, yet mayst thou see,
For many a man that may not stand a pull,
Yet liketh it him at the wrestlyng for to be,
And demeth yet, whether he doe bet, or he,
And if thou haddest connyng for tendite,
I shall thee shew matter of to write."

And with that my hand in his he toke anon,
Of which I comfort caught, and went in fast,
But Lord so I was glad, and well begon,
For ouer all, where I mine iyen cast,
Were trees clad with leaues, that aie shal last
Eche in his kind, with colour fresh and grene,
As emeraude, that joy it was to sene.

The bilder oke, and eke the hardy asshe,
The piller elme, the coffre vnto caraine,
The boxe pipe tree, holme to whips lasshe,
The sailing firre, the cipres death to plaine,
The shooter ewe, the aspe for shaftes plaine,
The olive of peace, and eke the dronken vine,
The victor palme, the laurer to diuine.

A gardein saw I, full of blosomed bowis,
Upon a river, in a grene mede,
There as sweetnesse euermore inough is,
With floures white, blewe, yelowe, and red,
And cold welle streames, nothing dede,
That swommen full of smale fishes light,
With finnes rede, and scales silver bright.

On every bough the birdes heard I sing,
With voice of angell, in hir armonie,
That busied hem, hir birdes forth to bring,
The little pretty conies to hir play gan hie,
And further all about I gan espie,
The dredful roe, the buck, the hart, and hind,
Squirrels, and beasts small, of gentle kind.

Of instruments of stringes in accord,
Heard I so play, a ravishing swetnesse,
That God, that maker is of all and Lorde,
Ne heard never better, as I gesse,
Therewith a wind, unneth it might be lesse,
Made in the leaves grene a noise soft,
Accordant to the foules song on loft.

The aire of the place so attempre was,
That never was ther greuance of hot ne cold
There was eke every holsome spice and gras,
Ne no man may there waxe sicke ne old,
Yet was there more joy o thousand fold,
Than I can tell or ever could or might,
There is ever clere day, and never night.

Under a tree, beside a well I sey
Cupide our lorde, his arrowes forge and file,
And at his feete his bowe already lay,
And well his doughter tempred all the while
The heddes in the well, with her wile
She couched hem after, as they should serve
Some to slea, and some to wound and carve.

Tho was I ware of Pleasaunce anon right,
And of Array, Lust, Beauty, and Curtesie,
And of the Craft, that can hath the might
To done by force, a wight to done folie:
Disfigured was she, I will not lie,
And by himselfe, vnder an oke I gesse,
Sawe I Delite, that stood with Gentlenesse.

Than saw I Beauty, with a nice attire,
And Youth, full of game and jolitee,
Foole Hardinesse, Flatterie, and Desire,
Messagerie, Mede, and other three,
Hir names shall not here be told for me,
And vpon pillers great of jasper long,
I sawe a temple of brasse ifounded strong.

And about the temple daunced alway
Women inow, of which some there were
Faire of hemself, and some of hem were gay,
In kirtils all disheueled went they there,
That was their office euer, fro yere to yere,
And on the temple, saw I white and faire,
Of doves sitting many a thousand paire.

And before the temple doore full soberly,
Dame Peace sat, a curtaine in her honde,
And her beside wonder discretly,
Dame Pacience, sitting there I fonde,
With face pale, vpon an hill of sonde,
And alther next, within and without,
Behest and Arte, and of her folke a rout.

Within the temple, of sighes hote as fire,
I heard a swough, that gan about ren,
Which sighes were engendred with desire,
That made euery herte for to bren
Of newe flambe, and well espied I then,
That all the cause of sorowes, that they drie,
Come of the bitter goddess Jalousie.

The god Priapus, saw I as I went
Within the temple, in souerain place stond,
In such array, as whan the asse him shent
With crie by night, and with sceptre in hond,
Full busilie men gan assay and fond,
Upon his hedde to set of sondrie hewe,
Garlandes full of freshe floures newe.

And in a priuie corner, in disport
Found I Venus, and her porter Richesse,
That was full noble, and hauten of her port,
Darke was that place, but after lightnesse
I sawe a lite, vnnethes, it might be lesse,
And on a bed of golde she lay to rest,
Till that the hote Sonne gan to west.

Her gilte heeres, with a gold threde
Ibound were, vntressed as she lay,
And naked from the brest vnto the hede,
Men might her see, and sothly for to say,
The remnaunt, couered well to my pay,
Right with a little kerchefe of Valence,
There was no thicker clothe of defence.

The place gaue a thousand sauours soote,
And Bacchus god of wine sate her beside,
And Ceres next, that doeth of hunger boote,
And as I said, a middes lay Cupide,
To whom on knees, the yong folkes cride,
To be their helpe, but thus I let her lie,
And farther in the temple I gan espie.

That in dispite of Diane the chaste,
Full many a bowe ibroke hing on the wall,
Of maidens, such as gone hir times waste
In her seruice: and painted ouer all,
Of many a storie, of which I touch shall
A fewe, as of Calixte, and Athalant,
And many a maid, of which the name I want.

Semyramus, Candace, and Hercules,
Biblis; Dido, Tisbe, and Piramus,
Tristram, Isoude, Paris, and Achilles,
Helaine, Cleopatre, and Troilus,
Sylla, and eke the mother of Romulus,
All these were paynted on that other side,
And all hir loue, and in what plite they dide.

Whan I was commen ayen into the place
That I of spake, that was so soote and grene,
Forth walked I tho, my seluen to solace,
Tho was I ware, where there sate a quene,
That as of light, the sommer Sunne shene
Passeth the sterre, right so ouer measure,
She fairer was than any creature.

And in a laund, vpon an hill of floures,
Was set this noble goddesse Nature,
Of branches were her halles and her boures
Iwrought, after her craft and her measure,
Ne there nas foul, that cometh of engendrure,
That there ne were prest, in her presence,
To take hir dome, and yeue hir audience.

For this was on sainct Valentines day,
Whan euery foul cometh to chese hir make,
Of euery kind, that men thinke may,
And that so huge a noise gan they make,
That yearth, sea, and tree, and euery lake,
So full was, that vnneth there was space
For me to stand, so full was all the place.

And right as Alaine, in the plaint of kind,
Deuiseth Nature, of such araie and face,
In seche aray, men might her there find.
This noble empresse full of all grace,
Bad euery foule take hir owne place,
As they were wont alway, fro yere to yere,
On sainct Valentines day, standen there.

That is to say, the foules of rauine
Were highest set, and than the foules smale,
That eaten, as that nature would encline,
As worme or thing, of which I tell no tale,
But water foule sat lowest in the dale,
And foules that liueth by seed sat on the grene,
And that so many, that wonder was to sene.

There might men the royall egle find,
That with his sharpe looke perseth the Son,
And other egles of a lower kind,
Of which that clerkes well deuisen con,
There was the tyrant with his fethers don,
And grene, I mean the goshauke that doth pine
To birdes, for his outragious rauine.

The gentle faucon, that with his fete distreineth
The kings hand, the hardy sperhauke eke,
The quales foe, the merlion that peineth
Himself full oft the larke for to seke,
There was the doue, with her iyen meke,
The jelous swan, ayenst his deth that singeth,
The oul eke, that of deth the bode bringeth.

The crane, the geant, with his tromps soune,
The theif the chough, and the chattring pie,
The scorning jaie, the eles foe the heroune,
The false lapwing, full of trecherie,
The stare, that the counsaile can bewrie,
The tame ruddocke, and the coward kite,
The cocke, that horiloge is of thropes lite.

The sparow Venus son, and the nightingale
That cleapeth forth the fresh leaues new,
The swalow, murdrer of the bees smale,
That maken honie of floures fresh of hew,
The wedded turtell, with his herte true,
The pecocke, with his angel fethers bright,
The fesaunt, scorner of the cocke by night.

The waker gose, the cuckowe euer vnkind,
The popingeie, full of delicasie,
The drake, stroier of his owne kind,
The storke, wreker of aduoutrie,
The hote cormeraunt, ful of glotonie,
The rauin and the crowe, with her voyce of care,
The trostell old, and the frostie feldfare.

What should I say of fouls of euery kind,
That in this world haue fethers and stature,
Men might in that place assembled find,
Before that noble goddess of Nature,
And eche of them did his busie cure,
Benignely to chese, or for to take
By her accorde, his formell or his make.

But to the poinct, Nature held on her hond,
A formell egle, of shape the gentillest,
That euer she among her workes fond,
The most benigne, and eke the goodliest,
In her was euery vertue, at his rest
So farforth, that Nature her selfe had blisse,
To looke on her, and oft her beeke to kisse.

Nature, the vicare of the almightie Lord,
That hote, colde, heuie, light, moist, and drie,
Hath knit, by euen number of accord,
In easie voice, began to speake and say,
" Foules take hede of my sentence I pray,
And for your own ease, in fordring of your need,
As fast as I may speak, I will me speed.

" Ye know wel, how on S. Valentines day,
By my statute, and through my gouernance,
Ye doe chese your makes, and after flie away
With hem, as I pricke you with pleasaunce,
But nathelesse, as by rightfull ordinaunce,
May I not let, for all this world to win,
But he that most worthiest is, shall begin.

" The tercell egle, as ye know full wele,
The foule royall, aboue you all in degre,
The wise and worthie, the secret true as stele,
The which I haue formed, as ye may see,
In euery parte, as it best liketh mee,
It nedeth not his shape you to devise,
He shall first chese, and speaken in his gise.

" And after him, by order shall ye chese,
After your kind, euerich as you liketh,
And as your hap is, shall ye win or lese,
But which of you, that loue most entriketh,
God sende him her, that sorest for him siketh:"
And therewithall, the tercell gan she call,
And said, " My sonne the choise is to thee fall.

" But nathelesse, in this condicion
Must be the choice, of euericne that is here,
That she agree to his election,
Who so he be, that should been her fere,
This is our vsage alway, fro yere to yere,
And who so may at this time haue his grace,
In blisfull time he came into this place."

With hed enclined, and with ful humble chere,
This roial tercell spake, and taried nought,
" Unto my soueraine lady, and not my fere,
I chose and chese, with will, herte, and thought,
The formell on your hand, so wel iwrought,
Whose I am all, and euer will her serue,
Doe what her luste, to doe me liue or sterue.

" Beseehyng her of mercy, and of grace,
As she that is my ladie soverain,
Or let me die here present in this place,
For certes long may I not liue in pain,
For in my herte is coruen euery vain,
Hauing regard onely to my trouth,
My dere herte, haue on my wo some routh.

" And if I be found to her vntrue,
Disobeisaunt, or wilfull negligent,
Auauntour, or in processe loue a newe,
I pray to you this be my judgement,
That with these foules I be all to rent,
That ilke day that she me euer find
To her vntrue, or in my giite vnkind.

" And sith that none loueth her so well as I,
Although she neuer of loue me beliet,
Than ought she be mine through her mercy,
For other bonde can I none on her knet:
For well nor wo neuer shall I let
To serue her, how farre so that she wende,
Say what you list, my tale is at an ende."

Right as the fresh redde rose newe,
Against the sommer Sunne coloured is,
Right so for shame all waxen gan the hewe
Of this formell, whan she heard all this,
Neither she answerde well, ne said amis,
So sore abashed was she, till that Nature
Said, " Doughter drede you not, I you assure."

Another tercell egle spake anon,
Of lower kind, and said " That should not be,
I loue her better than ye doe, by sainct John,
Or at the least I loue her as well as ye,
And lenger haue serued her in my degree,
And if she should haue loued for long louing,
To me alone had be the guerdoning.

" I dare eke say, if she me finde false,
Unkind jangler, or rebell in any wise,
Or jelous, doe me hang by the halse,
And but I beare me in her seruise
As well as my wit can me suffise,
Fro poinct to poinct, her honour for to saue,
Take she my life, and all the good I haue."

The third tercell egle answerde tho,
" Now sirs, ye see the little leaser here,
For euery foule crieth out to be ago
Forth with his make, or with his lady dere:
And eke Nature her self ne will not here
For tarying her, not half that I would sey,
And but I speake, I must for sorrow dey.

" Of long seruice auaunt I me nothing,
But as possible is me to die to day,
For wo, as he that hath be languishing
This twenty winter, and wel it happen may,
A man may serve better, and more to pay,
In half a year, although it were no more,
Than some man doth, that hath served full yore.

" I ne say not this by me, for I ne can
Do no service that may my lady please,
But I dare say, I am her trewest man,
As to my dome, and fainest wold her please:
At short wordes, till that death me cease,
I will be hers, whether I wake or winke,
And trewe in all that herte may bethinke."

Of al my life sith that day I was borne,
So gentle plee in love or other thing,
Ne herde never no man me beforne,
Who so that had leiser and conning
For to rehearse their chere, and their speaking,
And from the morrow gan this spech last,
Till downward went the Sunne wonder fast.

The noyse of foules for to be deliverd,
So loude rang, " Have don and let vs wend,"
That well weend I, the wood had al to shiverd:
" Come off" they cryd, " alas, ye will us shend,
Whan shal your cursed pleding have an end,
How should a judge either party leue,
For ye or nay, without any preue?"

The goos, the duck, and the cuckow also,
So cried "Keke, keke, Cuckow, Queke queke hie,"
Through mine eares the noise went tho.
The goos said than "Al this nys worth a flie,
But I can shape hereof a remedie,
And will say my verdite, faire and swithe,
For water foule, whoso be wroth or blithe."

"And I for worm foule," said the fole cuckow
"For I will of mine own authorite,
For common spede, take on me the charge now,
For to deliver us, it is great charite."
"Ye may abide a while, yet perde,"
(Quod the turtel) "if it be your will,
A wight may speak, it were as good be still.

"I am a sede foule, one the vnworthiest,
That wote I well, and leest of conning,
But better is that a wights tonge rest,
Than entremete him of such doing
Of which he neither rede can nor sing,
And who so it doth, full foule himself acloyeth,
For office vncommitted oft annoyeth."

Nature, which that alway had an eare,
To murmure of the lewdenesse behind,
With facond voice said, "Hold your tongues there,
And I shall soone, I hope, a counsaile find,
You for to deliver, and fro this noyse unbind:
I charge of euery flock ye shall one call,
To say the verdite of you foules all."

Assented were to this conclusion,
The birdes all: and foules of ravine
Have chosen first by plaine election,
The tercelet of the faucon to define
All hir sentence, and as him lust th termine,
And to Nature him they did present,
And she accepteth him with glad entent.

The tercelet said than in this manere,
"Full hard it were to preve it by reason,
Who loueth best this gentle formell here,
For everich hath such replicatioun,
That by skils may none be brought adoun,
I cannot see that arguments availe,
Than seemeth it there must be battaile."

"All ready" (quod these eagle tercels tho:)
"Nay sirs" (quod he) "if that I durst it say,
Ye do me wrong, my tale is not ydo:
For sirs, taketh nat a greefe I pray,
It may not be as ye would, in this way,
Ours is the voice, that have the charge in hand,
And to the judges dome ye must stand.

"And therefore peace I say, as to my wit,
Me would thinke, how that the worthiest
Of knighthood, and lengest had vsed it,
Most of estate, of blood the gentillest,
Were fitting for her, if that her lest,
And of these three, she wote her selfe I trow
Which that he be, for it is light to know."

The water foules have their heads laid
Togider, and of short avisement,
Whan everiche had this verdite said,
They said soothly all by one assent,
How that the goos, with the facond gent,
That so desireth to pronounce our nede,
Shal tel her tale, and praid to God her spede.

And for these water foules tho began
The goose to speake, and in her cakeling,
She said, "Peace now, take keep every man,
And herken which a reason I shall forth bring,
My witte is sharpe, I love no tarrying,
I say I rede him, tho he were my brother,
But she will love him, let him love another."

"Lo here a parfite reason of a goose"
(Quod the sperhauke) "neuer mote she thee,
Lo such a thing it is to have a tongue lose:
Now parde foole, yet were it better for thee
Haue held thy peace, than shewd thy nicete,
It lieth nat in his wit, nor in his will,
But sooth is said, a fool cannot be still."

The laughter arose of gentill foules all,
And right anone the seed foules chosen had
The turtle true, and gan her to hem call,
And prayed her to say the sooth sad
Of this matter, and asked what she rad?
And she answerd, that plainly her entent
She would shew, and soothly what she ment.

"Nay, God forbede a lover should chaunge,"
The turtle said (and wex for shame all red)
"Though that his lady evermore be straunge,
Yet let him serve her alway, till he be deed,
Forsooth, I praise not the gooses reed,
For tho she died, I would none other make,
I will be hers, till that the death me take."

"Well ybourded" (quod the duck) "by my hat,
That men should love alway causelesse,
Who can a reason find, or wit in that,
Daunceth he merry that is mirthlesse,
Who should recke of that is retchlesse,
Ye queke yet," quod the duck, "full well and fair,
There be mo sterres in the skie than a pair."

"Now fie churle," quod the gentle tercelet,
"Out of the dunghill came that word aright,
Thou canst not see which thing is well beset,
Thou farest by love as owles do by light,
The day hem blindeth, full well they see by night,
Thy kind is of so low wretchedness,
That what love is, thou canst not se nor gess."

Tho gan the cuckow put him forth in preace,
For foule that eateth worme, and said blive:
"So I," quod he, "may have my make in peace,
I retch not how long that ye strive,
Let eech of hem be soleine all hir live,
This is my rede, sens they may nat accord,
This short lesson needeth not record."

"Ye, have the glutton filde his pauuch,
Than are we well," said the emerlon,
"Thou murdrer of the heysugge on the braunch
That brought thee forth, thou ruful glutton,
Live thou solein, wormes corruption,
For no force is of lack of thy nature,
Go, leud be thou while the world may dure."

"Now peace," quod Nature, "I commaund here
For I have heard all your opinion,
And in effect yet be we neuer the nere,
But finally, this is my conclusion,
That she her selfe shall have her election
Of whom her list, who so be wrothe or blithe,
Him that she cheseth, he shall her haue as swithe.

" For sith it may not here discussed be
Who loveth her best, as said the tercelet,
Than woll I done this favour to her, that she
Shall have right him, on whom her herte is set,
And he her, that his herte hath on her knet,
This iudge I nature, for I may not lie
To none estate, I have none other eye.

" But as for counsaile, for to chuse a make,
If I were reason, than would I
Counsaile you, the royal tercell take,
As said the tercelet, full skilfully,
As for the gentillest, and most worthy,
Which I have wroght so wel to my plesaunce
That to you it ought ben a suffisaunce."

With dredeful voice that formel her answerd,
" My rightful lady, goddess of Nature,
Sooth is, that I am ever under your yerd,
As is everich other creature,
And must be yours while my life may dure,
And therefore graunt me my first boone,
And mine entent, you woll I say right soone."

" I graunt it you," quod she, and right anone
This formel eagle spake in this degree:
" Almighty quene, unto this yeár be done
I aske respite for to avisen mee,
And after that to have my choice all free,
This all and some, that I would speak and sey,
Ye get no more, although ye do me dey.

" I woll not seruen Venus ne Cupide,
Forsooth as yet, by no manner way."
" Now sens it may none other ways betide"
(Quod Nature) " here is no more to say,
Than would I that these foules were away,
Ech with his make, for tarying lenger here,"
And said hem thus, as ye shall after here.

" To you speke I, ye tercelets" (quod Nature)
" Beth of good herte, and serveth all three,
A yeare is not so long to endure,
And ech of you paine him in his degree,
For to do well, for God wote quit is she
Fro you this year, what after so befall,
This entremes is dressed for you all."

And whan this werk brought was to an end,
To every foule Nature yave his make,
By even accord, and on his way they wend,
And Lord the blisse and joy that they make,
For ech of hem gan other in his wings take,
And with his neckes ech gan other wind,
Thanking alway the noble goddess of kind.

But first were chosen foules for to sing,
As yere by yere was alway his vsaunce,
To sing a roundel at his departing,
To do Nature honour and pleasaunce,
The note I trow maked was in Fraunce,
The words were such, as ye may here find,
The next verse, as I now have in mind.
Qui bien ayme tard oublye.

" Now welcome summer, with thy sunnes soft,
That hast this winter weathers overshake,
Saint Valentine, thou art full high on loft,
Which driuest away the long nights blake,
Thus singen smale foules for thy sake,
Well have they cause for to gladen oft,
Sens each of hem recovered hath his make,
Full blisful may they sing whan they awake."

And with the shouting whan hir song was do,
That the foules made at hir flight away,
I woke, and other bookes took me to
To rede upon, and yet I rede alway,
I hope ywis to rede so some day,
That I shall mete something for to fare
The bet, and thus to rede I nill not spare.

EXPLICIT.

OF

QUEEN ANNELIDA AND FALSE ARCITE.

Arcite a Theban knight, forsaketh queen Annelida, who loved him intirely, and taketh a new lady: whereupon Annelida maketh this great complaint.

" O thou fiers God of armes Mars the rede,
That in thy frosty countrey called Thrace,
Within thy grisly temples full of drede,
Honoured art as patrone of that place,
With the Bellona, Pallas full of grace,
Be present, and my song continue and gie,
At my beginning thus to thee I cry.

" For it full depe is sonken in minde,
With pitous herte in English to endite,
This old story, in Latine which I finde,
Of queene Annelida and false Arcite,
That elde, which all can frete and bite,
And it hath freten many a noble story,
Hath nigh devoured out of our memory.

" Be favourable eke thou Polimnia
On Pernaso that hath thy sisters glade,
By Elicon, not far from Cirsa,
Singest with voice memorial in the shade,
Under the laurer, which that may not fade,
And doe that I my ship to haven winne,
First follow I Stace, and after him Corinne.

Jamque domos patrias Cithiæ post aspera gentis,
Prælia laurigeo subeuntem Thesea curru,
Lætifici plausus missusque ad sidera vulgi, &c.

Whan Theseus with warres long and great,
The aspre folke of Cithe had ouercome,
The laurer crowned in his chaire gold beat,
Home to his country houses is ycome,
For which the people blisful all and some,
So criden, that to the sterres it went,
And him to honouren did all hir entent.

Before this duke in sign of victory,
The trompes come, and in his baner large,
The image of Mars, and in token of glory,
Men might see of treasure many a charge,
Many a bright helm, and many a spere and targe,
Many a fresh knight, and many a blisful rout,
On horse and on foot, in all the field about.

Ipolita his wife, and hardy queene
Of Cithia, that he conquered had,
With Emely her young sustor shene,
Faire in a chaire of gold he with him lad,
That all the ground about her chair she sprad
With brightness of beauty in her face,
Fulfilled of largesse and of grace.

With his triumph and laurer crowned thus,
In all the floure of fortunes yeuing,
Let I this noble prince Theseus,
Toward Athenes in his way riding,
And fonde I woll in shortly to bring,
The slye way of that I gan to write,
Of queene Annelida and false Arcite.

Mars that through his furious course of ire,
The old wrath of Juno to fulfill,
Hath set the peoples hertes both on fire
Of Thebes and Grece, and euerich other to kill
With bloody speres, rested never still,
But throng now here now there among hem both,
That euerich other slue, so were they wroth.

For whan Amphiorar and Tideus,
Ipomedon and Partinope also
Were dedde, and slain proud Campaneus,
And whan the wretched Thebans brethren two
Were slain, and king Adrastus home ago,
So desolate stood Thebes and so bare,
That no wight could remedy his care.

And whan the old Creon gan espy,
How that the blood royal was brought adown,
He held the citee by his tyranny,
And did the gentils of that regioun
To been his friends, and dwell in the toun,
So what for loue of him, and what for awe,
The noble folke were to the towne ydrawe.

Among all these, Annelida the queene
Of Ermony was in that towne dwelling,
That fairer was than the Sonne sheene,
Throughout the world so gan her name spring,
That her to see had every wight liking,
For as of trouth is there none her liche,
Of all the women in this world riche.

Yong was this queene, of twenty yere old,
Of middle stature, and of soch fairnesse,
That Nature had a ioy her to behold,
And for to speaken of her stedfastnesse,
She passed hath Penelope and Lucresse,
And shortly if she may ben comprehended,
In her might nothing been amended.

This Theban knight eke sothe to sain,
Was yong, and thereto withall a lusty knight,
But he was double in love, and nothing plain,
And subtill in that craft ouer any wight,
And with his conning wan this lady bright:
For so ferforth he gan her trouth assure,
That she him trusteth ouer any creature.

What should I sain, she loueth Arcite so
That whan that he was absent any throw,
Anone her thought her herte brast atwo,
For in her sight to her he bare him low,
So that she wende have all his herte yknow,
But he was false, it nas but fayned chere,
As nedeth not soche crafte men to lere.

But neuerthelesse full mikell businesse
Had he, er that he might his lady winne,
And swore he would dien for distresse,
Or from his witte he said he would twinne:
Alas the while, for it was routh and sinne,
That she upon his sorrowes would rue,
But nothing thinketh the false as doth the true.

Her fredome found Arcite in soch manere,
That all was his, that she hath, moch or lite,
Ne to no creature made she cheer,
Further than it liked to Arcite,
There was no lack, with which he might her wite,
She was so ferforth yeuen him to please,
That all that liked him did her ease.

There nas to her no maner letter sent,
That touched loue, from any maner wight,
That she ne shewed him, or it was brent,
So plain she was, and did her full might,
That she nyl hide nothing from her knight,
Lest he of any vntrouth her vpbreyde,
Without bode his herte she obeyd.

And eke he made him ialous ouer her,
That what that any man had to her sayd,
Anon he would praien her to swere
What was that word, or make him yuell apaid,
Than wende she out of her wit have braid,
But all was but sleight and flatterie,
Without love he fained jelousie.

And all this tooke she so debonairly,
That all his will, her thought it skilful thing
And ever the lenger she loved him tenderly,
And did him honour as he were a king,
Her herte was to him wedded with a ring,
For so ferforth vpon trouth is her entent,
That where he goth, her herte with him went.

Whan she shal eat, on him is so her thought,
That well vneth of meate toke she keepe,
And whan she was to her rest brought,
On him she thought alway till that she slepe,
Whan he was absent, priuely doth she wepe,
Thus liueth faire Annelida the queene,
For false Arcite, that did her all this tene,

This false Arcite, of his newfanglenesse,
For she to him so lowly was and trewe,
Tooke lesse deintee for her stedfastnesse,
And saw another lady proude and newe,
And right anon he clad him in her hewe,
Wote I not whether in white, reed, or grene,
And falsed faire Annelida the queene.

But neverthelesse, great wonder was it none
Though he were false, for it is the kind of man,
Sith Lamech was, that is so long agone,
To be in love as false as euer he can,
He was the first father that began
To loven two, and was in bigamye.
And he found tents first, but if men lye.

This false Arcite, somewhat must he faine,
Whan he was false, to coueren his tratoury,
Right as an horse, that can both bite and plaine,
For he bare her in honde of treachery,
And swore he coude her doublenesse espye,
And all was falsenesse that she to him ment,
Thus swore this thefe, and forth his way he went.

Alas what herte might endure it,
For routhe or wo, her sorrow for to tell,
Or what man hath the conning or the wit,
Or what man might within the chambre dwell,
If I to him rehersen shall the Hell
That suffreth fayre Annelida the queene,
For false Arcite, that did all this tene.

She wepeth, waileth, and swouneth pitously,
To ground deed she falleth as a stone
Crampisheth her limmes erokedly,
She speketh as her witte were all agone,
Other colour than ashen hath she none,
Ne none other word speketh she moch or lite,
But "Mercy cruell herte mine Arcite."

And thus endureth, til that she was so mate
That she ne hath foot, on which she may sustene,
But forth languishing ever in this estate,
Of which Arcite hath neyther routh ne tene,
His herte was els where newe and grene,
That on her wo, ne deineth him not to think,
Him recketh never whether she flete or sinke.

This newe lady holdeth him so narowe,
Up by the bridel, at the staues end,
That every word he dred it as an arowe,
Her daunger made him both bowe and bend,
And as her luste, made him turne or wend,
For she ne graunted him in her liuing,
No grace, why that he hath to sing.

But droue him forth, unneth list her know
That he was seruaunt vnto her ladyship,
But lest he were proude, she helde him lowe,
Thus serueth he, without meate or sip,
She sent him now to land, and now to ship,
And for she yaue him daunger all his fill,
Therfore she had him at her owne will.

Ensample of this, ye thrifty women all,
Take hede of Annelida and false Arcite,
That for her list him her dere herte call,
And was so meke, therefore he loved her lite,
The kinde of mans herte is to delite
On thing that straunge is, also God me save,
For what they may not get, that wold they have.

Now turne we to Annelida ayen,
That pyneth day by day in languishing,
But whan she saw that her ne gate no geyn,
Upon a day sorowfully wepyng,
She cast her for to make a complainyng,
And with her owne hand she gan it write,
And sent it to her Theban knight Arcite.

THE

COMPLAINT OF ANNELIDA TO FALSE ARCITE.

"So thirled with the point of remembraunce,
The swerde of sorowe, whette with false pleasaunce,
Mine herte bare of blisse, and black of hew
That turned is to quaking all my daunce,
My sewerty is a waped countenaunce,
Sens it avayleth nought to ben trew:
For who so trew is, it shall her rew,
That serueth love, and doth her observaunce
Alway to one, and chaungeth for no new.

"I wote my selfe as well as any wight,
For I loved one, with all mine herte and might
More than my self an hundred thousand sith,
And called him my hertes lyfe, my knight,
And was all his, as ferre as it was right,
And whan that he was glad, than was I blithe,
And his disease was my death as swithe,
And he ayen, his trouth hath me plight,
For evermore hys lady me to kithe.

"Now is he false alas, and causeles,
And of my wo he is so routhles,
That with a worde him list not ones daine,
To bring ayen my sorowfull herte in pees,
For he is caught vp in another lees,
Right as him list, he laugheth at my paine,
And I ne can mine herte not restraine
For to loue him yet alway neuertheles,
And of all this I not to whom to plaine.

"And shuld I playne, alas the hard stound,
Unto my foe, that yaue myne herte a wound,
And yet desireth that myne harme be more,
Now certes ferther woll I neuer found,
None other helpe, my sores for to sound,
My desteny hath shaped so full yore,
I woll none other medecine ne lore,
I woll ben aye there I was ones bound,
That I haue said, he said for euermore.

"Alas, where is become your gentilnesse,
Your words full of pleasanee and humblesse,
Your obseruaunce in so lowe manere,
Your awayting, and your besinesse,
On me that ye called your maistresse,
Your soueraine lady in this world here?
Alas, is there neyther worde ne chere,
Ye vouchsafe vpon myne heuinesse?
Alas your loue, I bye it all to dere.

"Now certes swete, though that ye
Thus causelesse the cause be,
Of my deedly aduersite,
Your manly reason ought it to respite,
To slee your frende, and namely me,
That neuer yet in no degre
Offended you, as wisly he
That all wote, of wo my soule quite.

"But for I was so playne, Arcite,
In all my workes moch and lite,
And was so besie you to delite,
Myne honour saue, meke, kinde, and fre,
Therefore ye put in me this wite:
Alas, ye retche not a mite,
Though that the swerde of sorow bite
My wofull herte, through your cruelty.

"My sweet fo, why do ye so for shame,
And thinke ye that furthered be your name,
To loue a newe, and ben vntrew aye,
And put you in slander now and blame,
And do to me aduersitie and grame,

That loue you most, God thou wost alway,
Yet turne ayen, and yet be playne some day,
And than shall this that now is mis, ben game,
And all foryeue, while I lyue may.

" Lo herte myne, al this is for to saine,
As whether shall I pray or els playne,
Which is the way to done you to be trew,
For eyther mote I haue you in my chayne,
Or with the deth ye mote depart vs twayne,
There bethe none other meane wayes new,
For God so wisely on my soule rewe,
As verely ye slaine me with the payne,
That mowe ye see vnfained on mine hewe.

" For thus ferforth haue I my deth sought,
My selfe I murder with my priuie thought,
For sorow and routh of your vnkindnesse,
I wepe, I wayle, I fast, all helpeth naught,
I voide joy that is to speake of aught,
I voide company, I flie gladnesse,
Who may auaunt her better of heuinesse,
Than I? and to this plite haue ye me brought,
Without gilte, me needeth no witnesse.

" And should I pray, and weiuen womanhede,
Nay rather death, than do so foule a dede,
And aske mercy and giltlesse, what nede,
And if I plaine what lyfe I lede,
You recketh not, that know I out of drede,
And if I vnto you mine othes bede,
For mine excuse, a scorne shall be my mede,
Your chere floureth, but it woll not sede,
Full long agon I might haue taken hede.

" For though I had you to morow agayne,
I might as well hold Aprill from rayne,
As holde you to maken stedfast,
Almighty God, of trouth the souerayn,
Where is that trouth of man, who hath it slayn,
She that hem loueth, shall hem find as fast,
As in a tempest is a rotten mast,
Is that a tame beest, that is aye fayne
To renne away, whan he is lest agast.

" Now mercy sweete, if I missay,
Haue I aught sayd out of the way,
I not, my witte is all away,
I fare as doth the songe of chantepleure,
For now I plaine, and now I pley,
I am so mased that I dey,
Arcite hath borne away the key
Of all my world, and my good auenture.

" For in this world there is no creature,
Walking in more discomfiture,
Than I, ne more sorowe endure,
For if I sleepe a furlonge way or twey,
Than thinketh me that your figure
Before me stante clad in asure,
Efte to profre a newe assure,
For to ben trewe, and mercy me to prey.

" The long night, this wonder sight ydrie,
That on the day for such affray I die,
And of all this right naught ywis ye retche,
Ne neuermore mine eyen to ben drye,
And to your routh, and to your trouth I crye,
But well away, to ferre been they to fetch,
Thus holdeth me my desteny a wretch,
But me to rede out of this drede or gye,
Ne may my wit (so weake is it) not stretch.

" Than end I thus, sith I may do no more,
I yeue it vp for now and euermore,
For I shall neuer efte putten in balaunce
My sikernesse, ne lerne of loue the lore,
But as the swan, I haue herde say fall yore,
Ayenst his deth woll sing in his penaunce,
So sing I here the destinie and chaunce,
How that Arcite, Annelida so sore
Hath thrilled with the point of remembraunce."

Whan that Annelida this wofull queene,
Hath of her hand written in this wise,
With face deed, betwixt pale and greene,
She fell a swoune, and sithe she gan to rise,
And vnto Mars avoweth sacrifise
Within the temple, with a sorowful chere,
That shapen was, as ye may plainly here.

EXPLICIT.

THE

COMPLAINT OF THE BLACK KNIGHT.

The heavy complaint of a knight, for that he cannot win his ladies grace.

In May, whan Flora the fresh lusty quene,
The soyle hath cladde in grene, red, and whight,
And Phebus gan to shede his stremes shene,
Amidde the Bulle, with all the beames bright,
And Lucifer, to chace away the night,
Ayen the morow our orizont hath take,
To bid all lovers out of hir slepe awake.

And hertes heavy for to recomfort,
From drerihed of heavy night sorow,
Nature bad hem rise, and hem disport,
Ayen the goodly glad grey morow,
And hope also, with sainct Johan to borow,
Bad in dispite of daunger and dispaire,
For to take the holsome lusty ayre.

And with a sigh I gan for to abreide
Out of my slumber, and sodainly vp starte,
As he (alas) that nigh for sorow deide,
My sicknesse sate aye so nye my herte,
But for to finde soccour of my smart,
Or at the least some release of my peine,
That me so sore halte in every veine.

I rose anone, and thought I would gone
Into the wodde, to heare the birdes sing,
Whan that the misty vapour was agone,
And cleare and faire was the morning,
The dewe also like silver in shining
Upon the leaves, as any baume swete,
Till firy Titan with his persant hete

Had dryed vp the lusty licour new,
Upon the herbes in the grene mede,
And that the floures of many divers hew,
Upon hir stalkes gon for to sprede,
And for to splay out hir leves in brede
Againe the Sunne, gold burned in his spere,
That doune to hem cast his beams clere.

And by a river forth I gan costey,
Of water clere, as birell or cristall,
Till at the last I found a little wey,
Toward a parke, enclosed with a wall,
In compace rounde, and by a gate small,
Who so that would, frely might gone
Into this parke, walled with grene stone.

And in I went to heare the birdes song,
Which on the branches, both in plaine and vale,
So loud sang, that all the wood rong,
Like as it should shiver in peeces smale,
And as me thought, that the nightingale
With so great might, her voice gan out wrest
Right as her herte for love would brest.

The soile was plaine, smoth, and wonder soft,
All overspread with tapettes that Nature
Had made her selfe: covered eke aloft
With bowes greene, the floures for to cure,
That in hir beauty they may long endure
From all assaut of Phebus fervent fere,
Which in his sphere so hote shone and clere.

The ayre attempre, and the smothe wind
Of Zepherus, among the blosomes white,
So holsome was, and so nourishing by kind,
That smale buddes, and round blosomes lite,
In maner gan of hir brethe delite,
To yeve vs hope there fruite shall take
Ayenst autumpne redy for to shake.

I saw the Daphene closed under rinde,
Greene laurer, and the holsome pine,
The mirre also that wepeth ever of kinde,
The cedres hye, vpright as a line,
The filbert eke, that lowe doth encline
Her bowes grene, to the yearth adoun,
Unto her knight called Demophoun.

There sawe I eke the fresh hauthorne
In white motley, that so swote doth smell,
Ashe, firre, and oke, with many a yong acorn,
And many a tree mo than I can tell,
And me be forne I sawe a little well,
That had his course, as I gan beholde,
Under an hill, with quicke stremes colde.

The gravel gold, the water pure as glasse,
The bankes round, the well environyng,
And soft as velvet the yong grasse
That therevpon lustely came springyng,
The sute of trees about compassyng,
Hir shadow cast, closing the well round,
And all the herbes growing on the ground.

The water was holsome, and so vertuous,
Through might of herbes growyng beside,
Not like the welle where as Narcissus
Islaine was, through vengeaunce of Cupide,
Where so covertly he did hide
The graine of death vpon eche brinke,
That death mote folow, who that ever drinke.

Ne like the pitte of the Pegace,
Under Permaso, where poetes slept,
Nor like the welle of pure chastite,
Which that Diane with her nimphes kept,
Whan she naked into the water lepte,
That slowe Acteon with her hondes fell,
Onely for he came so nigh the well.

But this welle that I here of rehearse,
So holsome was, that it would assuage,
Bollen hertes, and the venim pearce,
Of pensifehed, with all the cruell rage,
And over more refresh the visage
Of hem that were in any wrinesse,
Of great labour, or fallen in distresse.

And I that had through daunger and disdain
So drye a thrust, thought I would assay
To taste a draught of this welle or twain,
My bitter langour if it might alay,
And on the banke anone doune I lay,
And with mine hed vnto the welle I raught,
And of the water dranke I a good draught.

Wherof me thought I was refreshed wele,
Of the brennyng that sate so nigh my herte,
That verely anone I gan to fele
An huge parte released of my smart,
And therewithall anone vp I start,
And thought I would walke and see more,
Forth in the parke, and in the holtes hore.

And through a laund as I yede a pace,
And gan about fast to behold,
I found anone a delectable place,
That was beset with trees young and old,
Whose names here for me shall not be told,
Amidde of which stood an herber greene,
That benched was, with colours new and clene.

This herber was full of floures gende,
Into the which, as I beheld gan,
Betwixt an hulfeere and a woodbende,
As I was ware, I saw where lay a man
In blacke, and white colour pale and wan,
And wonder deadly also of his hewe,
Of hurtes grene, and fresh woundes new.

And overmore distrayned with sickneesse
Beside all this he was full grevously,
For vpon him he had an hote accesse,
That day by day him shooke full pitously,
So that for constrayning of his malady,
And hertely wo, thus lying all alone,
It was a death for to hear him grone.

Wherof astonied, my fote I gan withdraw,
Greatly wondring what it might be,
That he so lay and had no felaw,
Ne that I could no wight with him see,
Wherof I had routhe, and eke pite,
And gan anone, so softly as I coude,
Among the bushes prively me to shroude.

If that I might in any wise aspy,
What was the cause of his deedly wo,
Or why that he so pitously gan cry
On his fortune, and on ure also,
With all my might I layd an eare to,
Every word to marke what he said,
Out of his swough amonge as he abraid.

But first, if I should make mencion
Of his person, and plainely him discrive,
He was in sothe, without exception,
To speake of manhood, one the best on live
There may no man ayen trouth strive,
For of his tyme, and of his age also,
He proved was, there men shuld have ado.

For one of the best therto of bread and length
So well ymade by good proporcion,
If he had be in his deliver strength,
But thought and sicknesse were occasion
That he thus lay in lamentacion,
Grufle on the ground, in place desolate,
Sole by himselfe, awhaped and amate.

And for me seemeth that it is fitting
His wordes all to put in remembraunce,
To me that heard all his complayning,
And all the ground of his wofull chaunce,
If there withall I may you do pleasaunce,
I woll to you so as I can anone,
Lyke as he sayd, rehearce everichone.

But who shall helpe me now to complain,
Or who shall now my stile gy or lede,
O Niobe, let now thy teeres rain
In to my penne, and helpe eke in nede,
Thou wofull Myrre that felest my herte blede
Of pitous wo, and mine hand eke quake,
Whan that I write, for this mannes sake,

For vnto wo accordeth complayning,
And dolefull chere vnto heavinesse,
To sorow also, sighing and weping,
And pitous mourning vnto drerinesse,
And who that shall write of distresse,
In party needeth to know feelingly,
Cause and roote of all soch malady.

But I alas, that am of witte but dull,
And have no knowing of soch matere,
For to discrive, and write at the full
The wofull complaint, which that ye shall here,
But even like as doth a skriuencre,
That can no more what that he shall write,
But as his maister beside doth endite.

Right so fare I, that of no sentement,
Say right naught in conclusion,
But as I herde whan I was present,
This man complaine, with a pitous soun,
For even like without addicioun,
Or disencrease, eyther more or lesse,
For to reherse anone I woll me dresse.

And if that any now be in this place,
That sele in love brenning of fervence,
Or hindred were to his ladies grace,
With false tonges, that with pestilence
Slea trewe men, that neuer did offence
In worde nor deed, ne in hir entent,
If any soch be here now present,

Let him of routh lay to audience,
With doleful chere, and sobre conntenaunce,
To here this man, by full hye sentence,
His mortall wo, and his perturbaunce,
Complayning, now lying in a traunce,
With lookes vpcast, and rufull chere,
Theffect of which was as ye shall here.

" The thought oppressed with inward sighs sore,
The painful life, the body languishing,
The woful gost, the herte rent and tore,
The pitous chere pale in complayning,
The deedly face, like ashes in shining,
The salte teares that from mine eyen fall,
Percel declare ground of my paynes all.

" Whose herte is ground to blede in heuinesse,
The thought receit of wo, and of complaint,
The brest is chest of dole and drerinesse,
The body eke so feeble and so faint,
With hote and colde mine axes is so maint,
That now I chiuer, for defaut of heat,
And hote as glede, now sodainly I sweat.

" Now hote as fire, now colde as ashes deed,
Now hote for cold, now cold for heat againe,
Now cold as yse, now as coles reed,
For heate I brenne, and thus betwixe twaine,
I possed am, and all forecast in paine,
So that my heate plainly as I fele,
Of greeuous colde is cause euery dele.

" This is the colde of inward hie disdayn,
Colde of dispite, and colde of cruell hate,
This is the colde that euer doth his besie payn,
Ayenst trouth to fight and debate,
This is the colde that the fire abate
Of trewe meaning, alas the harde while,
This is the colde that woll me begile.

" For euer the better that in trouth I ment,
With all my might faithfully to serue,
With herte and all to be diligent,
The lesse thanke, alas I can deserue:
Thus for my trouth danger doth me sterue,
For one that should my death of mercy let,
Hath made dispite new his swerde to whet

" Against me, and his arowes to file,
To take vengeaunce of wilfull cruelte,
And tonges false through hir sleightly wile,
Han gon a werre that will not stinted be,
And false enuie, wrath and enuite,
Haue conspired against all right and law,
Of hir malice, that trouth shall be flaw.

" And male bouch, gan first the tale tell,
To sclaunder trouth of indignacion,
And false reporte so loude range the bell,
That misbeleefe and false suspection
Haue trouth brought to his dampnacion,
So that alas, wrongfully he dieth,
And falsenesse now his place occupieth.

" And entred is in to trouthes londe,
And hath thereof the full possession,
O rightfull God that first the trouth fonde,
How may thou suffre soch oppression,
That falsheed should haue jurisdiction
In trouthes right to flee him gyltles,
In his fraunchise he may not lyue in pees.

" Falsly accused, and of his fone forjudged,
Without answere, while he was absent,
He damned was, and may not be excused,
For cruelte sate in judgement,
Of hastinesse without aduisement,
And badde disdaine do execute anone,
His judgement in presence of his fone.

' Attourney may none admitted been
To excuse trouth, ne a worde to speke,
To faith or othe the judge list not seen,
There is no game, but he will be wreke:
O Lord of trouth to thee I call and clepe,
How may thou see thus in thy presence,
Without mercy murdred innocence.

" Now God that art of trouth soueraine,
And seest how I lie for trouth bound,
So sore knit in loues fyrie chaine,
Euen at the death through gyrte with many a wound,
That likely are neuer for to sound,
And for my trouth am dampned to the death,
And not abyde, but draw along the breath:

" Consider and see in thine eternal right,
How that mine herte professed whilom was,
For to be trewe with all my full might,
Onely to one the which now alas,
Of volunte without any trespas,
My accusours hath taken vnto grace,
And cherisheth hem my death to purchace.

" What meaneth this? what is this wonder ure?
Of purueyaunce if I shall it call,
Of god of loue, that false hem so assure,
And trewe alas, downe of the whele ben fall,
And yet in sothe this is the worst of all,
That falshed wrongfully of troth hath the name,
And trouth ayenward of falshed beareth the blame.

" This blind chaunce, this stormy aventure,
In loue hath most his experience,
For who that doth with trouth most his cure,
Shall for his mede finde most offence,
That serueth loue with all his diligence:
For who can faine vnder lowlyhede,
Ne fayleth not to finde grace and spede.

" For I loued one, full long sith agone,
With all mine herte, body and full might,
And to be deed my herte can not gone
From his heste, but hold that he hath hight,
Though I be banished out of her sight,
And by her mouth dampned that I shall dey,
Unto my hest, yet I will euer obey.

" For euer sith that the world began,
Who so liste looke, and in story rede,
He shall aye find that the trewe man
Was put abacke, whereas the falshede
Yfurthered was: for Loue taketh none hede
To slea the trew, and hath of hem no charge,
Where as the false goeth frely at hir large.

" I take record of Palamydes,
The trewe man, the noble worthy knight,
That euer loued, and of his paine no relees,
Notwithstanding his manhood and his might,
Loue vnto him did full great vnright,
For aye the bet he did in cheualrie,
The more he was hindred by enuie.

" And aye the better he did in euery place,
Through his knighthood and busie payne,
The ferder was he from his ladies grace,
For to her mercy might he neuer attayne,
And to his death he coud it not refrayne,
For no daungere, but aye obey and serue,
As he best coude, plainly till he sterue.

" What was the fine also of Hercules,
For all his conquest and his worthinesse,
That was of strength alone peerles,
For like as bookes of him list expresse,
He set pillers through his hye prowesse,
Away at Gades, for to signifie,
That no man might him passe in cheualrie.

" The which pillers ferre beyond Inde,
Be set of gold, for a remembraunce:
And for all that was he set behinde,
With hem that loue list feebly auaunce,
For him set last vpon a daunce,
Against whom helpe may no strife,
For all his trouth he lost his life.

" Phebus also for his pleasaunt light,
Whan that he went here in yearth lowe,
Unto the herte with Uenus sight,
Ywounded was, through Cupides bowe,
And yet his lady list him not to knowe,
Theugh for her loue his herte did blede,
She let him go, and toke of him no hede.

" What shall I say of yonge Piramus?
Of trewe Tristram, for all his hye renowne,
Of Achilles, or of Antonius,
Of Arcite, or of him Palomoune,
What was the end of hir passioune,
But after sorow death, and than hir graue,
Lo here the guerdon that these louers haue.

" But false Jason with his doublenesse,
That was vntrewe at Colkos to Medee,
And Theseus, roote of vnkindnesse,
And with these two eke the false Enee.
Lo thus the false aye in one degree,
Had in loue hir lust and all hir will,
And saue falshood, there was none other skill.

" Of Thebes eke the false Arcite,
And Demophon eke for his slouth,
They had hir lust and all that might delite,
For all hir falshood and great vntrouth:
Thus euer Loue alas, and that is routh,
His false lieges forthereth what he may,
And sleeth the trewe vngoodly day by day.

" For trewe Adon was slaine with the bore,
Amidde the forest in the grene shade,
For Venus loue he felt all the sore,
But Vulcanus with her no mercy made,
The foule chorle had many nights glade,
Where Mars her knight and her man,
To find mercy comfort none he can.

" Also the yonge fresh Ipomedes,
So lustly free as of his corage,
That for to serue with all his herte he ches
Athalant, so faire of her visage,
But Loue alas quite him so his wage
With cruell daunger plainly at the last,
That with the death guerdonlesse he past.

" Lo here the fine of Loues seruice,
Lo how that Loue can his seruaunts quite,
Lo how he can his faithfull men dispise,
To slea the trewe men, and false to respite,
Lo how he doth the swerde of sorow bite
In hertes, soch as most his lust obey,
To saue the false and do the trewe dey.

" For faith nor othe, worde, ne assuraunce,
Trewe meaning, awaite, or businesse,
Still porte, ne faithfull attendaunce,
Manhood ne might in armes worthinesse,
Pursute of worship nor hie prowesse,
In straunge land riding ne trauaile,
Full litell or nought in loue doth auaile.

" Perill of death, nor in see ne land,
Hunger ne thrust, sorow ne sicknesse,
Ne great emprises for to take in hand,
Sheding of blood, ne manfull hardinesse,
Ne oft wounding at sautes by distresse,
Nor in parting of life nor death also,
All is for nought, Loue taketh no heed thereto.

" But lesings with hir flatterie,
Through hir falshede, and with hir doublenesse,
With tales new, and many fained lie,
By false semblaunt, and counterfeit humblesse,
Under colour depaint with stedfastnesse,
With fraud couered vnder a pitous face,
Accept be now rathest vnto grace.

" And can himselfe now best magnifie
With fained port and presumption,
They haunce hir cause with false surquidrie,
Under meaning of double entention,
To thinke one in hir opinion,
And say another, to set himselfe aloft,
And hinder trouth, as it is seene full oft.

" The which thing I buy now all too deare,
Thanked be Venus, and the god Cupide,
As it is seene by mine oppressed cheare,
And by his arrowes that sticken in my side,
That saue death I nothing abide
Fro day to day, alas the hard while,
Whan euer his dart that him list to file,

" My wofull herte for to riue atwo,
For faut of mercy, and lacke of pite
Of her that causeth all my paine and wo,
And list not ones of grace for to see
Unto my trouth through her cruelte,
And most of all I me complaine,
That she hath joy to laugh at my paine.

" And wilfully hath my death sworne,
All guiltlesse, and wote no cause why,
Saue for the trouth that I had aforne
To her alone to serue faithfully,
O god of loue, vnto thee I cry,
And to thy blind double deite,
Of this great wrong I complaine me.

" And vnto thy stormy wilfull variaunce,
Iment with change and great vnstablenesse,
Now vp, now down, so renning is thy chance,
That thee to trust may be no sikernesse,
I wite it nothing but thy doublenesse,
And who that is an archer, and is blend,
Marketh nothing, but shooteth by wend.

" And for that he hath no discretion,
Without aduise he let his arrow go,
For lacke of sight, and also of reason,
In his shooting it happeth oft so,
To hurt his friend rather than his fo,
So doth this god with his sharpe stone,
The trew sleeth, and letteth the false gone.

" And of his wounding this is the worst of all,
Whan he hurt doeth to so cruell wretch,
And maketh the sicke for to cry and call
Unto his foe for to be his leche,
And hard it is for a man to seche
Upon the point of death in jeoperdie,
Unto his foe to find a remedie.

" Thus fareth it now euen by me,
That to my foe that gaue my herte a wound,
Mote aske grace, mercy, and pite,
And namely there where none may be found,
For now my sore my leche will confound,
And god of kind so hath set mine ure,
My liues foe to haue my wound in cure.

" Alas the while now that I was borne,
Or that I euer saw the bright Sonne,
For now I see that full long aforne,
Or I was borne, my desteny was sponne
By Parcas sisterne, to slea me if they conne,
For they my death shopen or my shert,
Only for trouth, I may it not astert.

" The mighty goddesse also of Nature,
That vnder God hath the gouernaunce,
Of worldly things committed to her cure,
Disposed haue through her wise purueiance,
To giue my lady so much suffisaunce
Of all vertues, and therewithall puruide,
To murder trouth, hath take danger to gide.

" For bounte, beaute, shape, and seemelihede,
Prudence, wit, passingly fairenesse,
Benigne port, glad chere, with lowlihede,
Of womanhede right plenteous largenesse,
Nature did in her fully empresse,
Whan she her wrought, and alther last disdain,
To hinder trouth, she made her chamberlain.

" Whan mistrust also, and false suspection,
With misbeleue she made for to be
Cheefe of counsaile to this conclusion,
For to exile trouth, and eke pite,
Out of her court to make mercy flee,
So that dispite now holdeth forth her rein,
Through hasty bileue of tales that men fein.

" And thus I am for my trouth alas
Murdred and slain, with words sharp and kene,
Guiltlesse God wote of all trespas,
And lie and blede vpon this cold grene,
Now mercy swete, mercy my liues quene,
And to your grace of mercy yet I prey,
In your seruice that your man may dey.

" But if so be that I shall die algate,
And that I shall none other mercy haue,
Yet of my death let this been the date,
That by your wil I was broght to my graue,
Or hastely, if that you list me saue,
My sharpe wounds that ake so and blede,
Of mercy charme, and also of womanhede.

" For other charme plainly is there none,
But only mercy, to helpe in this case,
For though my wounds bleed euer in one,
My life, my death, standeth in your grace,
And though my guilt be nothing, alas,
I aske mercy in all my best entent,
Ready to die, if that ye assent.

" For there against shall I neuer striue
In word ne werke, plainely I ne may,
For leuer I haue than to be alive
To die soothly, and it be to her pay,
Ye though it be this same day,
Or whan that euer her list to deuise,
Suffiseth me to die in your seruise.

" And God, that knowest the thought of euery wight
Right as it is, in euery thing thou maist see,
Yet ere I die, with all my full might,
Lowly I pray to graunt vnto mee,
That ye goodly, faire, fresh, and free,
Which onely slea me for default of routh,
Or that I die, ye may know my trouth.

" For that in sooth sufficeth me,
And she it know in every circumstaunce,
And after I am well paid that she
If that her list of death to do vengeaunce
Unto me, that am vnder her lygeaunce,
It sit me not her doome to disobey,
But at her lust wilfully to dey.

" Without grutching or rebellion
In will or word, holy I assent,
Or any manner contradiction,
Fully to be at her commaundement,
And if I die in my testament
My herte I send, and my spirit also,
What so ever she list with hem to do.

" And alderlast to her womanhede,
And to her mercy me I recommaund,
That lie now here betwixe hope and drede,
Abiding plainly what she list commaund,
For utterly this nis no demaund
Welcome to me while me lasteth breath;
Right at her choice, where it be life or death.

" In this matter more what might I saine,
Sith in her hand, and in her will is all,
But life and death, my joy, and all my paine,
And finally my best hold I shall,
Till my spirit by desteny fatall,
Whan that her list fro my body wend,
Haue here my trouth, and thus I make an end."

And with that word he gan sigh as sore,
Like as his herte riue would atwaine,
And held his peace, and spake no word more,
But for to see his wo and mortal paine,
The teares gonne fro mine eyen raine
Full pitously, for very inward roth,
That I him saw, so long wishing for troth.

And all this while my selfe I kepte close
Among the bowes, and my selfe gonne hide,
Till at the last the wofull man arose,
And to a lodge went there beside,
Where all the May his custome was tabide,
Sole to complaine of his paines kene,
From yere to yere, under the bowes grene.

And for bicause that it drew to the night,
And that the Sunne his arke diurnal
Ypassed was, so that his persaunt light,
His bright beams and his streams all
Were in the waues of the water fall,
Under the bordure of our oceian,
His chaire of gold, his course so swiftly ran:

And while the twilight and the rowes rede
Of Phebus light were deaurat alite,
A penne I tooke, and gan me fast spede
The wofull plaint of this man to write,
Word by word, as he did endite,
Like as I heard, and coud hem tho report,
I haue here set, your hertes to disport.

If ought be misse, lay the wite on me,
For I am worthy for to beare the blame,
If any thing misse reported be,
To make this ditie for to seeme lame,
Through mine unconning, but for to sain the same,
Like as this manne his complaint did expresse,
I aske mercy and forgiuenesse.

And as I wrote, me thought I saw aferre,
Ferre in the west lustely appere
Esperus the goodly bright sterre,
So glad, so faire, so persaunt eke of chere,
I mean Uenus with her beames clere,
That heauy hertes only to releue,
Is wont of custome for to shew at eue.

And I as fast fell adown on my knee,
And euen thus to her gan I to prey:
" O lady Uenus so faire upon to see,
Let not this man for his trouth dey,
For that joy thou haddest whan thou ley
With Mars thy knight, whan Uulcanus fond,
And with a chaine unvisible you bond

" Togider both tway in the same while,
That all the court aboue celestiall,
At your shame gan laugh and smile:
Ah, faire lady welly fond at all,
Comfort to carefull, O goddesse immartall,
Be helping now, and do thy diligence,
To let the streames of thine influence

" Descend downe, in forthering of the trouth,
Namely of hem that lie in sorrow bound,
Shew now thou might, and on hir wo haue routh,
Ere false daunger slea hem and confound:
And specially let thy might be found,
For so to couer what so that thou may
The true man that in the herber lay.

" And all true forther for his sake,
O glad sterre, O lady Uenus mine,
And cause his lady him to grace take,
Her herte of stele to mercy so encline,
Ere that thy bemes go vp to decline,
And ere that thou now go fro us adoun,
For that loue thou haddest to Adoun."

And whan she was gone to her rest,
I rose anone, and home to bed went,
For weary, me thought it for the best,
Praying thus in all my best entent,
That all trew, that be with daunger shent,
With mercy may in release of hir paine,
Recured be, ere May come efte againe.

And for that I ne may no lenger wake,
Farewell ye louers all that be trew,
Praying to God, and thus my leue I take,
That ere the Sunne to morrow be risen new,
And ere he haue ayen rosen hew
That each of you may haue such a grace,
His owne lady in armes to embrace.

I meane thus, in all honesty,
Without more ye may togider speake
What so ye list at good liberty,
That each may to other hir herte breke,
On jelousies onely to be wreke,
That hath so long of his mallice and enny
Werred trouth with his tiranny.

LENUOYE.

Princesse, pleaseth it to your benignitie
This little ditie to haue in mind,
Of womanhede also for to see,
Your man may your mercy find,
And pity eke, that long hath be behind,
Let him againe be provoked to grace,
For by my trouth it is against kind,
False daunger to occupy his place.

Go little quaire vnto my lives queene
And my very hertes soueraine,
And be right glad for she shall the scene,
Such is thy grace, but I alas in paine
Am left behind, and not to whom to plaine,
For mercy, ruth, grace, and eke pite
Exiled be, that I may not attaine,
Recure to find of mine adversite.

EXPLICIT.

A PRAISE OF WOMEN.

Altho thee list of women evill to speak,
And sain of hem worse than they deserve,
I pray to god that hir neckes to break,
Or on some evil death mote tho janglers sterve
For every man were holden hem to serve,
And do hem worship, honour, and servise,
In every manner that they best coud devise.

For we ought first to think on what manere
They bring vs forth, and what pain they endure
First in our birth, and sith fro yere to yere
How busely they done their busie cure,
To keepe vs fro every misaventure
In our youth whan we have no might
Our selfe to keepe, neither by day nor night.

Alas, how may we say on hem but wele,
Of whom we were fostred and ybore,
And ben all our succour, and ever true as stele,
And for our sake full oft they suffer sore,
Without women were all our joy lore,
Wherfore we ought all women to obey
In all goodnesse, I can no more say.

This is well knowne, and hath ben or this,
That women ben cause of all lightnesse,
Of knighthood, norture, eschuing all mallis,
Encrease of worship, and of all worthinesse, [nesse,
Thereto curteis and meke, and ground of all good-
Glad and merry, and true in every wise
That any gentill herte can thinke or devise.

And though any would trust to your vntruth,
And to your faire words would aught assent,
In good faith me thinketh it wer great ruth,
That other women shuld for hir gilt be shent,
That never knew, ne wist nought of hir entent,
Ne list not to heare tho faire words ye write,
Which ye you paine fro day to day tendite.

But who may beware of your tales vntrue,
That ye so busily paint and endite,
For ye will swere that ye never knew,
Ne saw the woman, neither much ne lite,
Save only her, to whom ye had delite,
As for to serve of all that ever ye sey,
And for her love must ye needs dey.

Than will ye swere that ye knew never before
What Love was, ne his dredfull observaunce,
But now ye feele that he can wound sore,
Wherfore ye put you into her governaunce,
Whom Love hath ordeind you to serve and do ple-
With al your might your little lives space, [sance
Which endeth soone, but if she do you grace.

And than to bed will he soone draw,
And soone sicke ye will you than faine,
And swere fast your lady hath you slaw,
And brought you suddainly in so high a paine
That fro your death may no man you restraine,
With a daungerous looke of her eyen two,
That to your death must ye needs go.

Thus will ye morne, thus will ye sigh sore,
As though your herte anon in two wold brest,
And swere fast that ye may live no more,
Mine owne lady, that might if ye lest
Bring mine herte somedele into rest,
As if you list mercy on me to have,
Thus your vntrouth will ever mercy crave.

Thus woll ye plain, tho ye nothing smert,
These innocent creatures for to beguile,
And swere to hem, so wounded is your herte
For hir love, that ye may live no while.
Scarsly so long as one might go a mile,
So hieth death to bring you to an end,
But if your soverain lady list you to amend.

And if for routh she comfort you in any wise
For pity of your false othes sere,
So that innocent weneth that it be as you devise,
And weneth your herte be as she may here,
Thus for to comfort and somwhat do you chere:
Than woll these janglers deme of her full ill,
And saine that ye have her fully at your will.

Lo how ready hir tonges been, and prest
To speake harme of women causelesse,
Alas, why might ye not as well say the best,
As for to deme hem thus guiltlesse,
In your herte iwis there is no gentilnesse,
That of your own gilt list thus women fame,
Now by my trouth, me think ye be too blame.

For of women cometh this worldly wele,
Wherfore we ought to worship hem evermore,
And though it mishap one, we ought for to hele,
For it is all through our false lore,
That day and night we paine vs evermore
With many an oth, these women to beguile
With false tales, and many a wicked wile.

And if falshede should be reckened and told
In women, iwis full trouth were,
Not as in men, by a thousand fold,
Fro all vices iwis they stand cleare,
In any thing that I could of heare,
But if enticing of these men it make,
That hem to flatteren connen never slake.

I would fain wete where euer ye coud here,
Without mens tising, what women did amis,
Forther ye may get hem, ye lie fro yere to yere
And many a gabbing ye make to hem iwis,
For I could neuer heare, ne knowen ere this,
Where euer ye coud find in any place,
That euer women besought you of grace.

There ye you pain, with all your ful might.
With all your herte, and all your businesse,
To pleasen hem both by day and night,
Praying hem of hir grace and gentilnesse,
To haue pitie upon your great distresse,
And that they would on your paine haue routh,
And slea you not, sens ye meane but trouth.

Thus may ye see that they ben faultlesse,
And innocent to all your werkes slie,
And all your crafts that touch falsenesse,
They know hem not, ne may hem not espie,
So sweare ye, that ye must needs die,
But if they would of hir womanhead
Upon you rew, ere that ye be dead.

And than your lady, and your hertes queene
Ye call hem, and therewith ye sighe sore,
And say, "My lady I trow that it be seene
In what plite that I haue liued full yore,
But now I hope that ye woll no more
In these paines suffer me for to dwell,
For all goodnesse iwis ye be the well."

Lo which a painted processe can ye make,
These harmlesse creatures for to beguile,
And whan they slepe, ye paine you to wake,
And to bethinke you on many a wicked wile,
But ye shall see the day that ye shall ourse the [while
That ye so busily did your entent
Hem to beguile, that falshed neuer meant.

For this ye know wel, though I would lie,
In women is all trouth and stedfastnesse,
For in good faith I neuer of hem sie
But much worship, bountie, and gentilnesse,
Right comming, faire, and full of meeknesse,
Good and glad, and lowly I you ensure,
Is this goodly angellike creature

And if it hap a man be in disease,
She doeth her businesse, and her full paine
With al her might, him to comfort and please
If fro his disease she might him restraine,
In word ne deed ywis she woll not faine,
But with all her might she doth her businesse
To bring him out of his heauinesse,

Lo what gentillesse these women haue,
If we could know it for our rudenesse,
How busie they be us to keepe and saue,
Both in heale, and also in sicknesse,
And alway right sorrie for our distresse,
In euery manner, thus shew they routh,
That in hem is all goodnesse and trouth.

And sith we find in hem gentilnesse and trouth,
Worship, bountie, and kindnesse euermore,
Let neuer this gentillesse throgh your slouth
In hir kind trouth be aught forlore
That in women is, and hath ben full yore,
For in reuerence of the Heauens queene,
We ought to worship all women that beene.

For of all creatures that euer wer get and borne,
This wote ye well a woman was the best,
By her was recouered the blisse that we had lorne,
And through the woman shall we come to rest,
And ben ysaued, if that our selfe lest,
Wherefore me thinketh, if that we had grace,
We oughten honour women in every place.

Therefore I rede, that to our liues end,
Fro this time forth, while that we haue space,
That we haue trespaced, pursue to amend,
Praying our ladie well of all grace
To bring us unto that blisful place,
There as she and all good women shal be in fere
In Heauen aboue, among the angels clere.

EXPLICIT.

THE HOUSE OF FAME.

In this book is shewed how the deeds of all men and women, be they good or bad, are carried by report to posterity.

God tourne us euery dream to good,
For it is wonder thing by the rood
To my wit, what causeth sweuens
On the morrow, or on euens,
And why the effect followeth of some,
And of some it shal neuer come,
Why that it is an auision,
And why this is a reuelation,
Why this a dreame, why that a sweuen,
And not to euery man liche euen,
Why this a fantome, why that oracles,
I not: but who so of these miracles
The causes know bet than I,
Define he, for I certainely
Ne can hem not, ne neuer thinke
To busie my wit for to swinke
To know of hir significations
The gendres, ne distinctions
Of the times of hem, ne the causes,
Or why this is more than that is,
Or yeue folkes complexions,
Make hem dreame of reflections,
Or else thus, as other saine,
For the great feeblenesse of hir brain,
By abstinence, or by sicknesse,
Prison, strife or great distresse,
Or els by disordinaunce,
Or natural accustomaunce,
That some men be too curious
In studie, or melancolius,
Or thus, so inly full of drede,
That no man may him bote rede,
Or els that deuotion
Of some, and contemplation,
Causen such dreames oft,
Or that the cruell life vnsoft
Of hem that loues leden,
Oft hopen much or dreden,
That purely hir impressions
Causen hem to haue visions,
Or if spirits han the might
To make folke to dreame on night,
Or if the soule of proper kind,
Be so perfite as men find,
That it wote what is to come,
And that he warneth all and some
Of eueriche of hir auentures,
By auisions, or by figures,

But that our flesh hath no might
To vnderstand it aright,
For it is warned too derkely,
But why the cause is, not wote I,
Well worth of this thing clerkes,
That treaten of that, and of other werkes,
For I of none opinion
Nill as now make mention,
But only that the holy rood
Tourne vs euery dreame to good,
For neuer sith I was borne,
Ne no man els me before,
Mette I trow stedfastly
So wonderfull a dreame as I.
The tenth day now of December,
The which, as I can remember,
I woll you tellen euerydele,
But at my beginning trusteth wele,
I woll make inuocation,
With a deuout speciall deuotion
Unto the god of sleepe anone,
That dwelleth in a caue of stone,
Upon a streame that commeth fro Lete,
That is a flood of Hell vnswete,
Beside a fulke, that men clepe Cimerie,
There sleepeth aye this god vnmerie,
With his slepie thousand sonnis,
That alway to sleepe hir wonne is
And to this god that I of rede,
Pray I, that he woll me spede,
My sweuen for to tell aright,
If euery dreame stand in his might,
And he that mouer is of all
That is and was, and euer shall,
So giue hem joy that it here,
Or all that they dreame to yere,
And for to stand all in grace
Of hir loues, or in what place
That hem were leuest for to stond,
And shield hem from pouertie and shond,
And from euery vnhappe and disease,
And send hem that may hem please,
That taketh well and scorneth nought,
Ne it misdeme in hir thought,
Through malicious entention,
And who so through presumption,
Or hate, or scorne, or through enuie,
Dispite, or yape, or fellonie,
Misdeme it, pray I Jesus good,
Dreame he barefoot, or dreame he shood,
That euery harme that any man
Hath had sith the world began,
Befall him thereof, or he sterue,
And graunt that he may it deserue.
Lo, with right such a conclusion,
As had of his auision
Cresus, that was king of Lide,
That high vpon a gibbet dide,
This praier shall he haue of me,
I am no bette in charite.

Now herken, as I haue you sayd,
What that I mette or I abrayd,
Of December the tenth day,
Whan it was night, to slepe I lay,
Right as I was wont to done,
And fell asleepe wonder sone,
As he that was weary forgo,
On pilgrimage miles two
To the corpes of saint Leonard,
To maken lithe, that erst was hard.
But as I slept, me mette I was
Within a temple ymade of glas,
In which there were mo images
Of gold, standing in sundry stages,
In mo rich tabernacles,
And with perre mo pinacles,
And mo curious portraitures,
And queint manner of figures
Of gold worke, than I saw euer.
But certainly I nist neuer
Where that it was, but well wist I,
It was of Uenus redely
This temple, for in portreiture,
I saw anon right her figure
Naked fleeting in a see,
And also on her head parde,
Her rose garland white and red,
And her combe to kembe her hed,
Her doues, and dan Cupido,
Her blind sonne, and Uulcano,
That in his face was full browne.
But as I romed vp and downe,
I found that on the wall there was
Thus written on a table of bras.
" I woll now sing if that I can,
The armes, and also the man,
That first came through his destinie
Fugitife fro Troy the countrie,
Into Itaile, with full much pine,
Unto the stronds of Lauine :"
And tho began the story anone,
As I shall tellen you echone.
First saw I the destruction
Of Troy, through the Greeke Sinon,
With his false vntrue forswearings,
And with his chere and his lesings
Made a horse, brought into Troy,
By which Troyans lost all hir joy.
And after this was grauen, alas,
How Ilions castle assailed was
And won, and king Priamus slaine,
And Polites his sonne certaine,
Dispitously of dan Pirrus.
And next that saw I how Uenus
Whan that she saw the castle brend,
Downe from Heauen she gan discend,
And had her sonne Eneas to flee,
And how he fled, and how that he
Escaped was from all the prees,
And tooke his father, old Anchises,
And bare him on his backe away,
Crying " Alas and welaway,"
The which Anchises in his hand
Bare tho the gods of the land,
Thilke that unbrenned were.
Than saw I next all in fere,
How Crusa, dan Eneas wife,
Whom that he loued all his life,
And her yong sonne Iulo,
And eke Ascanius also,
Fledden eke with drerie chere,
That it was pitie for to here,
And in a forrest as they went,
At a tourning of a went,
How Crusa was ylost, alas,
That rede not I, how that it was,
How he her sought, and how her ghost
Bad him flie the Greekes host,

And said he must into Itaile,
As was his destinie, sauns faile,
That it was pitie for to heare,
Whan her spirit gan appeare
The words that she to him saied,
And for to keepe her sonne him praied.
There saw I grauen eke how he,
His father eke, and his meine,
With his ships gan to saile
Toward the countrey of Itaile,
As streight as they mighten go.
There saw I eke the cruell Juno,
That art dan Jupiters wife,
That hast yhated all thy life
All the Troyan blood,
Ren and cry as thou were wood
On Eolus, the god of winds,
To blowen out of all kinds
So loud, that he should drench
Lord, lady, groome, and wench
Of all the Troyans nation,
Without any of hir saluation.
There saw I such tempest arise,
That euery herte might agrise,
To see it painted on the wall.
There saw I eke grauen withall
Uenus, how ye my lady dere,
Weeping with full wofull chere,
Praying Jupiter on hie
To saue and keepe that nauie
Of that Troyan Eneas,
Sith that he her sonne was.
There saw I Joues Uenus kisse,
And graunted was of the tempest lisse.
There saw I how the tempest stent,
And how with all pine he went,
And priuely tooke a riuage
Into the countrey of Carthage,
And on the morow how that he,
And a knight that height Achate,
Metten with Uenus that day,
Going in a queint array,
As she had be an hunteresse,
With wind blowing vpon her tresse,
And how Eneas began to plaine,
Whan he knew her, of his paine,
And how his ships dreint were,
Or els ylost, he nist where,
How she gan him comfort tho,
And bade him to Cartage go,
And there he should his folke find,
That in the sea were left behind,
And shortly of this thing to pace,
She made Eneas so in grace
Of Dido, queene of that countre,
That shortly for to tellen, she
Became his loue, and let him do
All that wedding longeth to,
What should I speake it more quaint,
Or paine me my words to paint,
To speake of loue, it woll not be,
I cannot of that faculte,
And eke to tellen of the manere
How they first acquainted were,
It were a long processe to tell,
And ouer long for you to dwell.
There saw I graue, how Eneas
Told to Dido euery caas,
That him was tidde vpon the see.
And eft grauen was how that she
Made of him shortly at a word,
Her life, her loue, her lust, her lord,
And did to him all reuerence,
And laid on him all the dispence,
That any woman might do,
Wening it had all be so,
As he her swore, and hereby demed
That he was good, for he such seemed.
Alas, what harme doth apparence,
Whan it is false in existence,
For he to her a traitour was,
Wherefore she slew her selfe alas
Lo, how a woman doth amis,
To loue him that vnknowen is,
For by Christ lo thus it fareth,
It is not all gold that glareth,
For also brouke I well mine head,
There may be vnder goodlihead
Couered many a shreud vice,
Therefore be no wight so nice,
To take a loue onely for chere,
Or speech, or for friendly manere,
For this shall euery woman find,
That some man of his pure kind
Woll shewen outward the fairest,
Till he haue caught that what him lest,
And than woll he causes find,
And swere how she is vnkind,
Or false, or priuie, or double was,
All this say I by Eneas
And Dido, and her nice lest,
That loued all to soone a guest,
Wherefore I woll say o prouerbe,
That he that fully knoweth the herbe,
May safely lay it to his eie,
Withouten drede this is no lie.
But let vs speake of Eneas,
How he betraied her, alas,
And left her full vnkindly.
So whan she saw all vtterly,
That he would her of trouth faile,
And wenden from her into Itaile,
She gan to wring her handes two.
"Alas" (quod she) "that me is wo,
Alas, is euery man thus true,
That euery yere woll haue a new,
If it so long time endure,
Or els three parauenture,
And thus of one he woll haue fame
In magnifying of his owne name,
Another for friendship sayeth he,
And yet there shall the third be,
That is taken for delite,
Lo, or els for singular profite:"
In such words gan complaine
Dido of her great paine,
As me mette dreaming readily,
None other authour alledge woll I.
"Alas" (quod she) "my sweet herte,
Haue pitie on my sorrowes smart,
And slea me not, go not away.
"O wofull Dido, welaway"
(Quod she) vnto her selfe tho.
"O Eneas what woll ye do,
O that your loue ne your bond,
That ye swore with your right hond,
Ne my cruell death" (quod she)
"May hold you still here with me.
"O, haue ye of my death no pite,
Iwis mine owne deare herte ye

Know full well that neuer yet,
As farre as euer I had wit,
Agilt you in thought ne in dede.
" O, haue ye men such goodlihede
In speech, and neuer a dele of trouth,
Alas that euer had routh
Any woman on a false man.
" Now I see well, and tell can,
We wretched women can no art,
For certaine, for the more part,
Thus we been serued euerichone,
How sore that ye men can grone,
Anon as we have you receiued,
Certainly we been deceiued,
For though your loue lest a season,
Wait vpon the conclusion,
And eke how ye determine,
And for the more part define,
O welaway that *I* was borne,
For through you my name is lorne,
And mine acts redde and song
Ouer all this land in euery tong.
" O wicked Fame, for there nis
Nothing so swift lo as she is,
O sooth is, euery thing is wist,
Though it be couerde with the mist,
Eke though I might duren euer,
That I haue done recouer I neuer,
That it ne shall be said, alas,
I shamed was through Eneas,
And that I shall thus judged be:
" Lo right as she hath done, now she
Woll done eftsoones hardely,
Thus say the people priuely:"
But that *is* done, nis not to done,
But all her complaint ne her mone
Certaine auaileth her not a stre,
And whan she wist soothly he
Was forth into his ship agone,
She into chamber went anone,
And called on her suster Anne,
And gan her to complaine than,
And said, that she cause was,
That she first loued him alas,
And first counsailed her thereto,
But what, whan this was said and do,
She roft her seluen to the herte,
And deide through the wounds smart,
But all the manner how she deide,
And all the words how she seide,
Who so to know it hath purpose,
Rede Uirgile in Eneidos,
Or the Pistels of Ouide,
What that she wrote or that she dide,
And nere it too long to endite,
By God I would it here write,
But welaway, the harme and routh
That hath betide for such vntrouth,
As men may oft in bookes rede,
And all day seene it yet in dede,
That for to thinken it tene is.
Lo Demophon, duke of Athenis,
How he forswore him falsely,
And traied Phillis wickedly,
That kings doughter was of Thrace,
And falsely gan his tearme pace,
And whan she wist that he was false,
She hong her selfe right by the halse,
For he had done her such vntrouth,
Lo, was not this a wo and routh.
Eke looke how false and recheles
Was to Briseida Achilles,
And Paris to Oenone,
And Jason to Hipsiphile,
And eft Jason to Medea,
And Hercules to Dianira,
For he left her for Iolee,
That made him take his death parde.
How false was eke Theseus,
That as the storie telleth vs,
How he betraied Adriane,
The deuill be his soules bane,
For had he laughed or yloured,
He must haue been all deuoured,
If Adriane ne had be,
And for she had of him pite,
She made him fro the death escape,
And he made her a full false jape,
For after this within a while,
He left her sleeping in an isle,
Desart alone right in the see,
And stale away, and let her bee,
And tooke her suster Phedra tho
With him and gan to ship go,
And yet he had sworne to here,
On all that euer he could swere,
That so she saued him his life,
He would taken her to his wife,
For she desired nothing els,
In certaine, as the booke vs tels.
But for to excuse this Eneas
Fulliche of all his great trespas,
The booke saith sauns faile,
The gods bad him go to Itaile,
And leauen Affrickes regioun,
And faire Dido and her toun,
Tho saw I graue how to Itaile
Dan Eneas gan for to saile,
And how the tempest all began,
And how he lost his steresman,
Which that the sterne, or he tooke keepe,
Smote ouer the bord as he sleepe.
And also saugh I how Sibile
And Eneas beside an isle,
To Hell went for to see
His father Anchises the free,
And how he there found Palimurus,
And also Dido, and Deiphebus,
And euerichc tourment eke in Hell
Saw he, which long is for to tell,
Which paines who so list to know,
He must rede many a row
In Uergile or in Claudian,
Or Daunt, that it tellen can.
Tho saw I eke all the ariuaile
That Eneas had made in Itaile,
And with king Latin his treate,
And all the battailes that he
Was at himselfe, and his knights,
Or he had all iwonne his rights,
And how he Turnus reft his life,
And wan Lauina to his wife,
And all the maruellous signals
Of the gods celestials,
How maugre Juno, Eneas
For all her sleight and her compas
Acheued all his auenture,
For Jupiter tooke on him cure,
At the prayer of Uenus,
Which I pray alway saue vs,

And vs aye of our sorrowes light.
Whan I had seene all this sight
In this noble temple thus,
" Hey lord, thought I, that madest vs,
Yet saw I neuer such noblesse
Of images, nor such richesse,
As I see grauen in this church,
But nought wote I who did hem worch,
Ne where I am, ne in what countree,
But now will I out gone and see
Right at the wicket if I can
Seene ought where stering any man,
That may me tellen where I am."
Whan I out of the dore came,
I fast about me beheld,
Than saw I but a large field,
As farre as euer I might see,
Without toune, house, or tree,
Or bush, or grasse, or eared land,
For all the field was but of sand,
As small as men may see at eye
In the desart of Lybye,
Ne no manner creature,
That is yformed by nature,
Ne saw I, me to rede or wisse:
" O Christ," thought I, " that are in blisse,
From fanton and illusion
Me saue," and with deuotion
Mine eyen to the Heauen I cast,
Tho was I ware lo at the last,
That fast by the Sunne on hye,
As kenne might I with mine eye,
Me thought I saw an egle sore,
But that it seemed much more
Than I had any egle yseine,
This is as sooth as death certaine,
It was of gold, and shone so bright,
That neuer saw men such a sight,
But if the Heauen had ywonne
All new of God another sonne,
So shone the egles fethers bright,
And somewhat downward gan it light.

EXPLICIT LIBER PRIMUS.

Now hearken euery manner man,
That English vnderstand can,
And listeth of my dreame to here,
For nowe at erst shall ye lere
So sely and so dredefull a vision,
That I say neither Scipion,
Ne king Nabugodonosore,
Pharao, Turnus, ne Alcanore,
Ne metten such a dreame as this,
Now faire blisfull, O Cipris,
So be my fauour at this time,
That ye me tendite and rime
Helpeth, that in Pernaso dwell,
Beside Elicon the clere well.
O thought, that wrote all that I met,
And in the tresorie it set
Of my braine, now shall men see
If any vertue in thee bee,
To telf all my dreame aright,
Now kithe thy engine and thy might.
This egle of which I haue you told,
That with feathers shone all of gold,
Which that so high gan to sore,
I gan behold more and more,
To seene her beauty and the wonder,
But neuer was that dent of thunder,
Ne that thing that men call soudre,
That smite sometime a toure to poudre,
And in his swift comming brend,
That so swithe gan downward discend,
As this foule whan it beheld,
That I a roume was in the field,
And with his grim pawes strong,
Within his sharpe nailes long,
Me fleyng at a swappe he hent,
And with his sours againe vp went,
Me carying in his clawes starke,
As lightly as I had ben a larke,
How high, I cannot tellen you,
For I came vp, I nist neuer how,
For so astonied and asweued
Was euery vertue in my heued,
What with his sours and my dread,
That all my feeling gan to dead,
For why it was a great affray.
Thus I long in his clawes lay,
Till at the last he to me spake
In mans voice, and said " Awake,
And be not agast so for shame,"
And called me tho by my name,
And for I should better abraid,
Me to awake, thus he said,
Right in the same voice and steuin,
That vseth one that I can neuin,
And with that voice, sooth to saine,
My mind came to me again,
For it was goodly said to me,
So nas it neuer wont to be,
And herewithal I gan to stere,
As he me in his feet bere,
Till that he felt that I had heat,
And felt eke tho mine herte beat,
And tho gan he me to disport,
And with gentle wordes me comfort,
And said twice, " Saint Mary,
Thou art a noyous thing to cary,
And nothing needeth it parde,
For also wise God helpe me,
As thou no harme shalt haue of this,
And this case that betiddeth thee is,
Is for thy lore and for thy prow,
Let see, darst thou looke yet now,
Be full ensured boldely,
" I am thy friend," and therewith I
Gan for to wonder in my mind.
" O God," quod I, " that madest all kind,
Shall I none otherwise die,
Whether Joue will me stellifie,
Or what thing may this signifie,
I am neither Enoeke, ne Helie,
Ne Romulus, ne Ganimede,
That were bore up as men rede,
To Heaven with dan Jupiter,
And made the gods buteler:"
Lo, this was tho my fantasie,
But he that bare gan aspie,
That I so thought and said this,
" Thou deemest of thy selfe amis,
For Joue is not thereabont,
I dare thee put full out of doubt
To make of the yet a sterre,
But ere I beare thee much ferre,
I will the tell what I am,
And whider thou shalt, and why I came,

To do this, so that thou take
Good herte, and not for feare quake."
"Gladly," quod I, "Now well," quod he:
"First, I that in my feet haue the,
Of whom thou hast feare and wonder,
I am dwelling with the god of thonder,
Which men callen Jupiter,
That doth me flien full oft fer
To do all his commaundement,
And for this cause he hath me sent
To thee: herke now by thy trouth,
Certaine he hath of thee routh,
That thou hast so truely
Long serued ententifely
His blind newe Cupido,
And faire Uenus also,
Without guerdon euer yet,
And nathelesse hast set thy wit,
Although in thy head full little is,
To make bookes, songs, and dities
In rime, or else in cadence,
As thou best canst in reuerence
Of Loue, and of his seruaunts eke,
That haue his seruice sought and seke,
And painest thee to praise his art,
Although thou haddest neuer part,
Wherefore also God me blesse,
Iouis halt it great humblesse,
And vertue eke, that thou wilt make
A night full oft thine head to ake,
In thy study so thou writest,
And evermore of Loue enditest,
In honour of him and praisings,
And in his folkes furtherings,
And in hir matter all deuisest,
And not him ne his folke dispisest,
Although thou maist go in the daunce
Of hem, that him list not ahaunce,
Wherefore as I said ywis,
Jupiter considreth well this,
And also beausire, of other things,
That is, thou haste no tidings
Of Lones folke, if they be glade,
Ne of nothing else that God made,
And not onely fro ferre countree,
That no tidings commen to thee,
Not of thy very neighbours,
That dwellen almost at thy dores,
Thou hearest neither that ne this,
For whan thy labour all done is,
And hast made all thy reckenings
In stead of rest and of new things,
Thou goest home to thine house anone,
And also dombe as a stone,
Thou sittest at another booke,
Till fully dased is thy looke,
And liuest thus as an hermite,
Although thine abstinence is lite,
And therfore Iouis through his grace
Will that I beare thee to a place,
Which that hight the House of Fame,
And to do the sport and game
In some recompensation
Of thy labour and deuotion
That thou hast had, lo causelesse,
To god Cupido the recchelesse,
And thus this god through his merite
Will with some manner thing thee quite,
So that thou wilt be of good chere,
For trust well that thou shalt here,
When we ben commen there as I say,
Mo wonder things dare I lay,
And of Loues folke mo tidings,
Both soothsawes and lesings,
And mo loues new begon,
And long serued till loue is won,
And mo louers casuelly,
That ben betide, no man wote why,
But as a blind man starteth an hare,
And more jolite and welfare,
While they find loue of stele,
As thinke men, and ouer all wele,
Mo discords, and mo iealousies,
Mo murmures, and mo nouelries,
And also mo dissimulations,
And eke fained reparations,
And mo berdes in two hours
Without rasour or sisours
Ymade, than graines be of sands,
And eke mo holding in mo hands,
And also mo renouelaunces
Of old forleten aqueintaunces,
Mo loue daies, and mo accords
Than on instruments ben cords,
And eke of loue mo exchaunges,
Than euer corne were in graunges,
Unneth maiest thou trowen this,"
Quod he, "No so helpe me God as wis"
Quod I, "Now why," quod he, "For it
Were impossible to my wit,
Though Fame had all the pries
In all a realme and all aspies,
How that yet he should heare all this,
Or they espien:"—"O yes, yes,"
Quod he, to me, "that can I preue
By reason, worthy for to leue,
So that thou giue thine aduertence
To understand my sentence.
"First shalt thou here where she dwelleth,
Right so as thine owne booke telleth,
Her palais standeth as I shall say
Right euen amiddes of the way
Betweene Heauen, Earth, and see,
That whatsoeuer in all these three
Is spoken in priue or apert,
The way thereto is so ouert,
And stant eke in so just a place,
That euery sowne mote to it pace,
Or what so commeth from any toug,
Be rowned, red, or song,
Or spoken in suertie or drede,
Certaine it mote thider nede.
"Now hearken well, for why I will
Tellen thee a proper skill,
And a worthy demonstration
In mine imagination.
"Geffray, thou wotest well this,
That euery kindely thing that is,
Hath a kindely stede there he
May best in it conserued be,
Unto which place euery thing,
Through his kindely enclining,
Meueth for to come to,
Whan that it is away therefro,
As thus, lo how thou maist al day see,
Take any thing that heauie bee,
As stone or lead, or thing of weight,
And beare it neuer so hie on height,
Let go thine hand, it falleth downe,
Right so say I by fire or sowne

Or smoke, or other things light,
Alway they seeke upward on height,
Light things up, and downward charge,
While euerich of hem be at large,
And for this cause thou maist well see,
That euery riuer unto the see
Enclined is to go by kind,
And by these skilles, as I find,
Haue fishes dwelling in flood and see,
And trees eke on the earth be,
Thus euery thing by his reason
Hath his own proper mansion,
To which he seeketh to repaire,
There as it should nat appaire.
" Lo, this sentence is knowne couth
Of euery philosophers mouth,
As Aristotle and dan Platone,
And other clerkes many one,
And to confirme my reasoun,
Thou wost well that speech is soun,
Or else no man might it here,
Now herke what I woll thee lere.
" Sowne is not but eyre ybroken,
And euery speech that is spoken,
Loud or priue, foule or faire,
In his substaunce is but aire,
For as flame is but lighted smoke,
Right so is sowne eyre ybroke,
But this may be in many wise,
Of which I will thee devise,
As sowne commeth of pipe or harpe,
For when a pipe is blowen sharpe,
The eyre is twist with violence,
And rent: lo, this is my sentence
Eke, whan men harpe strings smite,
Wheder it be much or lite,
Lo, with the stroke the eyre it breketh,
And right so breaketh it whan men speketh,
Thus wost thou well what thing is speach,
Now henceforth I will thee teach,
How euerich speech, voice, or soun,
Through his multiplicatioun,
Though it were piped of a mouse,
Mote needs come to Fames House,
I proue it thus, take heed now
By experience, for if that thou
Threw in a water now a stone,
Well wost thou it will make anone
A little roundell as a cercle,
Parauenture as broad as a couercle,
And right anone thou shalt see wele,
That whele cercle wil cause another whele,
And that the third, and so forth brother,
Euery cercle causing other,
Broader than himselfe was,
And thus from roundell to compas,
Ech about other going,
Causeth of others stering,
And multiplying euermo,
Till it be so farre go
That it at both brinkes bee,
Although thou may it not see
Aboue, yet gothe it alway under,
Though thou thinke it a great wonder,
And who so saith of trouth I vary,
Bid him proue the contrary,
And right thus euery word iwis,
That loud or priuie yspoken is,
Moueth first an eyre about,
And of his mouing out of dout
Another eyre anone is moued,
As I haue of the water proued,
That euery cercle causeth other,
Right so of eyre my leue brother,
Euerich eyre in other stereth
More and more, and speech vp beareth,
Or voice or noise, word or soun,
Aye through multiplication,
Till it be at the House of Fame,
Take it in earnest or in game,
Now have I told, if thou haue mind,
How speech or sowne, of pure kind
Enclined is upward to meue,
This majest thou fele well by preue,
And that same stede iwis,
That euery thing enclined to is,
Hath his kindliche stede,
That sheweth it without drede,
That kindely the mansioun
Of euerich speeche of euery soun,
Be it either foule or faire,
Hath his kind place in aire,
And sith that euery thing iwis
Out of his kind place iwis,
Moueth thider for to go,
If it away be therefro,
As I haue before proued thee,
It sheweth euery soune parde,
Moueth kindely to pace,
As up into his kind place,
And this place of which I tell,
There as Fame list to dwell,
Is sette amiddes of these three,
Heauen, Earth, and eke the see,
As most conseruatife the soun,
Than is this the conclusion,
That euery speech of euery man,
As I thee tell first began,
Moueth vp on height to pace
Kindly to Fames place.
" Tell me this now faithfully,
Haue I not proued thus simply,
Without any subtelte
Of speech, or great prolixite,
Of termes of philosophy,
Of figures of poetry,
Or colours of rhetorike,
Perde it ought thee to like,
For hard language, and hard matere
Is incombrous for to here
At ones, wost thou not well this?"
And I answered and said " Yes."
" Ah ah," quod he, " lo so I can,
Leudly unto a leud man
Speke, and shew him such skilles,
That he may shake hem by the billes,
So palpable they shoulden be,
But tel me this now pray I thee,
How thinketh thee my conclusioun?"
" A good persuasion,"
Quod I, " it is, and lyke to be,
Right so as thou hast proued me,"
" By God," quod he, " and as I leue,
Thou shalt haue it or it be eue,
Of euery word of this sentence,
A profe by experience,
And with thyne eares heare well,
Toppe and tayle, and euerideli,
That euery word that spoken is,
Commeth into Fames House ywis,

As I haue said, what wilt thou more,"
And with this word upper to sore,
He began and said "By saint Jame,
Now will we speake all of game.
"How farest thou now," quod he, to me,
"Well," quod I, "Now see," quod he,
By thy trouth yond adowne,
Where that thou knowest any towne,
Or house, or any other thing,
And whan thou hast of ought knowing,
Looke that thou warne me,
And I anon shall tell thee,
How farre that thou art now therefro."
And I adowne gan to loken tho,
And beheld fields and plaines,
Now hils, and now mountaines,
Now valeis, and now forests,
And now unneth great beests,
Now riuers, now citees,
Now townes, now great trees,
Now shippes sayling in the see.
But thus soone in a while hee,
Was flowen fro the ground so hye,
That all the world as to mine eye,
No more seemed than a pricke,
Or else was the eyre so thicke
That I might it not discerne:
With that he spake to me so yerne,
And said: "Seest thou any token,
Or ought that in this world of spoken?"
I said "Nay,"—"No wonder is,"
Quod he, "for neuer halfe so hye as this,
Nas Alexander of Macedon
King, ne of Rome dan Scipion,
That saw in dreame at point deuise,
Heaven and Earth, Hell and Paradise,
Ne eke the wretch Dedalus,
Ne his childe nice Icharus,
That flewe so hie, that the hete
His wyngs molte, and he fell wete
In midde the sea, and there he dreint,
For whom was made a great complaint.
"Now tourne upward," quod he, "thy face,
And behold this large place,
This eyre, but looke that thou ne bee
Adrad of hem that thou shalt see,
For in this regioun certayne,
Dwelleth many a citezeine,
Of which speaketh dan Plato,
These ben the eyrishe beests lo,"
And tho sawe I all the menie,
Both gone and also flie.
"Lo," quod he, "cast up thyne eye,
See yonder lo, the galaxie,
The which men clepe the milky way,
For it is white: and some parfay
Callen it Watling streete,
That ones was brent with the hete,
When the Sunnes sonne the rede,
That hight Pheton, would lede
Algate his fathers cart, and gie.
"The cart horse gan well aspie,
That he coud no gouernaunce.
And gan for to leape and praunce,
And beare him up, and now doun,
Till he saw the Scorpioun,
Which that in Heauen a signe is yet,
And he for fere lost his wit
Of that, and let the reynes gone
Of his horse, and they anone
Soone up to mount, and downe discende,
Till bothe eyre and Earth brende,
Till Jupiter lo, at the last
Him slew, and fro the earte cast.
"Lo, is it not a great mischaunce,
To let a foole haue gouernaunce
Of things that he can not demaine?"
And with this word sothe for to saine
He gan alway upper to sore,
And gladded me than more and more,
So faithfully to me spake he.
Tho gan I to looke under me,
And beheld the eyrish beests,
Cloudes, mistes, and tempests,
Snowes, hayles, raynes, and windes,
And than gendring in hir kindes,
All the way through which I came;
"O God," quod I, "that made Adame,
Moch is thy might and nobles."
And tho thought I upon Boece,
That writeth a thought may flie so hie,
With fethers of philosophy
To passen euerich element,
And when he hath so far ywent,
Than may be seen behind his backe,
Cloude, and earth, and all that I of spake.
Tho gan I wexe in a were,
And said, "I wote well I am here;
But whether in body or in goost,
I not ywis, but God thou woost,"
For more clere entendement,
Nas me neuer yet ysent,
And than thought I on Marcian,
And eke of Anticlaudian,
That sothe was hir descripcion
Of all the Heauens region,
As far as that I saw the preve,
And therefore I can hem leue.
With that the egle gan to cry,
"Let be," quod he, "thy fantaste,
Wilt thou learne of sterres ought?"
"Nay certainly," quod I, "right nought."
"And why," quod he? "For I am old:"
"Or els would I thee haue told,"
Quod he, "the sterres names lo,
And all the Heauens signs to,
And which they be."—"No force," quod I.
"Yes parde," quod he, "wost thou why,
For whan thou redest poetry,
How the goddes can stellify
Birde, fishe, or him, or her,
As the rauin and other,
Or Arions harpe fine,
Castor, Polexe, or Delphine,
Or Athalantes doughters seuen,
How all these are set in Heven,
For though thou haue hem ofte in hand,
Yet nost thou nat where they stand."
"No force," quod I, "it is no need,
As well I leue so God me speed,
Hem that writen of this matere,
As though I knew hir places here,
And eke they semen here so bright,
It should shenden all my sight,
To looke on hem:"—"That may well be,"
Quod he, and so forth bare he me
A while, and tho he gan to cry,
(That neuer herde I thing so hie)
"Hold up thine heed, for all is well,
Saint Julian lo, bonne hostell,

See here the House of Fame lo,
Mayst thou not here that I do?"
"What?" quod I, "The great sowne"
Quod he, "that rombleth up and downe
In Fames House full of tidings,
Both of fayre speech and chidings,
And of false and sothe compounded,
Herken well it is not rowned.
"Herest thou not the great swough?"
"Yes perde," quod I, "wel ynough,"
And what sowne is it like," quod he?
"Peter, lyke the beating of the see,"
Quod I, "against the roches halow,
Whan tempests done her shippes swalow,
And that a man stand out of doute,
A myle thens, and here it route.
"Or els lyke the humbling
After the clappe of a thundring,
When Iouis hath the eyre ybete,
But it doth me for feare swete."
"Nay, drede thee not thereof," quod he,
It is nothing that will byten thee;
Thou shalt haue no harme truely."
And with that worde both he and I
As nigh the place arrived were,
As men might cast with a spere,
I nisle how, but in a strete
He set me faire on my feete,
And said, "Walke forth a pace.
And tell thine aduenture and case,
That thou shalt finde in Fames place."
"Now," quod I, "while we haue space
To speake, or that I go fro thee,
For the loue of God tell me,
In sothe, that I will of thee fere,
If this noyse that I here
Be as I haue herde thee tell,
Of folke that done in earth dwell,
And commeth here in the same wise,
As I thee herd or this deuise,
And that here liues body nis
In all that house that yonder is,
That maketh all this loude fare."
"No," quod he, "by saint Clare,
And also wisse God rede me,
But o thing I will warne thee,
Of the which thou wilt haue wonder.
"Lo, to the House of Fame yonder,
Thou woste how commeth euery speach,
It needeth not the efte to teach,
But understand now right well this,
When any speach ycomen is,
Up to the palais anone right,
It wexeth like the same wight,
Which that the worde in earth spake,
Be he clothed in reed or blake,
And hath so very his likenesse,
And spake the worde that thou wilt gesse,
That it the same body be,
Man or woman, he or she.
"And is not this a wonder thing,"
"Yes," quod I tho, "by Heauen king,"
And with this worde "farewell," quod he,
"And here will I abide thee,
And God of Heauen send thee grace,
Some good to learne in this place,"
And I of him tooke leaue anone,
And gan forth to the palays gone.

EXPLICIT LIBER SECUNDUS.

God of science and of light,
Apollo through thy great might,
This litteH last booke now thou gie,
Now that I will for maistrie,
Here art potenciall be shewde,
But for the time is light and lewde,
Yet make it somewhat agreeable,
Though some verse fayle in a sillable,
And that I do no diligence,
To shewe craft, but sentence,
And if deuine vertue thou
Wilt helpe me to shewe now,
That in my heed ymarked is,
Lo, that is for to meanen this,
The House of Fame for to discriue,
Thou shalt see me go as blinde
Unto the next laurer I see,
And kisse it, for it is thy tree,
Now entre in my brest anone.
When I was from the Egle gone,
I gan behold vpon this place,
And certaine or I further passe,
I will you all the shappe deuise,
Of house and citee, and all the wise,
How I gan to this place approch,
That stood vpon so hie a roch,
Hyer standeth none in Spayne,
But vp I clambe with moch payne,
And though to climbe greued mee,
Yet I ententife was to see,
And for to poren wondre low,
If I coude any wise yknow
What maner stone this roche was;
For it was lyke a limed glas,
But that it shone full more clere,
But of what congeled matere
It was, I niste redely,
But at the last espied I,
And found that it was euerydele,
A roche of yse and not of stele,
Thought I "By saint Thomas of Kent,
This were a feeble foundement,
To builden on a place hie,
He ought him little to glorifie,
That hereon bilte, God so me saue."
Tho sawe I all the hall ygraue
With famous folkes names fele,
That had been in moch wele,
And hir fames wide yblow,
But well vneth might I know
Any letters for to rede
Hir names by, for out of drede,
They weren almost of thawed so,
That of the letters one or two
Were molte away of euery name,
So vnfamous was wexe her fame,
But men say, what may euer last.
Tho gan I in mine herte cast,
That they were molte away for heate;
And not away with stormes beate,
For on that other side I sey,
Of this hill, that northward ley,
How it was written full of names,
Of folke that had afore great fames,
Of old time, and yet they were
As fresh as men had written hem there
The self-day, or that houre
That I on hem gan to poure,

But well I wiste what it made,
It was conserued with the shade,
All the writing that I sie,
Of a castell that so stoode on hie,
And stoode eke in so cold a place,
That heate might it not deface,
Tho gan I on this hill to gone,
And found on the coppe a wone,
That all the men that been on liue,
Ne han the conning to discriue
The beaute of that ilke place,
Ne coud caste no compace,
Soch another for to make,
That might of beauty be his make,
Ne so wonderly ywrought,
That it astonieth yet my thought,
And maketh all my witte to swinke
On this castell for to thinke,
So that the great beautie,
The caste, crafte, and curiositie,
Ne can I not to you deuise,
My witte ne may me not suffise,
But nathelesse all the substaunce
I haue yet in my remembraunce,
For why me thought by saint Gile,
All was of stone of berile,
Both the castell and the toure,
And eke the hall, and euery boure,
Without peeces or joynings,
But many subtell compassings,
As babeuries and pinnacles,
Imageries and tabernacles,
I saw, and full eke of windowes,
As flakes fallen in great snowes,
And eke in each of the pinnacles
Weren sundry habitacles,
In which stooden all withouten,
Full the castle all abouten,
Of all manner of minstrales,
And jestours, that tellen tales
Both of weeping and of game,
And of all that longeth vnto Fame,
There heard I play on an harpe,
That souned both well and sharpe,
Him Orpheus full craftely,
And on this side fast by
Sat the harper Orion,
And Gacides Chirion,
And other harpers many one,
And the Briton Glaskirion,
And smale harpers with hir glees,
Sate vnder hem in diuers sees,
And gone on hem upward to gape,
And counterfeited hem as an ape,
Or as craft counterfeit kind.
Tho saw I standen hem behind,
A farre from hem, all by hemselue,
Many a thousand times twelue,
That made loud minstralcies
In cornmuse and shalmies,
And many another pipe,
That craftely began to pipe,
Both in douced and in rede,
That ben at feasts with the brode,
And many a floite and litling horne,
And pipes made of greene corne,
As haue these little heard gromes,
That keepen beasts in the bromes.
There saw I than dan Citherus,
And of Athenes dan Proserus,
And Mercia that lost her skinne,
Both in face, body, and chinne,
For that she would enuien Io,
To pipen bette than Apollo.
There saw I eke famous old and yong,
Pipers of all the Dutch tong,
To learne loue daunces, springs,
Reyes, and the straunge things.
Tho saw I in another place,
Standing in a large space
Of hem that maken bloody soun,
In trumpe beme, and clarioun,
For in fight and bloodsheddings
Is used gladly clarionings.
There heard I trumpe, Messenus,
Of whom that speaketh Uergilius.
There heard I Joab trumpe also,
Theodomas, and other mo,
And all that vsed clarion,
In Casteloigne and Aragon,
That in hir times famous were,
To learnen saw I trumpen there.
There saw I sit in other sees,
Playing upon other sundry glees,
Which that I cannot neuen,
Mo than sterres ben in Heuen,
Of which I nill as now not rime,
For ease of you, and losse of time:
For time ylost, this know ye,
By no way may recouered be.
There saw I playing jogelours,
Magiciens, and tragetours,
And phetonisses, charmeresses,
Old witches, sorceresses,
That vsen exorsisations,
And eke subfumigations,
And clerkes eke, which conne well
All this magicke naturell,
That craftely doe hir entents,
To maken in certaine ascendents,
Images Io, through which magike,
To maken a man ben hole or sike.
There saw I the queene Medea,
And Circes eke, and Caliophia.
There saw I Hermes Ballenus,
Limote, and eke Simon Magus.
There saw I, and knew by name,
That by such art done men haue fame.
There saw I Coll Tragetour
Upon a table of sicamour
Play an vncouth thing to tell,
I saw him carry a wind mell
Under a walnote shale.
What should I make lenger tale,
Of all the people that I sey,
I could not tell till domisdey.
Whan I had all this folke behold,
And found me loose and not hold,
And I amused a long while
Upon this wall of berile,
That shone lighter than a glas,
And made well more than it was,
As kind thing of fame is,
And than anone after this,
I gan forth romen till I fond
The castell yate on my right hond,
Which so well coruen was,
That neuer such another nas,
And yet it was by auenture
Ywrought by great and subtill cure;

It needeth not you more to tellen,
To make you too long dwellen,
Of these yates florishings,
Ne of compaces, ne of karuings,
Ne how the hacking in masonries,
As corbets, and imageries,
But Lord so faire it was to shewe,
For it was all with gold behewe,
But in I went, and that anone
There met I crying many one,
" A larges a larges, bold vp well
God saue the lady of this pell,
Our owne gentill lady Fame,
And hem that willen to haue a name
Of vs," thus heard I crien all,
And fast commen out of the hall,
And shoke nobles and starlings,
And crowned were as kings,
With crownes wrought full of losinges,
And many ribans, and many fringes
Were on hir clothes truely.
Tho at the last espied I
That purseuauntes and heraudes,
That crien riche folkes laudes,
It weren, all and euery man
Of hem, as I you tell can
Had on him throwe a vesture,
Which men clepe a coate armure,
Embroudred wonderly riche,
As though they were not yliche,
But nought will I, so mote I thriue,
Be about to discriue
All these armes that there weren,
That they thus on hir coates weren,
For to me were impossible,
Men might make of hem a bible,
Twenty foote thicke as I trowe,
For certain who so coud know,
Might there all the armes seen,
Of famous folke that had been
In Affrike, Europe, and Asie,
Sith first began cheualrie.
Lo, how should I now tell all this,
Ne of the hall eke what need is,
To tellen you that euery wall
Of it, and rofe and flore with all,
Was plated halfe a foote thicke
Of golde, and that nas not wicke,
But for to proue in all wise,
As fine as ducket in Uenise,
Of which to lite all in my pouche is,
And they were set as thicke of ouches
Fine, of the finest stones fayre,
That men reden in the lapidaire,
Or as grasses growen in a mede,
But it were all to long to rede,
The names, and therefore I pace,
But in this lustie and riche place,
That Fames hall called was,
Full moch prees of folke there nas,
Ne crouding, for to moch prees,
But all on hie aboue a dees,
Satte in a see imperiall,
That made was of rubie royall,
Which that a carbuncle is ycalled,
I sawe perpetually ystalled,
A feminine creature,
That neuer formed by nature
Was soch another thing I saie;
For altherfirst, soth to saie,
Me thought that she was so lite,
That the length of a cubite,
Was lenger than she seemed be,
But thus soone in a while she,
Her self tho wonderly streight,
That with her feet she therthe reight,
And with her hedde she touched Heauen,
There as shineth the sterres seuen,
And thereto yet, as to my wit,
I saw a great wonder yet,
Upon her iyen to behold,
But certainly I hem neuer told,
For as fele iyen had she,
As fethers vpon foules be,
Or weren on the beasts foure,
That Goddes trone can honour,
As writeth John in the Apocalips,
Her heer that was owndie and crips,
As burned gold it shone to see.
And sothe to tellen also shee,
Had also fele vp standing eares,
And tonges, as on beast been heares,
And on her feete woxen saw I,
Partriche winges redily.
But Lord the perrie and the richesse,
I saw sitting on the goddesse,
And the heauenly melodie,
Of songes full of armonie,
I heard about her trone ysong,
That all the palais wall rong,
So song the mighty Muse she,
That cleped is Caliope,
And her seuen sisterne eke,
That in hir faces seemen meke,
And euermore eternally,
They song of Fame tho heard I,
" Heried be thou and thy name,
Goddes of renoun and of Fame."
Tho was I ware at the last,
As I mine iyen gan vp cast,
That this ilke noble queene,
On her shoulders gan sustene
Both the armes and the name
Of tho that had large fame,
Alisander, and Hercules,
That with a sherte his life did lese,
And thus found I sitting this goddesse,
In noble honour and richesse,
Of which I stinte a while now,
Other thing to tellen you.
Tho saw I stande on thother side,
Streight doune to the doores wide,
From the dees many a pillere
Of metall, that shone not full clere,
But though ther were of no richesse,
Yet were they made for great noblesse,
And in hem great sentence,
And folke of hie and digne reuerence,
Of which to tell will I fonde.
Upon a piller sawe I stonde,
Alderfirst there I sie,
Upon a piller stonde on hie,
That was of lede and of iron fine,
Him of the secte Saturnine,
The Ebraike Josephus the old,
That of Jewes gestes told,
And he bare on his shulders hie,
The fame vp of the Jurie,
And by him stoden other seuen,
Wise and worthy for to neuen,

To helpen him beare vp the charge,
It was so heauy and so large,
And for they written of battayles,
As well as of other maruayles,
Therefore was lo, this pillere,
Of which I you tell here,
Of leade and iron both iwis,
For iron Martes metall is,
Which that god is of battayle,
And the leade withouten fayle,
Is lo, the metall of Saturne,
That hath full large whele to turne,
To stand forth on either rowe
Of hem, which I could knowe,
Though I by order hem not tell,
To make you to long to dwell.
These, of which I gan rede,
There saw I stand out of drede,
Upon an iron piller strong,
That painted was all endlong,
With tigres blood in euery place,
The Tholason that height Stace,
That bare of Thebes vp the name,
Upon his shoulders, and the fame
Also of cruell Achilles,
And by him stode withouten lees,
Full wonder hie vpon a piller
Of iron, he the great Omer,
And with him Dares and Titus
Before, and eke he Lollius,
And Guido eke the Colempnis,
And English Galfride eke iwis,
And ech of these as I haue joy,
Was busie to beare vp Troy,
So heavy thereof was the fame,
That for to beare it was no game,
But yet I gan full well espie,
Betwene hem was a little enuie,
One said that Omer made lies,
Feyning in his poetries,
And was to the Greekes fauourable,
Therefore held he it but fable.
Tho saw I stand on a pillere,
That was of tinned iron clere,
The Latine poete Virgile,
That hath bore vp a long while
The fame of pius Eneas.
And next him on a piller was,
Of copper, Venus clerke, Ouide,
That hath sowen wondrous wide
The great god of loues fame,
And there he bare vp well his name,
Upon this piller also hie,
As I might see it with mine iye:
For why this hall whereof I rede,
Was woxe on height, length, and brede,
Well more by a thousand deale,
Than it was erst, that saw I weale.
Tho saw I on a piller by,
Of iron wrought full sternely,
The great poet dan Lucan,
That on his shoulders bare vp than,
As hie as that I might see,
The fame of Julius, and Pompee,
And by him stoden all these clerkes,
That write of Romes mighty werkes,
That if I would hir names tell,
All to long must I dwell.
And next him on a piller stood,
Of sulphure, liche as he were wood,
Dan Claudian, sothe for to tell,
That bare vp all the fame of Hell,
Of Pluto, and of Proserpine,
That queene is of the derke pine,
What should I more tell of this,
The hall was all full iwis,
Of hem that written old jestes,
As been on trees rokes nestes,
But it a full confuse mattere
Were all these jestes for to here,
That they of write, and how they hight.
But while that I beheld this sight,
I herde a noise approchen bliue,
That fareth as bees done in an hiue,
Ayenst her time of out flying,
Right soch a maner murmuring,
For all the world it seemed mee.
Tho gan I looke about and see,
That there come entring into the hall,
A right great company withall,
And that of sondry regions,
Of all kind of condicions,
That dwell in yearth vnder the Moone,
Poore and riche; and all so soone
As they were come into the hall,
They gan on knees doune to fall,
Before this ilke noble queene,
"And said, Graunt vs lady sheene,
Eche of vs of thy grace a bone,"
And some of hem she graunted sone,
And some she warned well and faire,
And some she graunted the contraire
Of hir asking vtterly:
But this I say you truely,
What her grace was, I nist,
For of these folke full well I wist,
They had good fame eche deserued,
Although they were diuersly serued,
Right as her sister dame Fortune
Is wont to serue in commune.
Now herken how she gan to pay
Hem that gan her of grace pray,
And yet lo, all this companie
Saiden soth, and not a lie.
"Madame," sayd they, "we bee
Folke that here besechen thee,
That thou graunt vs now good fame,
And let our workes haue good name,
In full recompensacioun
Of good worke, giue vs good renoun."
"I warne it you" (quod she) "anone,
Ye get of me good fame none,
By God, and therefore go your way."
"Alas" (quod they) "and welaway,
Tell vs what your cause may be."
"For me list it not" (quod she)
"No wight shall speake of you iwis,
Good ne harme, ne that ne this.
And with that worde she gan to call
Her messenger that was in hall,
And bad that he should faste gone,
Upon paine to be blind anone,
For Eolus the god of winde,
In Trace there ye shall him finde,
And bid him bring his clarioun,
That is full diuers of his soun,
And it is cleped cleare laude,
With which he wont is to herande
Hem that me list ypraised bee:
And also bid him how that hee

Bring eke his other clarioun,
That height sclaunder in euery toun,
With which he wont is to diffame
Hem that me list, and doe hem shame.
This messenger gan fast to gone,
And found where in a caue of stone,
In a countree that height Trace,
This Eolus with harde grace,
Helde the windes in distresse,
And gan hem vnder him to presse,
That they gone as the beres rore,
He bound and pressed hem so sore.
This messenger gan fast crie,
"Rise vp" (quod he) "and fast thee hie,
Till thou at my lady bee,
And take thy clarions eke with thee,
And speed thee fast:" and he anone,
Tooke to one that hight Tritone,
His clarions to bearen tho,
And let a certaine winde go,
That blewe so hidously and hie,
That it ne left not a skie
In all the welken long and brode.
This Eolus no where abode,
Till he was come to Fames feete,
And eke the man that Triton heete,
And there he stode as still as stone,
And herewithall there came anone
Another huge companie
Of good folke and gan to crie,
"Lady graunt vs now good fame
And let our workes haue that name,
Now in honour of gentilnesse,
And also God your soule blesse,
For we han well deserued it,
Therefore is right that we be quit."
"As thriue I" (quod she) "ye shall fayle,
Good workes shall you not auayle,
To haue of me good fame as now,
But wote ye what, I graunt you,
That ye shall haue a shrewd name,
And wicked loos and worse fame,
Though ye good loos haue well deserued,
Now goeth your way for you been serued:
And thou dan Eolus" (quod she)
"Take forth thy trumpe anone let see,
That is ycleped sclaunder light,
And blow hir loos, that euery wight
Speake of hem harme and shreudnesse,
In stede of good and worthinesse,
For thou shalt trumpe all the contrarie,
Of that they haue done well and faire."
Alas thought I, what auentures
Haue these sory creatures,
That they among all the pres,
Should thus be shamed giltles?
But what, it must needes be.
What did this Eolus, but he
Tooke out his blacke trumpe of bras,
That fouler than the Deuill was,
And gan this trompe for to blow,
As all the world should ouerthrow,
Throughout euery regioun,
Went this foule trumpes soun,
As swifte as a pillet out of a gonne,
When fire is in the pouder ronne,
And soch a smoke gan out wende,
Out of the foule trumpes ende,
Blacke, blue, grenishe, swartish, rede,
As doth where that men melte lede,
Lo, all on hie from the tewell,
And thereto one thing saw I well,
That the ferther that it ranne,
The greater wexen it beganne,
As doth the riuer from a well,
And it stanke as the pitte of Hell,
Alas, thus was hir shame yrong,
And giltlesse on euery tong.
Tho came the third companie,
And gone vp to the dees to hie,
And doune on knees they fell anone,
And saiden, "We been euerichone
Folke that han full truely
Deserued fame rightfully,
And prayed you it might be know,
Right as it is and forth blow."
"I graunt" (quod she) "for now me list
That your good workes shall be wist,
And yet ye shall haue better loos,
Right in dispite of all your foos,
Than worthy is, and that anone:
Let now" (quod she) "thy trumpe gone,
Thou Eolus that is so blacke,
And out thine other trumpe take
That hight laude, and blow it so
That through the world hir fame go,
All easely and not too fast,
That it be knowen at the last."
"Full gladly lady mine" he saied,
And out his trumpe of gold he braied
Anone, and set it to his mouth,
And blewe it east, west, and south,
And north, as loude as any thonder,
That euery wight hath of it wonder,
So brode it ran or that it stent,
And certes all the breath that went
Out of his trumpes mouth smelde,
As men a potte full of baume helde
Among a basket full of roses,
This fauour did he to hir loses.
And right with this I gan espie,
There came the fowerth companie,
But certaine they were wonder fewe,
And gonne to standen on a rewe,
And saiden, "Certes lady bright,
We haue done well with all our might,
But we ne keepe to haue fame,
Hide our workes and our name,
For Goddes loue, for certes wee
Haue surely done it for bountee,
And for no manner other thing."
"I graunt you all your asking,"
(Quod she) "let your workes be dedde."
With that about I tourned my hedde,
And sawe anone the fifth rout
That to this lady gan lout,
And doune on knees anone to fall,
And to her tho besoughten all,
To hiden hir good workes eke,
And said, they yeue not a leke,
For no fame, ne soch renoun,
For they for contemplacioun,
And Goddes loue had it wrought,
Ne of fame would they nought.
"What" (quod she) "and be ye wood,
And wene ye for to do good,
And for to haue of that no fame,
Haue ye dispite to haue my name,
Nay ye shall lien euerichone:
Blowe thy trumpe and that anone,"

(Quod she) "thou Eolus I hote,
And ring these folkes workes by note,
That all the world may of it heare:
And he gan blowe hir loos so cleare,
In his golden clarioun,
Through the worlde went the soun,
Also kindly and eke so soft,
That their fame was blowe aloft.
Tho came the sixt companie,
And gan fast to Fame crie,
Right verely in this manere,
They saiden, "Mercy lady dere,
To tell certain as it is,
We haue done neither that ne this,
But idell all our life hath be,
But nathelesse yet pray we,
That we may haue as good a fame,
And great renome and knowen name,
As they that haue do noble jestes,
And acheued all hir questes,
As well of loue as other thing,
All was vs neuer broche ne ring,
Ne els what fro women sent,
Ne ones in hir herte yment,
To maken vs onely frendly chere,
But mought temen vs on bere,
Yet let us to the people seeme
Soch as the world may of vs deeme,
That women louen vs for wood,
It shall do us as moch good,
And to our herte as moch auaile,
The counterpeise, ease, and trauaile,
As we had won with labour,
For that is dere bought honour,
At regard of our great ease:
And yet ye must us more please,
Let us be hold eke therto,
Worthy, wise, and good also,
And rich, and happy vnto loue.
For Goddes loue that sitteth aboue,
Though we may not the body haue
Of women, yet so God me saue,
Let men glewe on vs the name,
Suffiseth that we have the fame."
"I graunt" (quod she) "by my trouth,
Now Eolius withouten slouth,"
Take out thy trumpe of gold" (qnod she)
"And blowe as they haue asked me,
That euery man wene hem at ease,
Though they go in full badde lease,"
This Eolus gan it so blowe,
That through the world it was iknow.
Tho came the seuenth route anone,
And fill on knees euerichone,
And sayed, "Lady graunt vs soone,
The same thing, the same boone,
That this nexte folke haue done."
"Fie on you" (quod she) "euerichone,
Ye nastie swine, ye idle wretches,
Full of rotten slow tetches,
What false theeues where ye wold,
Been famed good, and nothing nold
Deserue why, ne neuer thought,
Men rather you to hangen ought,
For ye be like the slepie cat,
That would haue fish: but wost thou what?
He woll nothing weate his clawes,
Euil thrifte come to your iawes,
And on myne, if I it graunt,
Or do fauour you to auaunt.
"Than Eolus, thou kyng of Thrace,
Go blowe this folke a sorie grace,"
Quod she, "anone, and wost thou how,
As I shall tell thee right now,
Say these ben they that would honour
Haue, and do no kins labour,
Ne do no good, and yet haue laude,
And that men wende that belle I saude,
Ne coude hem not of loue werne,
And yet she that grint at querne,
Is all too good to ease hir herte."
This Eolus anone vp sterte,
And with his blacke clarioun
He gan to blasen out a soun,
As loude as belleth winde in Hell,
And eke therewith sothe to tell,
This sowne was so full of iapes,
As euer mowes were in apes,
And that went all the world about,
That euery wight gan on hem shout,
And for to laugh as they were wood,
Soch game found they in hir hood.
Tho came another company,
That had ydone the trechery,
The harme and great wickednesse,
That any herte coulden gesse,
And prayed her to haue good fame,
And that she nolde do hem no shame,
But giue hem loos and good renoun,
And do it blowe in clarioun.
"Nay wis," quod she, "it were a vice,
Al be there in me no iustice,
Me list not to do it now,
Ne this I nill graunt it you."
Tho came there leaping in a rout,
And gan clappen all about,
Euery man vpon the crowne
That all the hall gan to sowne,
And said, "Lady lefe and dere,
We ben soch folkes as ye may here,
To tell all the tale aright,
We ben shrewes every wight,
And haue delite in wickednesse,
As good folke haue in goodnesse,
And ioy to been knowen shrewes,
And full vice and wicked thewes,
Wherefore we pray you on a rowe,
That our fame be soch yknow,
In all things right as it is.
"I graunt it you," quod she, "ywis,
But what art thou that saiest this tale,
That wearest on thy hose a pale,
And on thy tippet soch a bell?"
"Madame," quod he, "sothe to tell,
I am that ilke shrewe iwis
That brent the temple of Isidis
In Athenes, lo that citee."
"And wherefore diddest thou so," quod she?
"By my trouth," quod he, "madame,
I wolde faine haue had a name,
As other folke had in the towne,
Although they were of great renowne
For hir vertue and hir thewes,
Thought I, as great fame haue shrewes:
(Though it be nought) for shrewdnesse,
As good folke haue for goodnesse,
And sithen I may not haue that one,
That other nyll I not forgone,
As for to get a fame here,
The temple set I all on fire.

" Now done our loos be blowe swithe,
As wisely be thou euer blithe."
" Gladly," quod she, " thou Eolus,
Herest thou not what they prayen vs,"
" Madame yes, full well," quod he,
" And I will trumpen it parde:"
And tooke his blacke trumpe fast,
And gan to puffen and to blast,
Till it was at the worldes end.
With that I gan about wend,
For one that stode right at my backe,
Me thought full goodly to me spake,
And said, " Frende what is thy name?
Arte thou come hider to haue fame?"
" Nay forsothe frende," quod I,
" I come not hither, graunt mercy,
For no such cause by my heed,
Suffiseth me as I were deed,
That no wight haue my name in honde
I wot my selfe best how I stonde,
For what I drie or what I thinke,
I woll my selfe all it drinke,
Certaine for the more part,
As ferforth as I can mine art."
" What dost thou here than" (quod he:)
(Quod I) " that woll I tell thee,
The cause why I stand here,
Some new tidings for to lere,
Some new thing, I not what,
Tidings eyther this or that,
Of loue, or such things glade,
For certainely he that me made
To come hyder, said to mee
I sholde bothe heare and see,
In this place wonder things,
But these be no soch tidings
As I meant of:" " No" (quod he)
And I answerde " No parde,
For well I wote euer yet,
Sith that first I had wit,
That some folke han desired fame,
Diuersly, and loos and name,
But certainly I nist how,
Ne where that fame dwelled or now,
Ne eke of her descripcion,
Ne also her condicion,
Ne the order of her dome,
Knew I not till I hider come."
" Why than be lo these tidings,
That thou now hether brings,
That thou hast herde" (quod he to mee)
" But now no force for well I see
What thou desirest for to lere,
Come forth and stande no lenger here,
And I woll thee without drede,
Into soch another place lede,
There thou shalt here many one."
Tho gan I forth with him gone,
Out of the castell sothe to sey.
Tho sawe I stand in a valey,
Under the castell fast by,
An house, that domus Dedali,
That Laborintus ycleped is,
Nas made so wonderly ywis,
Ne halfe so queintly ywrought,
And euermo, as swift as thought,
This queint house about went,
That neuermo it still stent,
And there came out so great a noyse,
That had it stonde upon Oyse,
Men might haue heard it easily
To Rome, I trowe sikerly,
And the noise which that I herde,
For all the world right so it ferde,
As doth the routing of the stone,
That fro thengin is letyn gone.
And all this house of which I rede,
Was made of twigges, salow, rede,
And greene eke, and some were white,
Such as men to the cages twhite,
Or maken of these paniers.
Or els hutches or doffers,
That for the swough and for the twigges,
This house was also full of gigges,
And also full eke of chirkinges,
And of many other werkings,
And eke this house hath of entrees
As many as leues ben on trees,
In sommer whan they been greene,
And on the rofe yet men may seene
A thousand holes, and wel mo,
To letten the sowne out go,
And by day in euery tide
Bene all the dores open wide,
And by night eche one unshet,
Ne porter is there none to let
No maner tidings in to pace,
Ne neuer rest is in that place,
That it nis filled full of tidings,
Eyther loude or of whisperings,
And euer all the houses angles,
Is ful of rownings and of iangles,
Of werres, of peace, of mariages,
Of restes, and of labour, of viages,
Of abode, of death, and of lyfe,
Of loue, of hate, accord, of strife,
Of losse, of lore, and of winnings,
Of heale, of sickenesse, or of lesings,
Of faire wether, and eke of tempests,
Of qualme, of folke, and of beests,
Of diuers transmutacions,
Of estates and eke of regions,
Of trust, of drede, of inlousie,
Of witte, of winning, of folie,
Of plenty, and of great famine,
Of chepe, derth, and of ruine,
Of good or misgouernment,
Of fire, and of diuers accident.
And lo, this house of which I write,
Syker be ye it nas not lite,
For it was sixtie myle of length,
Al was the timber of no strength,
Yet it is founded to endure,
While that it list to auenture,
That is the mother of tidings,
As the sea of welles and springs,
And it was shaped lyke a cage.
" Certes" (quod I) " in all mine age,
Ne saw I soch an house as this,"
And as I wondred me ywis,
Upon this house tho ware was I,
How mine egle fast by,
Was perched hie upon a stone,
And I gan streight to him gone,
And said thus, " I pray thee
That thou a while abide mee
For goddes loue, and let me seene
What wonders in that place bene,
For yet paraunter I may lere
Some good therein, or somewhat here,

That lefe me were, or that I went."
" Peter that is now mine entent,"
(Quod he to me) " therefore I dwell,
But certaine one thing I thee tell,
That but I bryng thee therin,
Ne shall thou neuer conne the gin,
To come into it out of doubt,
So faste it whirleth lo about,
But sith that Ioues of his grace,
As I haue said will the solace,
Finally with these things
Uncouth sighes and tidings,
To passe with thine euinesse,
Soch routh hath he of thy distresse,
That thou suffredest debonairly,
And woste they seluen vtterly,
Desperate of all blisse,
Sith that fortune hath made a misse,
The swete of all thine hertes rest,
Languish and eke in poynt to brest,
But he through his mighty melite,
Wil do thee ease, al be it lite,
And gaue in expresse commaundement,
To which I am obedient,
To forther thee with all my might,
And wish and teach thee aright,
Where thou maist most tidings here,
Thou shalt here many one lere."
With this word he right anone,
Hent me up bytwene his tone,
And at a window in me brought,
That in this house was at me thought,
And therewithall me thought it stent,
And nothing it about went,
And me set in the floore adoun
But such a great congregacioun
Of folke as I sawe rome about,
Some within and some without,
Nas neuer seene, ne shall be efte
That certes in this world nis lefte,
So many formed by nature,
Ne need so many a creature,
That wel vneth in that place
Had I a foote brede of space,
And euery wight that I sawe there,
Rowned euerich in others eere,
A new tiding priuely,
Or els he told it all openly
Right thus, and said: " Nost nat thou
That is betidde, lo right now."
" Not" (quod he) " tell me what,"
And than he told him this and that,
And swore thereto that it was soth,
Thus hath he said, and thus he doth,
And this shal be, and thus herde I say,
That shal be found that dare I lay:
That all the folke that is on liue,
Ne haue the conning to discriue,
Tho thinges that I herde there,
What a loude, and what in eere,
But all the wonder most was this,
Whan one had herd a thing ywis,
He came streight to another wight
Ane gan him tellen anon right,
The same that him was told
Or it a forlong way was old,
And gan somewhat for to eche
To this tiding in his speche,
More than euer it spoken was,
And nat so sone departed nas
Tho fro him that he ne mette
With the third, and erhe lette
Any stound he told hym alse,
Where the tidings sothe or false,
Yet wold he tell it natheles,
And euermore with mo encrees,
Than it was erst: thus north and south,
Went euery tiding fro mouth to mouth,
And that encreasing euermo,
As fire is wont to quicken and go
From a sparcle sprongen amis,
Till a citie brent vp is.
And whan that was full vp sprong,
And waxen more on euery tonge
Than euer it was, and went anone
Up to a window out to gone,
Or but it might out there passe,
It gan out crepe at some creuasse,
And flewe forth fast for the nones.
And sometime I saw there at ones,
A leasing and a sadde sothe sawe,
That gonnen of auenture drawe,
Out at a window for to pace,
And whan they metten in that place,
They were aehecked both two,
And neyther of them might out go,
For ech other they gonne so croude
Till ech of hem gan crien loude,
" Let me gone first,"—" nay but let mee,
And here I woll ensuren thee.
With vowes that thou wolt do so,
That I shall neuer fro thee go,
But be thine owne sworne brother,
We woll meddle vs eche in other,
That no man be he neuer so wrothe,
Shall haue one two, but bothe
At ones, as beside his leue,
Come we a morrowe or on eue,
But we cryde or still yrowned:"
Thus saw I salse and soth compowned,
Togider flie for o tiding.
Thus out at holes gonne wring,
Euery tidyng streight to Fame,
And she gan yeue eche his name,
After her disposicion,
And yeue hem eke duracion.
Some to wexe and wane soone,
As doth the faire white Moone,
And let hem gonne, there might I seen
Winged wonders fast flien,
Twenty thousand in a route,
As Eolus hem blewe aboute,
And lord this house in all times
Was full of shipmen and pilgrimes,
With scrippes brette full of leasings,
Entermelled with tidings,
And eke alone by hemselue.
O many thousand times twelue
Saw I eke of these pardoners,
Currours, and eke messaungers,
With boxes crommed full of lies
As euer vessell was with lies.
And as I alther fastest went
About, and did all mine entent,
Me for to playen and for to lere,
And eke a tiding for to here,
That I had herde of some countree
That shall not now be told for mee,
For it no need is redely
Folke can sing it bet than I,

For al mote out late or rathe,
All the sheues in the fathe.
I herde a great noise withall
In a corner of the hall,
There men of loue tidings told
And I gan thitherward behold,
For I saw renning euery wight,
As fast as that they hadden might,
And everich cride "What thing is that,"
And some said "I not neuer what,"
And whan they were all on a hepe,
Tho behind gone up lepe,
And clamben up on other faste
And vp the noyse on highen caste,
And treden fast on others heles
And stampe as men done after eles.
At the last I saw a man,
Which that I nought ne can,
But he seemed for to be
A man of great auctorite.
And therewithall I abraide
Out of my slepe halfe afraide,
Remembring well what I had sene
And how hie and ferre I had bene
In my goost, and had great wonder
Of that the god of thonder
Had let me knowen, and began to write
Like as ye have herd me endite,
Wherefore to study and rede alway,
I purpose to do day by day.
Thus in dreaming and in game,
Endeth this litell booke of Fame.

HERE ENDETH THE BOOKE OF FAME.

THE

COMPLAINT OF MARS AND VENUS.

GLADETH ye louers in the morowe graie,
Lo Uenus risen among you rows rede,
And floures freshe honour ye this daie,
For whan the Sun vprist than wold they sprede,
But ye louers that lie in any drede,
Flieth least wicked tongues you aspie,
Lo yonde the Sun, the candell of jelousie.

With tears blew, and with a wounded herte
Taketh your leue, and with saint John to borow
Apeseth somewhat of your paines smert,
Time cometh eft, that cessen shall your sorrow,
The glad night is worth an heauy morow,
Saint Ualentine, a foule thus heard I sing,
Upon thy day, or Sun gan vp spring.

Yet sang this foule, "I rede you all awake,
And ye that haue not chosen in humble wise,
Without repenting cheseth your make,
Yet at the least, renoueleth your seruice:
And ye that haue full chosen as I deuise,
Confermeth it perpetually to dure,
And paciently taketh your aventure."

And for the worship of this high feast,
Yet woll I my briddes wise sing,
The sentence of the complaint at the least,
That wofull Mars made at the departing
Fro fresh Uenus in a morowning,
Whan Phebus with his firie torches rede,
Ransaked hath euery louer in his drede.

Whilome the three Heauens lorde aboue,
As well by heavenlich reuolucion,
As by desert hath wonne Uenus his loue,
And she hath take him in subiection,
And as a maistresse taught him his lesson,
Commaunding him neuer in her seruice,
He were so bold no louer to dispise.

For she forbade him iealousie at all,
And cruelty, and boste, and tyranny,
She made him at her lust so humble and tall,
That whan she dained to cast on him her iye,
He tooke in patience to liue or die,
And thus she bridleth him in her maner,
With nothing, but with scorning of her chere.

Who reigneth now in blisse but Uenus,
That hath this worthy knight in gouernance
Who singeth now but Mars that serueth thus,
The faire Uenus, causer of pleasaunce,
He bint him to perpetuel obeysaunce,
And she binte her to loue him for euer,
But so be that his trespace it disceuer.

Thus be they knt, and reignen as in Heuen,
By loking most, as it fell on a tide,
That by her both assent was set a steuen,
That Mars shall enter as fast as he may glide,
In to her next palais to abide,
Walking his course till she had him ytake,
And he prayed her to hast her for his sake.

Than said he thus, "Mine hertes lady sweete,
Ye know well my mischief in that place,
For sikerly till that I with you meete,
My life stante there in auenture and grace,
But whan I see the beaute of your face,
There is no drede of death may do me smert,
For all your luste is ease to mine herte."

She hath so great compassion of her knight,
That dwelleth in solitude till she come,
For it stode so, that like time no wight,
Counsailed him, ne said to him welcome,
That nigh her wit for sorow was ouercome
Wherfore she spedded as fast in her way,
Almost in one day as he did in tway.

The great ioy that was betwix hem two,
Whan they be mette, there may no tong tel,
There is no more but unto bedde they go,
And thus in ioy and blisse I let hem dwell,
This worthy Mars that is of knighthood well,
The floure of fairnesse happeth in his arms,
And Uenus kisseth Mars the god of arms.

Soiourned hath this Mars of which I rede
In chambre amidde the palais priuely,
A certaine time, till him fell a drede,
Through Phebus that was commen hastely,
Within the palais yates sturdely,
With torch in hond, of which the stremes bright
On Uenus chambre, knockeden ful light.

The chambre there as lay this fresh queene,
Depainted was with white boles grete,
And by the light she knew that shon so shene,
That Phebus cam to bren hem with his hete
This silly Uenus ny dreint in teares wete,
Enbraseth Mars, and said "Alas I die,
The torch is come, that al this world wol wrie."

Up sterte Mars, him list not to sleepe,
Whan he his lady herde so complaine,
But for his nature was not for to weepe,
Instede of teares from his eyen twaine,
The firy sparcles sprongen out for paine,
And hente his hauberke that lay him beside,
Flie wold he nought, ne might himself hide.

He throweth on his helme of huge weight,
And girt him with his swerde, and in his honde
His mighty speare, as he was wont to feight,
He shoketh so, that it almost to wonde,
Full heuy was he to walken ouer londe,
He may not hold with Uenus company,
But bad her flie least Phebus her espy.

O woful Mars alas, what maist thou sain
That in the palais of thy disturbaunce,
Art left behind in peril to be slain,
And yet there to is double thy penaunce,
For she that hath thine herte in gouernance,
Is passed halfe the stremes of thine eyen,
That thou nere swift, wel maist thou wepe and crien.

Now flieth Uenus in to Ciclinius tour,
With void corse, for fear of Phebus light,
Alas and there hath she no socour,
For she ne found ne sey no maner wight,
And eke as there she had but littel might,
Wherefore her selven for to hide and saue,
Within the gate she fledde in to a caue.

Darke was this caue, and smoking as the hell
Nat but two paas within the yate it stood,
A naturel day in darke I let her dwell,
Now wol I speake of Mars furious and wood,
For sorow he wold haue seene his herte blood,
Sith that he might haue done her no company,
He ne rought not a mite for to die.

So feble he wext for hete and for his wo,
That nigh he swelt, he might vnneth endure
He passeth but a sterre in daies two,
But neuertheles, for al his hevy armure,
He foloweth her that is his liues cure,
For whose departing he tooke greater yre,
Than for his brenning in the fire.

After he walketh softly a paas,
Complayning that it pitie was to here,
He saide, "O lady bright Uenus alas,
That euer so wide a compas is my sphere,
Alas, whan shall I mete you herte dere,
This twelve dayes of April I endure,
Through ielous Phebus this misauenture."

Now God helpe sely Uenus alone,
But as God wold it happed for to be,
That while the weping Uenus made her mone
Ciclinius riding in his chyuanche,
Fro Uenus Ualanus might this palais see,
And Uenus he salueth, and maketh chere,
And her receiueth as his frende full dere.

Mars dwelleth forth in his aduersite,
Complayning ever in her departing,
And what his complaint was remembreth me,
And therefore in this lusty morowning,
As I best can, I wol it saine and sing,
And after that I woll my leaue take,
And God yeue euery wight ioy of his make.

THE COMPLAINT OF MARS.

The order of complaint requireth skilfully,
That if a wight shal plain pitously,
There mote be cause wherfore that men plaifl,
Or men may deme he plaineth folily,
And causeles, alas that am not I,
Wherfore the ground and cause of al my pain,
So as my troubled witte may it attain,
I wol reherse, not for to haue redresse,
But to declare my ground of heuinesse.

The first time alas that I was wrought,
And for certain effects hider brought,
By him that lorded each intelligence,
I yaue my trew seruice aud my thought,
For euermo, how dere I haue it bought,
To her that is of so great exeellence,
That what wight that sheweth first her offence,
Whan she is wroth and taketh of him no cure,
He may not long in ioy of love endure.

This is no fained mater that I tell,
My lady is the very sours and well
Of beaute, luste, fredome, and gentilnesse,
Of rich array, how dere men it sell,
Of all disport in which men frendly dwell,
Of loue and play, and of benigne humblesse,
Of sowne of instruments of al sweetnesse,
And thereto so well fortuned and thewed,
That through the world her goodnes is shewed.

What wonder is than though that I be set
My seruice on soch one that may me knet
To wele or wo, sith it lithe in her might,
Therfore myne herte for euer I to her hette,
Ne trewly for my death shall I not lette,
To ben her trewest seruaunt and her knight,
I flatter nat, that may wete euery wight,
For this day in her seruice shall I dye,
But grace be, I see her neuer with eye.

To whom shall I plaine of my distresse,
Who may me help, who may my herte redresse?
Shall I complaine vnto my lady free,
Nay certes, for she hath soch heauinesse,
For feare and eke for wo, that as I gesse,
In littel time it would her bane bee,
But were she safe, it were no force of mee,
Alas that euer louers mote endure,
For loue so many perilous auenture.

For though so be that louers be as trewe,
As any metal that is forged newe,
In many a case hem tideth oft sorowe,
Somtime hir ladies woll nat on hem rewe.
Somtime if that ielousie it knewe,
They might lightly lay hir heed to borow,
Somtime enuious folke with tongs horow,
Deprauen hem alas, whom may they please,
But he befalse, no louer hath his ease.

But what auaileth soch a long sermonun,
Of auentures of loue vp and doun,
I wol retourne and speaken of my paine,
The point is this of my distruction,
My right lady, my saluacioun,
Is in affray, and not to whom to plaine,
O herte sweete, O lady soueraine,
For your disease I ought wel swoun and swelt,
Though I none other harme ne drede felt.

To what fine made the God that sit so hie,
Beneth him loue other companie,
And straineth folke to loue mauger hir heed,
And than hir ioy for aught I can espie,
Ne lasteth not the twinckling of an eye,
And some haue neuer ioy till they be deed,
What meaneth this, what is this mistiheed,
Wherto constraineth he his folke so fast,
Thing to desire but it should last.

And though he made a louer loue a thing,
And maketh it seem stedfast and during,
Yet putteth he in it soch misauenture,
That rest nis there in his yeuing.
And that is wonder that so iust a king,
Doth such hardnesse to his creature,
Thus whether loue breake or els dure,
Algates he that hath with loue to done,
Hath ofter wo, than chaunged is the Moone.

It seemeth he hath to louers enmite,
And like a fisher, as men may all day se,
Baited his angle hoke with some pleasance,
Til many a fish is wood till that he be
Ceased therwith, and than at erst hath he
All his desire, and therwith all mischaunce,
And though the line breke he hath penance,
For with that hoke he wounded is so sore,
That he his wages hath for euermore.

The broche of Thebes was of soch kinde,
So full of rubies and of stones of Inde,
That euery wight that set on it an eye,
He wende anone to worth out of his mind,
So sore the beaute wold his herte bind,
Till he it had, him thought he must die,
And whan that it was his than should he dry,
Soch wo for drede, aye while that he it had,
That welnigh for the feare he should mad.

And whan it was fro his possession,
Than had he double wo and passion,
That he so faire a jewell hath forgo,
But yet this broche, as in conclusion,
Was not the cause of his confusion,
But he that wrought it enfortuned it so,
That euery wight that had it shold haue wo,
And therfore in the worcher was the vice,
And in the coueitour that was so nice.

So fareth it by louers, and by me,
For though my lady haue so great beaute,
That I was mad till I had gette her graee,
She was not cause of mine aduersite,
But he that wrought her, as mote I thee,
That put soch a beaute in her face,
That made me coueiten and purchase
Mine owne death, him wite I, that I die,
And mine vnwit that ever I clambe so hie,

But to you hardy knights of renowne,
Sith that ye be of my deuistowne,
Albe I not worthy to so great a name,
Yet saine these clerkes I am your patrone,
Therfore ye ought haue some compassion
Of my disease, and take it nat a game,
The proudest of you may be made ful tame,
Wherfore I pray you of your gentilesse,
That ye complaine for mine heauinesse.

And ye my ladies that be true and stable,
By way of kind ye ought to ben able,
To haue pite of folke that been in paine,
Now haue ye cause to cloth you in sable,
Sith that your empres the honorable,
Is desolate, wel ought you to plaine,
Now should your holy teares fall and raine,
Alas your honour and your emprice,
Nigh deed for drede, ne can her not cheuice.

Complaineth eke ye louers all in fere,
For her that with unfained humble chere,
Was euer redy to do you socour,
Complaineth her that euer hath be you dere,
Complaineth beaute, freedome, and manere,
Complaineth her that endeth your labour,
Complaineth thilke ensample of al honour,
That neuer did but gentilnesse,
Kytheth therfore in her some kindnesse.

THE COMPLAINT OF VENUS.

There nis so high comfort to my pleasance,
Whan that I am in any heauinesse,
As to haue layser of remembraunce,
Upon the manhood and the worthinesse,
Upon the trouth, and on the stedfastnesse,
Of him whose I am al while I may dure,
There ought to blame me no creature,
For euery wight praiseth his gentillesse.

In him is bounte, wisdome, and gouernaunce,
Wel more than any mans witte can gesse,
For grace hath wolde so ferforth him auance,
That of knighthood he his parfite richesse,
Honour honoureth him for his noblesse,
Thereto so well hath fourmed him nature,
That I am his for euer I him ensure,
For euery wight praiseth his gentillesse.

And nat withstanding all his suffisaunce,
His gentil herte is of so great humblesse,
To me in word, in werke, and in countenance,
And me to serue is all his besinesse,
That I am sette in very sikernesse,
Thus ought I blisse well mine auentour,
Sith that him list me seruen and honour,
For euery wight praiseth his gentillesse.

Now certes, Loue, it is right couenable
That men ful dere abie thy noble things,
As wake a bedde, and fasten at the table,
Weping to laugh and sing in complainings,
And downe to cast visage and lookings,
Often to chaunge visage and countenaunce,
Play in sleeping, and dremen at the daunce,
All the reuers of any glad feeling.

Jelousie he hanged by a cable,
She wold al know through her espying,
There doth no wight nothing so reasonable,
That al nis harme in her imagining,
Thus dere about is Loue in yeuing,
Which oft he yeueth without ordinaunce,
As sorow ynough, and little of pleasaunce,
All the reuers of any glad felling.

A little time his yeft is greable,
But full accombrous is the vsing,
For subtel ielousie the deceiuable,
Full often time causeth distourbing,
Thus ben we euer in drede and suffring,
In no certaine, we languishen in penaunce,
And haue well oft many an hard mischance,
All the reuers of any glad feling.

But certes, Loue, I say not in soch wise,
That for to scape out of your lace I ment,
For I so long haue been in your seruice,
That for to lete of will I neuer assent,
No force though ielousie me tourment,
Suffiseth me to see him whan I may,
And therefore certes to my ending day,
To loue him best, shall me neuer repent.

And certes, Loue, whan I me well adnise,
Of any estate that man may represent,
Than haue ye made me through your franchise
Thefe the best that euer in earth went,
Now loue well herte, and look thou neuer stent,
And lette the ielous put it in assay,
That for no paine woll I not say nay,
To loue him best, shall I neuer repent.

Herte to thee it ought ynough suffice,
That Loue so high a grace to you sent,
To chose the worthies in all wise,
And most agreable vnto mine entent,
Seek no ferther, neither way ne went,
Sith ye haue suffisaunce vnto my pay,
Thus wol I end this complaining or this lay,
To loue him best shall I neuer repent.

LENUOY.

Princes receiueth this complaining in gree,
Unto your excellent benignite,
Direct after my litel suffisaunce,
For elde, that in my spirite dulleth mee,
Hath of enditing all the subtelte
Welnigh berafte out of my remembraunce:
And eke to me it is a great penaunce,
Sith rime in English hath soch scarcite,
To folow word by word the curiosite
Of Gransonflour, of hem that make in Fraunce.

EXPLICIT.

OF THE

CUCKOW AND THE NIGHTINGALE.

Chaucer dreameth that he heareth the cuckow and the nightingale contend for excellency in singing.

THE god of love and benedicite,
How mighty and how great a lord is he,
For he can make of low hertes hy,
And of high low, and like for to dy,
And hard hertes he can maken free.

He can make within a little stound
Of sicke folke hole, fresh, and sound,
And of hole he can make seeke,
He can bind and vnbinden eke
That he woll have bounden or vnbound.

To tell his might my wit may not suffice,
For he can make of wise folke full nice,
For he may do all that he woll devise,
And lithy folke to destroyen vice,
And proud hertes he can make agrise.

Shortly all that ever he woll he may,
Against him dare no wight say nay,
For he can glad and greve whom him liketh,
And who that he woll, he lougheth or siketh,
And most his might he shedeth ever in May.

For every true gentle herte free,
That with him is or thinketh for to be,
Againe May now shall have some stering,
Or to joy or els to some mourning,
In no season so much, as thinketh me.

For whan they may here the birds sing,
And see the floures and the leaves spring,
That bringeth into hir remembraunce
A manner ease, medled with grevaunce,
And lustie thoughts full of great longing.

And of that longing commeth hevinesse,
And thereof groweth of great sicknesse,
And for lacke of that that they desire,
And thus in May ben hertes set on fire,
So that they brennen forth in great distresse.

I speake this of feeling truly,
If I be old and vnlusty,
Yet I have felt of the sicknesse through May
Both hote and cold, and axes every day,
How sore ywis there wote no wight but I.

I am so shaken with the fevers white,
Of all this May sleepe I but a lite,
And also it is not like to me,
That any herte should sleepy be,
In whom that Love his firy dart woll smite.

But as I lay this other night waking,
I thought how lovers had a tokening,
And among hem it was a commune tale,
That it were good to here the nightingale,
Rather than the leud cuckow sing.

And than I thought anon as it was day,
I would go some where to assay
If that I might a nightingale here,
For yet had I none heard of all that yere,
And it was tho the third night of May.

And anone as I the day aspide,
No lenger would I in my bed abide,
But vnto a wood that was fast by,
I went forth alone boldely,
And held the way downe by a brooke side.

Till I came to a laund of white and green,
So faire one had I never in been,
The ground was green, ypoudred with daisie,
The floures and the greues like hy,
All greene and white, was nothing els seene.

There sate I downe among the faire flours,
And saw the birds trip out of hir bours,
There as they rested hem all the night,
They were so joyfull of the dayes light,
They began of May for to done honours.

They coud that seruice all by rote,
There was many a lonely note,
Some song loud as they had plained,
And some in other manner voice yfained,
And some all out with the full throte.

They proyned hem, and made hem right gay,
And daunceden and lepten on the spray,
And euermore two and two in fere,
Right so as they had chosen hem to yere
In Feuerere vpon saint Ualentines day.

And the riuer that I sate vpon,
It made such a noise as it ron,
Accordaunt with the birds armony,
Me thought it was the best melody
That might ben yheard of any mon.

And for delite, I wote neuer how
I fell in such a slomber and a swow,
Nat all asleepe, ne fully waking,
And in that swow me thought I heard sing
The sorry bird the leaud cuckow.

And that was on a tree right fast by,
But who was than euill apaid but I:
"Now God" (quod I) "that died on the crois
Yeue sorrow on thee, and on thy leaud vois,
Full little joy haue I now of thy cry."

And as I with the cuckow thus gan chide,
I heard in the next bush beside
A nightingale so lustely sing,
That with her clere voice she made ring
Through all the greene wood wide.

"Ah, good nightingale" (quod I than)
"A little hast thou ben too long hen,
For here hath ben the leaud cuckow,
And songen songs rather than hast thou,
I pray to God euill fire her bren."

But now I woll you tell a wonder thing,
As long as I lav in that swouning,
Me thought I wist what the birds ment,
And what they said, and what was hir entent,
And of hir speech I had good knowing.

There heard I the nightingale say,
"Now good cuckow go somewhere away,
And let vs that can singen dwellen here,
For euery wight escheueth thee to here,
Thy songs be so elenge in good fay."

"What" (quod she) "what may thee aylen now,
It thinketh me, I sing as well as thou,
For my song is both true and plaine,
And though I cannot crakell so in vaine,
As thou dost in thy throte, I wot neuer how.

"And euery wight may vnderstand mee,
But nightingale so may they not done thee,
For thou hast many a nice queint cry,
I haue thee heard saine, ocy, ocy,
How might I know what that should be?"

"Ah foole" (quod she) "wost thou not what it is,
Whan that I say, ocy, ocy, ywis,
Than meane I that I would wonder faine,
That all they were shamefully yslaine,
That meanen ought againe loue amis.

"And also I would that all tho were dede,
That thinke not in loue hir life to lede,
For who so that wol not the god of loue serue,
I dare well say he is worthy to sterue,
And for that skill, ocy, ocy, I grede."

"Eye" (quod the cuckow) "this is a queint law,
That euery wight shall loue or be to draw,
But I forsake all such companie,
For mine entent is not for to die,
Ne neuer while I liue on Loues yoke to draw.

"For louers ben the folke that ben on liue,
That most disease haue, and most vnthriue,
And most endure sorrow, wo, and care,
And least feelen of welfare,
What needeth it ayenst trouth to striue."

"What" (quod she) "thou art out of thy mind,
How might thou in thy churlenesse find
To speake of Loues seruaunts in this wise,
For in this world is none so good seruise
To euery wight that gentle is of kind.

"For thereof truly commeth all goodnesse,
All honour and all gentlenesse,
Worship, ease, and all hertes lust,
Parfite joy, and full assured trust,
Iolitie, pleasaunce, and freshnesse,

"Lowlyhead, largesse, and curtesie,
Semelyhead, and true companie,
Drede of shame for to done amis:
For he that truly Loues seruaunt is,
Were lother be shamed than to die.

"And that this is soth that I sey,
In that beleeue I will liue and dey,
And cuckow so I rede that thou do ywis:"
"Than" (quod he) "let me neuer haue blisse,
If euer I vnto that counsaile obey.

"Nightingale thou speakest wonder faire,
But for all that is the sooth contraire,
For loue is in yong folke but rage,
And in old folke a great dotage,
Who most it vseth, most shall enpaire.

"For thereof cometh disease and heuinesse,
So sorow and care, and many a great sicknesse,
Despite, debate, anger, and enuie,
Deprauing, shame, vntrust, and jelousie,
Pride, mischeefe, pouerty, and woodnesse:

"Louing is an office of despaire,
And one thing is therein that is not faire,
For who that getteth of loue a little blisse,
But if he be alway therewith ywis,
He may full soone of age haue his haire.

"And nightingale therefore hold thee ny,
For leue me well, for all thy queint cry,
If thou be ferre or long fro thy make,
Thou shalt be as other that been forsake,
And than thou shalt hoten as doe I."

"Fie" (quod she) "on thy name and on thee,
The god of loue ne let thee neuer ythee,
For thou art worse a thousand fold than wood,
For many a one is full worthy and full good,
That had be naught ne had loue ybee.

" For euermore Loue his seruants amendeth,
And from all euill taches hem defendeth,
And maketh hem to brenne right in a fire,
In trouth and in worshipfull desire,
And whan him liketh, joy inough hem sendeth."

" Thou nightingale" he said, " be still,
For Loue hath no reason, but it is will,
For oft time vntrue folke he easeth,
And true folke so biterly he displeaseth,
That for default of courage he let hem spill."

Than tooke I of the nightingale keepe,
How she cast a sigh out of her deepe,
And said, " Alas that euer I was bore,
I can for tene not say one word more,"
And right with that word she brast out to weepe.

" Alas" (quod she) " my herte woll to breake,
To hearen thus this leaud bird speake
Of Loue, and of his worshipfull seruise,
Now God of loue thou help me in some wise,
That I may on this cuckow been awreake."

Me thought than he stert vp anone,
And glad was I that he was agone,
And euermore the cuckow as he flay,
Said " Farewell, farewell popingay,"
As though he had scorned me alone.

And than came the nightingale to mee,
And said, " Friend forsooth I thanke thee,
That thou hast liked me to rescow,
And one auow to loue make I now,
That all this May I woll thy singer be."

I thanked her, and was right well apaied:
" Ye" (quod she) " and be thou not dismaied,
Tho thou haue herd the cuckow erst than me,
For if I liue, it shall amended be
The next May, if I be not affraied.

" And one thing I woll rede thee also,
Ne leue thou not the cuckow, ne his loues so,
For all that he hath said is strong leasing:"
" Nay" (quod I) " thereto shall nothing me bring,
For loue and it hath doe me much wo.

" Ye, vse" (quod she) " this medicine
Euery day this May or thou dine,
Go looke vpon the fresh daisie,
And though thou be for wo in point to die,
That shall full greatly lessen thee of thy pine.

" And looke alway that thou be good and trew,
And I woll sing one of the songs new
For loue of thee, as loud as I may crie:"
And than she began this song full hie,
" I shrew all hem that been of loue vntrue."

And whan she had song it to the end,
" Now farewell" (quod she) "for I mote wend,
And god of loue, that can right well, and may,
As much joy send thee this day,
As any yet louer he euer send."

Thus taketh the nightingale her leaue of me,
I pray to God alway with her be,
And joy of loue he send her euermore,
And shilde us fro the cuckow and his lore,
For there is not so false a bird as he.

Forth she flew the gentle nightingale
To all the birds that were in that dale,
And gate hem all into a place in fere,
And besoughten hem that they would here
Her disease, and thus began her tale.

" The cuckow, well it is not for to hide,
How the cuckow and I fast haue chide,
Euer sithen it was day light,
I pray you all that ye do me right
On that foule false vnkind bridde."

Than spake o bird for all, by one assent,
" This matter asketh good auisement,
For we ben birdes here in fere,
And sooth it is, the cuckow is not here,
And therefore we woll haue a parliment.

" And thereat shall the egle be our lord,
And other peres that been of record,
And the cuckow shall be after sent,
There shall be yeue the judgement,
Or els we shall finally make accord.

" And this shall be without nay
The morrow after saint Ualentines day,
Under a maple that is faire and grene,
Before the chamber window of the quene,
At Woodstocke vpon the grene lay."

She thanked hem, and than her leaue toke,
And into an hauthorne by that broke,
And there she sate and song vpon that tree,
" Terme of life loue hath withhold me,"
So loud that I with that song awoke.

EXPLICIT.

O LEUD book with thy foule rudenesse,
Sith thou haste neither beauty ne eloquence.
Who hath thee caused or yeue the hardinesse
For to appeare in my ladies presence,
I am full siker thou knowest her benenolence,
Full agreeable to all her abying,
For of all good she is the best liuing.

Alas that thou ne haddest worthinesse,
To shew to her some pleasaunt sentence,
Sith that she hath through her gentillesse
Accepted the seruant to her digne reuerence,
O, me repenteth that I ne had science
And leiser als, to make thee more flourishing,
For of all good she is the best liuing.

Beseech her meekely with all lowlinesse,
Though I be ferre from her in absence,
To think on my trouth to her and stedfastnesse,
And to abridge of my sorrowes the violence,
Which caused is, wherof knoweth your sapience,
She like among to notifie me her liking
For of all good she is the best liuing.

LANUOYE.

AURORE of gladnesse, and day of lustinesse,
Lucern a night with heauenly influence
Illumined, root of beauty and goodnesse,
Suspires which I effunde in silence,
Of grace I beseech alledge let your writing,
Now of all good, sith ye be best liuing.

EXPLICIT.

THE COURT OF LOVE.

This book is an imitation of the Romaunt of the Rose, shewing that all are subject to love, what impediments soever to the contrary: containing also those twenty statutes which are to be observed in the Court of Love.

With timerous herte, and trembling hand of drede,
Of cunning naked, bare of eloquence,
Unto the floure of porte in womanhede
I write, as he that none intelligence
Of metres hath, ne floures of sentence:
Saufe that me list my writing to conuey,
In that I can to please her high nobley.

The blosomes fresh of Tullius gardein soot
Present they not, my matter for to born:
Poemes of Uirgil taken here no root,
Ne craft of Galfride, may not here sojourn:
Why nam I cunning? O well may I mourn
For lacke of science, that I cannat write
Unto the princes of my life aright.

No tearmes digne vnto her excellence,
So is she sprong of noble stirpe and high:
A world of honour and of reuerence
There is in her, this will I testifie,
Caliope thou suster wise and slie,
And thou Minerua, guide me with thy grace,
That language rude, my matter not deface.

Thy suger dropes sweet of Helicon
Distill in me, thou gentle Muse I pray,
And thee Melpomene I call anone,
Of ignorance the mist to chase away:
And giue me grace so for to write and say,
That she my lady of her worthinesse
Accept in gree this little short treatesse,

That is entituled thus, The Court of Loue:
And ye that ilen metriciens me excuse,
I you beseech for Uenus sake aboue,
For what I mean in this, ye need not muse:
And if so be my lady it refuse
For lacke of ornate speech, I would be wo,
That I presume to her to writen so.

But my entent and all my busie cure
Is for to write this treatesse, as I can,
Unto my lady, stable, true, and sure,
Faithfull and kind, sith first that she began
Me to accept in seruice as her man:
To her be all the pleasure of this book,
That whan her like she may it rede and look.

Whan I was young, at eighteene yeare of age,
Lusty and light, desirous of pleasaunce,
Approching on full sadde and ripe courage,
Loue arted me to do my obseruaunce,
To his estate, and done him obeisaunce,
Commaunding me the Court of Loue to see,
Alite beside the mount of Citharee.

There Citherea goddesse was and quene:
Honoured highly for her majeste,
And eke her sonne, the mighty god I wene,
Cupide the blind, that for his dignite
A M. louers worship on their kne,
There was I bid in paine of death to pere,
By Mercury the winged messengere.

So than I went by strange and fer countrees,
Enquiring aye what coast had to it drew
The Court of Loue: and thiderward as bees,
At last I see the people gan pursue:
And me thoght some wight was there that knew
Where that the court was holden ferre or nie,
And after them full fast I gan me hie.

Anone as I them ouertooke, I said:
"Heile friends, whither purpose ye to wend"
"Forsooth" (quod one) that answered liche a maid,
"To Loues Court now go we gentle friend."
"Where is that place" (quod I) "my fellow hend?"
"At Citheron, sir," said he, "without dout,
The king of loue, and all his noble rout,

"Dwelleth within a castle rially."
So than apace I journed forth among,
And as he said, so fond I there truly:
For I beheld the toures high and strong,
And high pinacles, large of hight and long,
With plate of gold bespred on euery side,
And precious stones, the stone werke for to hide.

No saphire in Inde, no rube rich of price,
There lacked than, nor emeraud so grene,
Bales Turkes, ne thing to my deuice,
That may the castle maken for to shene:
All was as bright as sterres in winter bene,
And Phebus shone to make his peace ageine,
For trespas done to high estates tweine.

Uenus and Mars, the god and goddesse clere,
Whan he them found in armes cheined fast,
Uenus was than full sad of herte and chere:
But Phebus beams streight as is the mast,
Upon the castle ginneth he to cast,
To please the lady, princes of that place,
In signe he looketh after Loues grace.

For there nis god in Heauen or Hell ywis,
But he hath ben right soget vnto Loue:
Joue, Pluto, or whatsoever he is,
Ne creature in yearth, or yet aboue,
Of these the reuers may no wight approue:
But furthermore, the castle to deserie,
Yet saw I neuer none so large and hie.

For vnto Heauen it stretcheth, I suppose,
Within and out depeinted wonderly,
With many a thousand daisie rede as rose,
And white also this saw I verely:
But who tho daisies might do signifie,
Can I not tell, safe that the quenes floure,
Alceste it was that kept there her sojoure:

Which vnder Uenus lady was and quene,
And Admete king and soueraine of that place,
To whom obeied the ladies good ninetene,
With many a thousand other bright of face:
And yong men fele came forth with lusty pace,
And aged eke, their homage to dispose,
But what they were, I coud not well disclose.

Yet nere and nere forth in I gan me dress
Into an hall of noble apparaile,
With arras spred, and cloth of gold I gesse,
And other silke of esyer anaile:
Under the cloth of their estate sauns faile
The king and quene there sat as I beheld:
It passed joy of Helise the field.

There saints haue their comming and resort,
To seene the king so rially beseine
In purple clad, and eke the quene in sort,
And on their heads saw I crownes tweine,
With stones fret, so that it was no paine,
Withouten meat and drink to stand and see
The kinges honour and the rialtee.

And for to treat of states with the king,
That ben of councel cheef, and with the quene:
The king had Danger nere to him standing,
The quene of loue, Disdain, and that was sene:
For by the faith I shall to God, I wene
Was neuer straunger none in her degree,
Than was the quene in casting of her eye.

And as I stood perceiuing her apart,
And eke the beames shining of her eyen,
Me thought they weren shapen lich a dart,
Sharpe and persing, and smal and streight of line:
And all her haire it shone as gold so fine,
Dishiuil crispe, downe hanging at her backe
A yard in length: and soothly than I spake.

"O bright regina, who made thee so faire?
Who made thy colour vermelet and white?
Wher wonneth that god, how far aboue the aire?
Great was his craft, and great was his delite.
Now maruell I nothing that ye do hight
The quene of loue, and occupie the place
Of Cithare: now sweet lady thy grace."

In mewet spake I so, that nought astart
By no condition word, that might be hard:
But in my inward thought I gan aduert,
And oft I said "My wit is dull and hard:"
For with her beauty, thus God wot I ferde,
As doth the man yrauished with sight,
Whan I beheld her cristall eyen so bright:

No respect hauing what was best to done,
Till right anone beholding here and there,
I spied a friend of mine, and that full sone,
A gentlewoman was the chamberere
Unto the quene, that hote as ye shall here,
Philobone, that loued all her life:
Whan she me sey, she led me forth as blife;

And me demanded how and in what wise
I thither come, and what my errand was?
"To seen the court" (quod I) "and all the guise,
And eke to sue for pardon and for grace,
And mercy aske for all my great trespas,
That I none erst come to the Court of Loue:
Foryeue me this, ye gods all aboue."

"That is well said" (quod Philobone) "indede:
But were ye not assomoned to appere
By Mercurius, for that is all my drede:"
"Yes gentill feire" (quod I) "now am I here,
Ye yet what tho though that be true my dere:"
"Of your free will ye should haue come vnsent,
For ye did not, I deme ye will be shent.

"For ye that reigne in youth and lustinesse,
Pampired with ease, and jalous in your age,
Your duty is, as ferre as I can gesse,
To Loues Court to dresseh your viage,
As soone as nature maketh you so sage,
That ye may know a woman from a swan,
Or whan your foot is growen halfe a span.

"But sith that ye by wilfull negligence
This eighteene year hath kept your self at large,
The greater is your trespas and offence,
And in your neck you mote bere all the charge:
For better were ye ben withouten barge
Amidde the sea in tempest and in raine,
Than biden here, receiuing wo and paine

"That ordained is for such as them absent
Fro Loues Court by yeres long and fele.
I ley my life ye shall full soone repent,
For Loue will reiue your colour, lust, and hele:
Eke ye must bait on many an heauy mele:
No force ywis: I stirred you long agone
To drow to court" (quod little) Philobone.

"Ye shall well see how rough and angry face
The king of loue will shew, whan ye him se:
By mine aduise kneel down and ask him grace,
Eschewing perill and aduersite,
For well I wote it woll none other be,
Comfort is none, ne counsall to your ease,
Why will ye than the king of loue displease?"

"O mercy God" (quod iche) "I me repent,
Caitife and wretch in herte, in will and thought,
And after this shall be mine hole entent
To serue and please, how dere that loue be bought:
Yet sith I haue mine own pennance ysought,
With humble sprite shall I it receiue,
Though that the king of loue my life bereiue.

"And though that feruent loues qualite
In me did neuer wortch truly: yet I
With all obeisaunce and humilite,
And benigne herte shall serue him till I die:
And he that lord of might is great and hie,
Right as him list me chastice and correct,
And punish me with trespace thus infect."

These wordes said, she caught me by the lap,
And led me forth in till a temple round,
Both large and wide: and as my blessed hap
And good auenture was, right soone I found
A tabernacle reised from the ground,
Where Uenus sat, and Cupide by her side,
Yet halfe for drede I can my visage hide.

And eft againe I looked and beheld,
Seeing full sundry people in the place,
And mister folke, and some that might not weld
Their lims wele, me thought a wonder case,
The temple shone with windows all of glass,
Bright as the day, with many a fair image,
And there I see the fresh quene of Cartage

Dido, that brent her beauty for the loue
Of false Eneas, and the weimenting
Of her Annelida, true as turtle doue,
To Arcite fals: and there was in peinting
Of many a prince, and many a doughty king,
Whose martirdom was shewed about the wals
And how that fele for loue had suffred fals.

But sore I was abashed and astonied
Of all tho folke that there were in that tide,
And than I asked where they had wonned:
"In diuers courts" (quod she) "here beside,
In sundry clothing mantill wise full wide
They were arraied, and did their sacrifise
Unto the god, and goddesse in their guise.

"Lo yonder folke" (quod she) "that kneele in blew,
They weare the colour aye and euer shall,
In signe they were and euer will be trew
Withouten chaunge: and soothly yonder all
That ben in black, and mourning cry and call
Unto the gods, for their loues bene,
Som sick, some dede, som all to sharp and kene."

"Yea than" (quod I) "what done these priests here,
Nonnes and hermites, freres, and all tho,
That sit in white, in russet, and in grene:"
"Forsooth" (quod she) "they waylen of their wo."
"O mercy lord, may they so come and go
Freely to court and haue such liberty?"
"Yea men of each condition and degre.

"And women eke: for truly there is none
Exception made, ne neuer was ne may:
This court is ope and free for euerichone,
The king of loue he will not say them nay:
He taketh all in poore or rich array,
That meekely sew vnto his excellence
With all their herte and all their reuerence."

And walking thus about with Philobone
I see where come a messengere in hie
Streight from the king, which let command anone,
Throughout the court to make an ho and cry:
"All new come folke abide, and wote ye why,
The kings lust is for to seene you sone:
Come nere let see, his will mote need be done."

Than gan I me present tofore the king,
Trembling for fere with visage pale of hew,
And many a louer with me was kneeling,
Abashed sore, till vnto the time they knew
The sentence yeue of his entent full trew:
And at the last the king hath me behold
With sterne visage, and seid, "What doth this old

"Thus ferre ystope in yeres, come so late
Unto the court?" "Forsooth, my liege" (quod I)
"An hundred time I haue ben at the gate
Afore this time, yet coud I neuer espie
Of mine acqueintaunce any in mine eie:
And shamefastnesse away me gan to chace,
But now I me submit vnto your grace."

"Well, all is pardoned with condition
That thou be true from henceforth to thy might
And seruen Loue in thine entention,
Sweare this, and than as ferre as it is right,
Thou shalt haue grace here in thy quenes sight."
"Yes by the faith I owe to your croun, I swere,
Though Death therefore me thirlith with his spere."

And whan the king had seene vs euerychone,
He let commaund an officer in hie
To take our faith, and shew vs one by one
The statutes of the court full busily:
Anon the booke was leid before their eie,
To rede and see what thing we must obserue
In Loues Court, till that we die and sterue.

And for that I was lettred, there I red
The statutes hole of Loues Court and hall:
The first statute that on the booke was spred,
Was to be true in thought and deeds all
Unto the king of loue the lord ryall,
And to the quene as faithfull and as kind,
As I coud thinke with herte, will and mind.

The second statute secretly to kepe
Councell of loue, not blowing euery where
All that I know, and let it sinke and flete,
It may not sowne in euery wights ere:
Exiling slaunder aye for drede and fere,
And to my lady which I loue and serue,
Be true and kind ther grace for to deserue.

The third statute was clerely writ also,
Withouten chaunge to liue and die the same,
None other loue to take for wele ne wo,
For blind delite, for ernest nor for game:
Without repent for laughing or for grame,
To bidden still in full perseueraunce,
All this was hole the kings ordinaunce.

The fourth statute to purchase ever to here,
And stirren folke to loue, and beten fire
On Uenus auter, here about and there
And preach to them of loue and hote desire,
And tell how loue will quiten well their hire:
This must be kept, and loth me to displease:
If loue be wroth, passe: for there by is ease.

The fifth statute, not to be daungerous,
If that a thought would reue me of my slepe:
Nor of a sight to be ouer squemous,
And so verely this statute was to kepe,
To turne and wallow in my bed and wepe,
Whan that my lady of her cruelty
Would from her herte exilen all pity.

The sixt statute, it was for me to vse,
Aloue to wander, void of company,
And on my ladies beauty for to muse,
And to thinke it no force to liue or die,
And eft againe to thinke the remedie,
How to her grace I might anone attaine,
And tell my wo vnto my soueraine.

The seventh statute, was to be patient,
Whether my lady joyfull were or wroth,
For words glad or heauy, diligent,
Wheder that she me helden lefe or loth:
And hereupon I put was to mine oth,
Her for to serue, and lowly to obey,
In shewing her my chere ye xx. sith aday.

The eight statute to my remembraunce,
Was to speaken and pray my lady dere,
With hourely labour and great entendaunce,
Me for to loue with all her herte entere,
And me desire and make me joyfull chere,
Right as she is surmouning euery faire,
Of beauty well and gentle debonaire.

The ninth statute, with letters writ of gold,
This was the sentence how that I and all,
Should euer dread to be to ouerbold
Her to displease, and truely so I shall,
But ben content for thing that may fall,
And meekely take her chastisement, and yerd,
And to offend her euer ben-aferd.

The tenth statute, was egally to discerne,
Betwene the lady and thine ability,
And thinke thy selfe art neuer like to yerne,
By right her mercy nor her equity,
But of her grace and womanly pity:
For though thy selfe be noble in thy strene,
A thousand fold more noble is thy quene.

Thy liues lady and thy soueraine,
That hath thine herte al hole in gouernaunce,
Thou mayst no wise it taken to disdaine,
To put thee humbly at her ordinaunce,
And give her free the reine of her plesaunce,
For liberty is thing that woman looke,
And truly els the matter is a crooke.

The xi. statute, thy signs for to know
With eye and finger, and with smiles soft,
And low to couch, and alway for to show,
For drede of spies, for to winken oft:
And secretly to bring up a sigh aloft,
But still beware of ouermuch resort,
For that parauenture spilleth all thy sport.

The xii. statute remember to obserue:
For all the paine thou hast for loue and wo,
All is too lite her mercy to deserue,
Thou musten think, whereuer thou ride or go:
And mortall wounds suffer thou also,
All for her sake, and thinke it well besette
Upon thy loue, for it may not be bette.

The xiii. statute, whylome is to thinke,
What thing may best thy lady like and please,
And in thine hertes bottome let it sinke:
Some thing deuise, and take for it thine ease,
And send it her, that may her herte appease:
Some herte, or ring, or letter, or deuice,
Or precious stone, but spare not for no price.

The xiiii. statute eke thou shalt assay,
Formely to keepe the most part of thy life:
Wish that thy lady in thine armes lay,
And nightly dreme, thou hast thy nights hertes wife,
Sweetly in armes, strayning her as blife:
And whan thou seest it is but fantasie,
See that thou sing not ouer merely.

For too much joy hath oft a wofull end,
It longeth eke this statute for to hold,
To deme thy lady euer more thy friend,
And thinke thy selfe in no wise a cokold.
In euery thing she doth but as she should:
Construe the best, beleeue no tales new,
For many a lye is told, that seemeth full trew.

But thinke that she, so bounteous and faire,
Coud not be false: imagine this algate,
And think that tonges wicked would her appair,
Sclandering her name and worshipfull estate,
And louers true to setten at debate:
And though thou seest a faut right at thine eye,
Excuse it bline, and glose it pretily.

The xv. statute, vse to swere and stare,
And counterfeit a lesing hardely,
To save thy ladies honour euery where,
And put thy selfe for her to fight boldely:
Say she is good, vertuous, and ghostly,
Clere of entent, and herte, yea, thought and will,
And argue not for reason ne for skill.

Againe thy ladies pleasure ne entent:
For loue will not be countrepleted indede:
Say as she saith, than shalt thou not be shent,
The crow is white, ye truly so I rede:
And aye what thing that she thee wilt forbede,
Eschew all that. and giue her soueraintee,
Her appetite followe in all degree.

The xvi. statute keepe it if thou may,
Seuen sith at night thy lady for to please,
And seuen at midnight, seuen at morrow day,
And drinke a caudle earely for thine ease.
Do this and keep thine head from all disease,
And win the garland here of louers all,
That euer came in court, or euer shall.

Full few, think I, this statute hold and keep:
But truely this my reason giueth me fele,
That some louers should rather fall asleepe,
Than take on hand to please so oft and wele.
There lay none oth to this statute adele,
But keep who might, as gaue him his corage
Now get this garland lusty folke of age:

Now win who may ye lusty folke of youth,
This garland fresh, of floures red and white,
Purple and blew, and colours fell vncouth,
And I shall croune him king of all delite,
In all the court there was not to my sight,
A louer true, that he ne was adrede,
Whan he expresse hath heard the statute rede.

The xvii. statue, whan age approcheth on,
And lust is laid, and all the fire is queint,
As freshly than thou shalt begin to fonne
And dote in loue, and all her image paint
In thy remembraunce, till thou begin to faint,
As in the first season thine herte began:
And her desire, though thou ne may ne can

Performe thy liuing actuell, and lust,
Regester this in thine remembraunce:
Eke whan thou maist not keep thy thing from rust,
Yet speake and talke of pleasaunt daliaunce,
For that shall make thine herte rejoice and daunce,
And whan thou maist no more the game assay,
The statute bid thee pray for them that may.

The xviii. statute, holy to commend,
To please thy lady, is that thou eschew
With sluttishnesse thy selfe for to offend,
Be jollife, fresh, and fete, with things new,
Courtly with manner, this is all thy due,
Gentill of port, and louing cleanlinesse,
This is the thing, that liketh thy maistresse.

And not to wander liche a dulled asse,
Ragged and torne, disguised in array,
Ribaud in speech, or out of measure passe,
Thy bound exceeding, thinke on this alway:
For women been of tender hertes aye,
And lightly set their pleasure in a place,
Whan they misthinke, they lightly let it passe.

The xix. statute, meat and drinke forgete:
Ech other day, see that thou fast for loue,
For in the court, they liue withouten mete,
Saue such as cometh from Uenus all aboue,
They take none hede, in pain of great reproue
Of meat and drinke, for that is all in vaine,
Onely they liue by sight of their soueraine.

The xx. statute, last of euerychone,
Enroll it in thyne hertes priuitee;
To wring and waile, to turne, and sigh and grone,
Whan that thy lady absent is from thee,
And eke renew the words all that she
Between you twain hath said, and all the chere
That thee hath made, thy lues lady dere.

And see thine herte in quiet, ne in rest
Sojourne, till time thou seene thy lady eft,
But where she won, by south, or east, or west,
With all thy force, now see it be not left:
Be diligent, till time thy life be raft,
In that thou mayest, thy lady for to see,
This statute was of old antiquitee.

An officer of high authority,
Cleped Rigour, made vs to swere anone:
He nas corrupt with partiality,
Fauour, prayer, ne gold that clerely shone;
"Ye shall" (quod he) "now sweren here echone,
Yong and old, to kepe in that they may
The statutes truly, all after this day."

O God thought I, hard is to make this oth:
But to my power shall I them obserue,
In all this world nas matter halfe so loth
To sweare for all: for though my body sterue,
I have no might them hole to obserue.
But herken now the case how it befell,
After my oth was made, the troth to tell.

I tourned leaues, looking on this booke,
Where other statutes were of women shene,
And right forthwith Rigour on me gan looke
Full angerly, and sayed unto the queene
I traitour was, and charged me let been,
"There may no man" (quod he) "the statute know,
That long to women, hie degree ne low.

"In secret wise they kepten been full close,
They soune echone to liberty, my friend,
Pleasaunt they be, and to their owne purpose,
There wote no wight of them, but God and fiend,
Ne naught shall wit, vnto the worlds end.
The queen hath yeue me charge in pain to die
Neuer to rede ne seene them with myne eie.

"For men shall not so nere of counsaile bene
With womanhood, ne knowen of her guise,
Ne what they think, ne of their wit thengine,
I me report to Salomon the wise,
And mighty Sampson, which beguiled thrise
With Dalida was, he wote that in a throw,
There may no man statute of women know.

"For it perauenture may right so befall,
That they be bound by nature to deceiue,
And spinne, and weep, and sugre strew on gall,
The herte of man to ruuish and to reiue,
And whet their tongue as sharpe as swerde or gleue,
It may betide, this is their ordinance,
So must they lowly doen their obseruaunce.

"And keepe the statute yeuen them of kind,
Of such as loue hath yeue hem in their life.
Men may not wete why turneth euery wind,
Nor waxen wise, nor been inquisitife
To know secret of maid, widow, or wife,
For they their statutes haue to them reserued,
And neuer man to know them hath deserued.

"Now dresse you forth, the god of loue you guide"
(Quod Rigour than) "and seek the temple bright
Of Cithera, goddesse here beside,
Beseech her by influence and might
Of all her vertue, you to teach aright,
How for to serue your ladies, and to please
Ye that been sped, and set your herte in ease.

"And ye that ben vnpurueyed, pray her eke
Comfort you soone with grace and destiny,
That ye may set your herte there ye may like,
In such a place, that it to loue may be
Honour and worship, and felicity
To you for aye, now goeth by one assent."
"Graunt mercy sir" (quod we) and forth we went

Deuoutly soft and easie pace to see
Uenus the goddesse image all of gold:
And there we found a thousand on their knee,
Some fresh and faire, some deadly to behold,
In sundry mantils new and some were old,
Some painted were with flames red as fire,
Outward to show their inward hote desire.

With dolefull chere, ful fell in their complaint,
Cried "Lady Uenus, rew vpon our sore,
Receiue our bils, with teares all bedreint,
We may not weepe, there is no more in store
But wo and pain, vs fretteth more and more:
Thou blisseful planet, louers sterre so shene,
Haue routh on vs, that sigh and carefull bene.

"And punish lady greuously we pray,
The false vntrue, with counterfeit pleasaunce:
That made their oth, be true to liue or dey,
With chere assured, and with countenaunce:
And falsely now they footen loues daunce,
Barraine of routh, vntrue of that they saied,
Now that their lust and pleasure is alaied."

Yet eft againe a thousand million
Rejoycing loue, leading their life in blisse,
They sayd "Uenus, redresse of all diuision,
Goddesse eternell, thy name ihired is:
By loues bond is knit all thing iwis,
Beast vnto beast, the yearth to water wan,
Bird vnto bird and woman vnto man,

"This is the life of joy that we ben in;
Resembling life of heauenly paradise,
Loue is exiler aye of vice and sinne,
Loue maketh hertes lusty to deuise,
Honour and grace, haue they in euery wise,
That been to loues law obedient,
Loue maketh folke benigne and diligent.

"Aye stering them to drede vice and shame:
In their degree, it maketh them honourable,
And sweet it is of loue to beare the name,
So that his love be faithfull, true and stable:
Loue pruneth him, to semen amiable,
Loue hath no faut, there it is exercised,
But sole with them that have all loue dispised.

"Honour to thee celestiall and clere
Goddesse of loue, and to thy celsitude,
That yeuest vs light so fer doun from thy spere,
Piercing our hertes with thy pulcritude,
Comparison none of similitude
May to thy grace be made in no degree,
That hast vs set with loue in vnitie.

"Great cause haue we to praise thy name and thee,
For thorough thee we liue in joy and blisse.
Blessed be thou, most soueraine to see,
Thy holy court of gladnesse may not misse:
A thousand sith we may rejoyce in this,
That we ben thine with herte and all yfere,
Enflamed with thy grace, and heauenly fere."

Musing of tho that spaken in this wise,
I me bethought in my remembraunce
Mine orizon right goodly to deuise,
And pleasantly with hertes obeisaunce,
Beseech the goddesse voiden my greuaunce,
For I loued eke, saufe that I wist not where,
Yet downe I set and sayd as ye shall here.

"Fairest of all, that euer were or bee,
Licour and light, to pensife creature,
Mine hole affiaunce, and my lady free,
My goddesse bright, my fortune and my ure,
I yeue and yeeld my herte to thee full sure,
Humbly beseeching lady of thy grace
Me to bestow now in some blessed place.

"And here I vow me, faithful, true, and kind,
Without offence of mutabilitie,
Humbly to serue, while I haue wit and mind,
Mine hole affiaunce, and my lady free,
In thilke place, there ye me signe to be:
And sith this thing of new is yeue me aye
To loue and serue, needly must I obey.

"Be merciable with thy fire of grace,
And fix mine herte, there beauty is and routh:
For hote I loue, determine in no place,
Saufe onely this, by God and by my trouth
Troubled I was, with slumber, slepe, and slouth
This other night, and in a visioun
I see a woman romen vp and doun,

"Of meane stature, and semely to behold,
Lustie and fresh, demure of countenaunce,
Yong and well shape, with hair shone as gold,
With eyen as cristal, ferced with pleasaunce,
And she gan stirre mine herte a lite to daunce:
But suddainly she vanish gan right there,
Thus I may say, I loue and wote not where.

"For what she is, ne her dwelling I not,
And yet I fele that loue distreineth me:
Might iche her know, her would I faine God wot
Serue and obey with all benignitie,
And if that other be my destinie,
So that no wise I shall her neuer see,
Than graunt me her that best may liken me.

"With glad rejoyce to liue in parfite hele,
Deuoid of wrath, repent or variaunce:
And able me to doe that may be wele
Unto my lady, with hertes hie pleasaunce:
And mighty goddes through thy purueiaunce
My wit, my thoght, my lust and loue so guide,
That to thine honor I may me prouide

"To set mine herte in place there I may like,
And gladly serue with all affection,
Great is the paine, which at mine herte doth sticke,
Till I be sped by thine election:
Helpe lady goddesse, that possession
I might of her haue, that in all my life
I clepen shall my quene, and hertes wife.

"And in the Court of Loue to dwell for aye
My will it is, and done thee sacrifice:
Daily with Diane eke to fight and fraye,
And holden werre, as might will me suffice:
That goddesse chast, I keepen in no wise
To serue, a figge for all her chastity,
Her law is for religiousity."

And thus gan finish prayer, laud, and preice,
Which that I yone to Uenus on my knee,
And in mine herte to ponder and to peice,
I gan anone her image fresh beautie:
"Heile to that figure sweet, and heile to thee
Cupide" (quod I) and rose and yede my wey,
And in the temple as I yede, I sey

A shrine surmounting all in stones rich,
Of which the force was pleasaunce to mine ey,
With diamond or saphire, neuer liche
I haue none seene, ne wrought so wonderly:
So whan I met with Philobone in hie,
I gan demaund, who is this sepulture,
"Forsooth" (quod she) "a tender creature

"Is shrined there, and Pity is her name,
She saw an egle wreke him on a flie,
And pluck his wing, and eke him in his game,
And tender herte of that hath made her die:
Eke she would weep and mourn right pitously
To seene a loner suffer great distresse,
In all the court nas none, as I do gesse,

"That coud a louer halfe so well auaile,
Ne of his wo the torment or the rage
Asken, for he was sure withouten faile,
That of his greef she coud the heat assuage
In steed of Pity, speedeth hote courage
The matters all of court, now she is dead,
I me report in this to womanhead.

"For weil and weep, and cry, and speak, and pray,
Women would not haue pity on thy plaint,
Ne by that mean, to ease thine herte conuay,
But thee receiuen for their owne talent:
And say that Pity causeth thee in consent
Of reuth to take thy seruice and thy paine,
In that thou maist, to please thy soueraine.

"But this is counsaile, keepe it secretly,"
(Quod she) "I nold for all the world about,
The queene of loue it wist, and wite ye why,
For if by me this matter springen out,
In court no lenger should I out of dout
Dwellen, but shame in all my life endry,
Now keepe it close" (quod she) "this hardely.

"Well all is well now shall ye seen," she said
"The fairest lady vnder Sunne that is:
Come on with me, demean you lich a maid,
With shamefast drede, for ye shall speak ywis
With her that is the mirrour joy and blisse:
But somewhat strange and sad of her demean
She is, beware your countenaunce be seen,

"Nor ouer light, ne rechelesse, ne too bold,
Ne malapert, ne renning with your tong,
For she will you obeisen and behold,
And you demand why ye were hence so long
Out of this court, without resort among:
And Rosiall her name is hote aright,
Whose herte as yet is yeuen to no wight.

" And ye also been, as I vnderstond,
With loue but light auanced, by your word,
Might ye by hap your freedom maken bond,
And fall in grace with her, and wele accord,
Well might ye thank the god of loue and lord,
For she that ye saw in your dreame appere,
To loue such one, what are they than the nere,

" Yet wote ye what, as my remembraunce
Me yeueth now, ye faine where that ye say,
That ye with loue had neuer acquaintaunce,
Saue in your dream right late this other day:
Why yes parde, my life that durst I lay,
That ye were caught vpon an heath, whan I
Saw you complain, and sigh full pitously.

" Within an herber, and a gardein faire
Where flowers grow, and herbes vertuous,
Of which the sauour swete was and the aire,
There were your self full hote and amorous:
Iwis ye been too nice and daungerous,
I would ye now repent, and loue some new,"
" Nay by my trouth," I said " I neuer knew

" The goodly wight, whose I shall be for aye:
Guide me the lord, that loue hath made and me."
But forth we went into a chamber gay,
There was Rosiall, womanly to see,
Whose streames, sotell piercing of her eye,
Mine herte gan thrill for beauty in the stound,
" Alas" (quod I) " who hath me yeve this wound,"

And than I drede to speake, till at the last
I grete the lady reuerently and wele,
Whan that my sigh was gone and ouerpast,
Than doun on knees ful humbly gan I knele,
Beseeching her my feruent wo to kele,
For there I tooke full purpose in my mind
Unto her grace, my painfull herte to bind.

For if I shall all fully her discriue,
Her head was round, by compasse of nature,
Her haire as gold, she passed all on liue,
And lilly forehed had this creature,
With liueliche browes, flaw of colour pure,
Betwene the which was meane disceueraunce
From euery brow, to shew a due distaunce.

Her nose directed streight, and euen as line,
With forme and shape thereto conuenient,
In which the goddes milk white path doth shine,
And eke her eyen ben bright and orient,
As is the smaragde, vnto my judgement,
Or yet these sterres Heauenly small and bright,
Her visage is of louely rede and white.

Her mouth is short, and shit in little space,
Flaming somedeale, not ouer redde I mean,
With pregnant lips, and thick to kisse percase,
For lippes thinne not fat, but euer lene,
They serue of naught, they be not worth a bean,
For if the basse been full, there is delite,
Maximian truly thus doth he write.

But to my purpose, I say white as snow
Been all her teeth, and in order they stond
Of one stature, and eke her breath I trow
Sumounteth all odours that euer I found
In sweetnesse, and her body, face, and hond
Been sharpely slender, so that from the head
Unto the foot, all is but womanhead.

I hold my peace, of other things hidde,
Here shall my soule, and not my tong bewray,
But how she was arraied, if ye me bidde,
That shall I well discouer you and say,
A bend of gold and silke, full fresh and gay,
With her intresse, broudered full wele,
Right smoothly kept, and shining euerydele.

About her necke a flower of fresh deuise,
With rubies set, that lusty were to sene,
And she in goun was light and summer wise,
Shapen full wele, the colour was of grene,
With aureat sent about her sides clene,
With diuers stones, precious and rich,
Thus was she rayed, yet saw I neuer her lich.

For if that Joue had but this lady seine,
Tho Calixto ne yet Alcmenia,
They neuer hadden in his armes leine,
Ne he had loued the faire Europa,
Ye ne yet Dane ne Antiopa,
For all their beauty stood in Rosiall,
She seemed lich a thing celestiall.

In bounty, favour, port, and seemelinesse,
Pleasaunt of figure, mirrour of delite,
Gracious to seene, and root of all gentilnesse,
With angell visage, lusty redde and white:
There was not lack; saufe daunger had alite
This goodly fresh in rule and gouernaunce,
And somdele strange she was for her pleasaunce.

And truly sone I took my leaue and went,
Whan she had me enquired what I was,
For more and more impressen gan the dent
Of Loues dart, while I beheld her face,
And eft againe I come to seeken grace,
And vp I put my bill, with sentence clere,
That followeth after, rede and ye shall here.

" O ye fresh, of beauty the root,
That nature hath formed so wele and made
Princes and quene, and ye that may do boot
Of all my langour, with your words glad,
Ye wounded me, ye made me wo bestad,
Of grace redresse my mortall greefe, as ye
Of all my harme the very causer be.

" Now am I caught, and vnware suddainly
With persaunt streames of your eye so clere,
Subject to been, and seruen you mekely,
And all your man, iwis my lady dere,
Abiding grace, of which I you require,
That mercilesse ye cause me not to sterue,
But guerdon me, liche as I may deserue.

" For by my troth, all the days of my breath
I am and will be your in will and herte,
Patient and meeke, for you to suffer death
If it require, now rue vpon my smart,
And this I swere, I neuer shall out start
From Loues Court for none aduersitie,
So ye would rue on my distresse and me.

" My destony, my fate, and houre I blisse,
That haue me set to been obedient
Onely to you, the floure of all iwis,
I trust to Uenus neuer to repent,
For euer redy, glad and diligent,
Ye shall me find in seruice to your grace,
Till death my life out of my body race.

" Humble vnto your excellence so digne,
Enforcing aye my wits and delite
To serue and please with glad herte and benigne,
And been as Troylus Troyes knight,
Or Antonie for Cleopatre bright,
And neuer you me thinkes to renay,
This shall I keepe vnto mine ending day.

" Emprint my speech in your memoriall
Sadly my princes, salue of all my sore,
And think, that for I would becommen thrall,
And been your owne, as I haue sayd before,
Ye must of pity cherish more and more
Your man, and tender after his desert,
And giue him courage for to been expert.

" For where that one hath set his herte on fire,
And findeth neither refute ne pleasaunce,
Ne word of comfort, death will quite his hire,
Alas that there is none allegeaunce
Of all their wo, alas the great greuaunce
To loue vnloued, but ye my lady dere,
In other wise may gouerne this matere."

" Truly gramercy friend of your good will,
And of your profer in your humble wise,
But for your service, take and keep it still,
And where ye say, I ought you well to cherise,
And of your greefe the remedy deuise,
I know not why: I nam acquainted well
With you, ne wot not sothly where ye dwell."

" In art of loue I write, and songs make,
That may be song in honour of the king
And quene of loue, and than I vndertake,
He that is sadde, shall than full merry sing,
And daungerous not ben in euery thing
Beseech I you, but seene my will and rede,
And let your answere put me out of drede."

" What is your name, rehearse it here I pray,
Of whence and where, of what condition
That ye been of, let see come off and say,
Faine would I know your disposition
Ye haue put on your old entention,
But what ye mean to serve me I ne wote,
Saufe that ye say ye loue me wonder hote."

" My name, alas, my herte why makes thou straunge,
Philogenet I calld am fer and nere,
Of Cambridge clerk, that neuer think to chaunge
Fro you that with your heuenly stremes clere
Rauish mine herte and ghost, and all infere,
Since at the first I write my bill for grace,
Me thinke I see some mercy in your face.

" And what I mene, by gods that all hath wrought,
My bill now maketh finall mention,
That ye been lady in my inward thought
Of all mine herte withouten offencion,
That I best loue, and sith I begon
To draw to court, lo than what might I say,
I yeeld me here vnto your nobley.

" And if that I offend, or wilfully
By pomp of herte your precept disobay,
Or done againe your will unskilfully,
Or greuen you for earnest or for play,
Correct ye me right sharply than I pray,
As it is seene vnto your womanhede,
And rew on me, or els I nam but dede."

" Nay God forbede to feffe you so with grace,
And for a word of sugred eloquence,
To haue compassion in so little space,
Than were it time that some of vs were hens,
Ye shall not find in me such insolence:
Eye what is this, may ye not suffre sight,
How may ye looke vpon the candle light?

" That clerer is and hotter than mine eie,
And yet ye sayd the beames perse and frete,
How shall ye than the candle light endrie,
For well wote ye, that hath the sharper hete,
And there ye bid me, you correct and bete,
If ye offend, nay that may not be done,
There come but few, that speden here so sone.

" Withdraw your eie, withdraw from presens eke;
Hurt not your selfe, through foly with a look,
I would be sorry so to make you sicke,
A woman should beware eke whom she took:
Ye beth a clerke, go serchen well my book,
If any women ben so light to winne,
Nay bide a while, tho ye were all my kinne.

" So sone ye may not win mine herte in truth,
The guise of court will seen your stedfastnesse;
And as you done to haue vpon you reuth,
Your owne desert, and lowly gentilnesse,
That will reward you joy for heauinesse,
And tho ye waxen pale, and grene and dede,
Ye must it vse a while withouten drede,

" And it accept and grutchen in no wise,
But where as ye me heartely desire
To lene to loue, me thinke ye be not wise,
Cease of your language, cease I you require,
For he that hath this twenty yeare ben here,
May not obtaine, than maruaile I that ye
Be now so bold of loue to treat with me."

" Ah mercy herte, my lady and my loue,
My rightwise princesse and my liues guide,
Now may I plaine to Uenus all aboue,
That ruthlesse ye me gaue this wound so wide
What haue I done, why may it not betide,
That for my trouth I may receiued be:
Alas than, your daunger and your cruelte,

" In wofull houre, I got was welaway,
In woful houre fostred and ifedde,
In wofull houre iborne, that I ne may
My supplication sweetly haue I spedde,
The frosty graue and cold must be my bedde,
Without ye list your grace and mercy shewe,
Death with his axe so fast on me doth hewe.

" So great disease and in so litteli while,
So littel joy that felte I neuer yet,
And at my wo Fortune ginneth to smile,
That neuer earst I felt so hard a fit:
Confounden ben my spirites and my wit,
Till that my lady take me to her cure,
Which I loue best of erthly creature.

" But that I like, that may I not come by,
Of that I plain, that haue I habondaunce,
Sorrow and thought they sit me wonder nie,
Me is withhold that might be my pleasance:
Yet turne againe my worldly suffisaunce,
O lady bright, and saufe your faithfull true,
And or I die yet ones vpon me rewe."

With that I fell in sound and dede as stone,
With colour slaine and wanne as asshe pale,
And by the hand she caught me vp anon,
"Arise," (quod she) "what haue ye dronken dwale,
Why slepen ye it is no nitertale:"
"Now mercy sweete," (quod I) "iwis affraied:"
"What thing," (quod she) "hath made you so dismaied.

"Now wote I well that ye a louer be,
Your hew is witnesse in this thing," she said:
"If ye were secret, ye might know," (quod she)
"Curteise and kind, all this shuld be alaid:
And now mine herte, al that I haue missaid,
I shall amend and set your herte in ease."
"That word it is," (quod I) "that doth me please,"

"But this I charge, that ye the stents keepe,
And breke them not for slouth nor ignoraunce."
With that she gan to smile and laughen depe,
"Iwis," (quod I) "I will do your pleasaunce:
The xvi. statute doth me great greuaunce,
But ye must that releasse or modifie."
"I graunt," (quod she) "and so I will truly."

And softly than her colour gan appere,
As rose so red throughout her visage all,
Wherefore me thinke it is accordyng here,
That she of right be cleped Rosiall:
Thus haue I won with words great and small
Some goodly worde of her, that I loue best,
And trust she shall yet sette mine herte in rest.

"Goth on," she said to Philobone, "and take
This man with you, and lede him all about
Within the court, and shewe him for my sake
What louers dwell within, and all the rout
Of officers him shew, for he is out of dout
A straunger yet:"—"Come on," (quod Philobone)
"Philogenet with me now must ye gon."

And stalkyng soft with easie pace, I saw,
About the kyng stonden all environ,
Attendaunce, Diligence, and their felow
Fortherer, Asperaunce, and many one,
Dred to offend, there stood, and not alone,
For there was eke the cruell aduersair,
The louers foe that cleped is Dispair.

Which vnto me spake angrely and fell,
And said, "My lady me disseiue ne shall:
Trowest thou," (quod she) "that all that she did tell,
Is true, nay nay, but vnder hony gall,
Thy birth and hers they be nothing egall:
Cast of thine herte, for all her words white,
For in good faith she loueth thee but alite.

"And eke remembre thine habilite,
May not compare with her, this well thou wot:"
Ye then came Hope and said, "My frend let be,
Beleue him not: Dispaire he ginneth dote,"
"Alas," (quod I) "here is both cold and hote:
The one me biddeth loue, the toder nay,
Thus wote I not what me is best to say.

"But well wote I, my lady graunted me,
Truly to be my woundes remedie,
Her gentilness may not infected be
With doublenesse, thus trust I till I die,"
So cast I to voide Dispaires company,
And taken Hope to councel and to friend.
"Yea keep that well," (quod Philobone) "in mind."

And there beside within a bay window,
Stod one in grene ful large of bread and length,
His beard as black as fethers of the crow,
His name was Lust of wonder might and strength,
And with Delite to argue there he think'th,
For this was all his opinion,
That loue was sinne: and so he hath begon

To reason fast, and ledge auctoritie:
"Nay," (quod Delite) "loue is a vertue clere,
And from the soule his progresse holdeth he:
Blind apetite of lust doth often stere,
And that is sinne: for reason lacketh there,
For thou dost think thy neighbours wife to win:
Yet thinke it well that loue may not be sinne.

"For God, and seint, they loue right verely,
Uoid of all sinne and vise this know I well,
Affection of flesh is sinne truly,
But verray loue is vertue as I fele,
For loue may thy freill desire ackele:
For verray loue is loue, withouten sinne:"
"Now stint," (quod Lust) "thou speketh not worth a pinne."

And there I left them in their arguing,
Roming ferther in the castell wide,
And in a corner Lier stode talking,
Of lesings fast, with Flatery there beside,
He said that woman weare attire of pride,
And men were found of nature variaunt,
And could be false and shewen beaw semblaunt.

Than Flatery bespake and said, ywis
See so she goth on patens faire and fete,
It doth right well: what prety man is this,
That rometh here, now truly drink ne mete
Nede I not haue, mine herte for joy doth bete
Him to behold, so is he goodly fresh:
It semeth for loue his herte is tender and nesh.

This is the court of lusty folke and glad,
And well becommeth their abite and array,
O why be some so sory and so sad,
Complaining thus in blacke and white and gray,
Freres they ben, and monkes in good fay:
Alas for routh great dole it is to seene,
To see them thus bewaile and sory been.

See how they cry and wring their hands white,
For they so sone went to religion,
And eke the nonnes with vayle and wimple plight,
Their thought is, they ben in confusion:
"Alas," they sain "we fain perfection,
In clothes wide and lacke our libertie,
But all the sinne mote on our frends be.

"For Uenus wote, we wold as faine as ye,
That bene attyred here and welbesene,
Desiren man and loue in our degre,
Ferm and faithful right as wold the quene:
Our frends wick in tender youth and grene,
Ayenst our will made vs religious,
That is the cause we mourn and wailen thus."

Than said the monk and freres in the tide,
"Wel may we curse our abbes and our place,
Our statutes sharpe to sing in copes wide,
Chastely to keepe vs out of loues grace,
And neuer to fele comfort ne solace:
Yet suffre we the heate of loues fire,
And after that some other haply we desire,

" O Fortune cursed, why now and wherefore
Hast thou," they said, " berafte vs libertie,
Sithe nature yaue vs instrument in store,
And appetite to loue and louers be?
Why mote we suffer soch aduersite,
Diane to serue, and Uenus to refuse,
Ful often sithe this matters doth vs muse?

" We serue and honour sore ayenst our will,
Of chastite the goddes and the queene,
Us leefer were with Uenus biden still,
And haue reward for loue and soget bene
Unto these women courtly, fresh, and shene,
Fortune we curse thy wheele of variance,
There we were well thou reuist our plesance."

Thus leaue I them with voice of plaint and care,
In raging wo crying full petously,
And as I yede full naked and full bare,
Some I behold looking dispitously,
On pouerty that dedly cast their eye,
And " Welaway," they cried, and were not faine,
For they ne might their glad desire attaine.

For lacke of richesse worldly and good,
They banne and curse, and weep, and sain, " Alas,
That pouerty hath vs hent that whilom stood
At hertes ease, and free and in good case,
But now we dare not shew our self in place,
Ne vs embold to dwell in company,
There as our herte wold loue right faithfully."

And yet againward shriked euery nonne,
The pange of loue so straineth them to crie:
" Now wo the time," (quod they) " that we be boun
This hatefull ordre nise will done vs die,
We sighe and sobbe, and bleden inwardly,
Freting ourself with thought and hard complaint,
That nie for loue we waxen wood and faint."

And as I stood beholding here and there,
I was ware of a sort full languishing,
Sauage and wild, of loking and of chere,
Their mantelles and their clothes ey tering,
And oft they were of nature complaining,
For they their members lacked, foot and hand,
With visage wry, and blind I vnderstand.

They lacked shape, and beauty to preferre
Themself in loue: and said that God and kind,
Hath forged them to worshippen the sterre,
Uenus the bright, and lefteu all behind,
His other werkes clene and out of mind:
" For other have their full shape and beauty,
And we," (quod they) been in deformity."

And nie to them there was a company,
That haue the susters waried and missaide,
I meane the three of fatal destiny,
That be our workers: sodenly abraide
Out gan they cry as they had been affraide,
" We curse," (quod they) " that euer hath nature,
Iformed vs this wofull life to endure."

And there eke was Contrite and gan repent,
Confessing hole the wound that Cithere
Hath with the darte of hote desire him sent,
And how that he to loue must subject be,
Than held he all his skornes vanity,
And said that louers held a blisful life,
Yong men and old, and widow, maid and wife.

" Bereue me goddesse," (quod he) " of thy might
My skornes all and skoffes, that I haue
No power for to moken any wight,
That in thy seruice dwell: for I did raue:
This know I well right now so god me saue,
And I shal be the chief post of thy faith,
And loue uphold, the reuers who so saith."

Dissemble stode not ferre from him in troth,
With party mantil party hode and hose,
And said he had vpon his lady routh,
And thus he wound him in, and gan to glose
Of his entent ful double I suppose,
In all the world he said he loued her wele,
But ay me thought he loued her nere a dele.

Eke Shamfastnesse was there as I tooke hede,
That blushed rede, and durst nat ben aknow
She louer was, for thereof had she drede,
She stode and hing her visage downe alow,
But such a sight it was to seene I trow,
As of these roses rody on their stalke,
There coud no wight her spy to speak or talk.

In loues art so gan she to abashe,
Ne durst not vtter al her pleuity:
Many a stripe and many a greuous lashe
She gauen to them that wolden louers be,
And hindered sore the simple cominalty,
That in no wise durst grace and mercy craue,
For were not she they need but ask and haue,

Where if they now aprochein for to speke,
Than Shamefastnesse returneth them again;
They thinke, if we our secrets counsel breke,
Our ladies wil haue scorn on vs certein,
And perauenture thinken great disdein:
Thus Shamefastnesse may bringen in Dispeire,
Whan she is dede the toder will be heire.

Come forth a Vaunter, now I ring thy bel,
I spied him sone, to God I make a vowe,
He loked blacke as fendes doth in Hell,
" The first," (quod he) " that euer I did wowe,
Within a worde she come, I wotte not how,
So that in armes was my lady free,
And so hath ben a thousand mo than she.

" In England, Britain, Spain, and Picardy,
Artois, and Fraunce, and vp in hie Holand,
In Burgoine, Naples, and Italy,
Nauerne, and Grece, and vp in hethen lond
Was neuer woman yet that wold withstond,
To ben at commaundement whan I wold,
I lacked neyther siluer, coigne, ne gold.

" And there I met with this estate and that,
And here I broched her, and her I trow:
Lo there goeth one of mine, and wotte ye what?
You fresh attired haue I laid full lowe,
And soch one yonder eke right well I know:
I kept the statute whan we lay ifere,
And yet yon same hath made me right good chere."

Thus hath a Vaunter blowen euery where,
Al that he knoweth, and more a thousand fold
His auncestry of kinne was to Lier,
For first he maketh promise for to hold
His ladies councel, and it not vnfold,
Wherfore the secret whan he doth vnshitte,
Than lieth he, that all the world may witte.

For falsing so his promise and behest,
I wounder sore he hath such fantasie,
He lacketh wit I trow or is a beast,
That can no bet himself with reason gie,
By mine aduise, loue shall be contrary
To his auaile, and him eke dishonour,
So that in court he shall no more sojour.

" Take heed," (quod she) this little Philobone,
" Where Enuy rocketh in the corner yond,
And sitteth dirke, and ye shall see anone
His leane body, fading both face and hond,
Himselfe he fretteth, as I vnderstond,
Witnesse of Ouid methamorphosose,
The louers so he is, I will not glose.

" For where a louer thinketh him promote,
Enuy will grutch, repining at his wele,
It swelleth sore about his hertes rote,
That in no wise he cannot liue in hele,
And if the faithful to his lady stele,
Enuy will noise and ring it round about,
And sey much worse than done is out of dout."

And Priuy Thought rejoysing of himselfe,
Stood not ferre thence in abite maruellous,
" You is," (thought I) " some spirit or some elfe,
His subtill image is so curious:
How is," (quod I) " that he is shaded thus
With yonder cloth, I not of what colour?"
And nere I went and gan to lere and pore.

And framed him a question full hard,
" What is," (quod I) " the thing thou louest best,
Or what is bote vnto thy paines hard,
Me thinke thou liuest here in great vnrest,
Thou wandrest aye from south to east and west,
And east to north as ferre as I can see,
There is no place in court may holden thee.

" Whom followest thou where is thy herte iset,
But my demaund asoile I thee require."
" Me thought," (quod he) " no creature may let
Me to ben here, and where as I desire:
For where as absence hath done out the fire,
My mery thought it kindeleth yet againe,
That bodely me thinke with my soueraine

" I stand and speake, and laugh, and kisse, and halse:
So that my thought comforteth me ful oft,
I think god wote, though al the world be false,
I will be true, I thinke also how soft
My lady is in speach, and this on loft
Bringeth min herte with joy and great gladnes,
This priuy thought alayeth mine heauines.

" And what I thinke or where to be, no man
In all this Earth can tell iwis but I:
And eke there nis no swalow swift, ne swan
So wight of wing, ne half so yerne can flie,
For I can bene and that right sodenly,
In Heuen, in Hell, in Paradise, and here,
And with my lady whan I will desire.

" I am of counsell, ferre and wide I wote,
With lorde and lady, and theyr preuitie
I wotte it all, and be it colde or hote,
They shall not speake without licence of me,
I mine in soch as seasonable be,
For first the thing is thought within the hart,
Er any word out from the mouth astart.

And with the word Thought bad farewel and yede:
Eke forth went I to seene the courts guise,
And at the doore came in so God me spede,
Twenty courteours of age and of assise
Liche high, and brode, and as I me aduise,
The Golden Loue, and Leden Loue they hight,
The tone was sad, the toder glad and light.

" Yes draw your herte with all your force and might,
To lustinesse and ben as ye haue seid,
And thinke that I no drope of fauour hight,
Ne neuer had vnto your desire obeid,
Till sodenly me thought me was affraied,
To seene you waxe so dede of countenaunce,
And Pite bade me done you some pleasaunce.

" Out of her shrine she rose from death to liue,
And in mine eare full priuely she spake,
' Doth not your seruaunt hens away to driue,
Rosial,' (quod she) ' and than mine herte it brake,
For tenderich: and where I found moch lacke,
In your person, than I my selfe bethought,
And saide, this is the man myne hearte hath sought."

" Gramercy Pity, might I but suffise,
To yeue due laude vnto thy shrine of gold,
God wotte I would: for sith that thou did rise
From death to liue for me, I am behold,
To thanken you a thousand times told,
And eke my lady Rosial the shene,
Which hath in comfort set mine herte iwene.

" And here I make mine protestacion,
And depely swere as mine power to bene
Faithful, deuoide of variacion,
And her forbeare in anger or in tene,
And seruiceable to my worldes quene,
With al my reason and intelligence,
To done her honour high and reuerence."

I had not spoke so sone the worde, but she,
My souerain, did thanke me hertely,
And said, " Abide ye shall dwell still with me,
Till season come of May, for than truly,
The king of loue and all his company,
Shall hold his feste full rially and well,"
And there I bode till that the season fell.

On May day whan the larke began to rise,
To matens went the lusty nightingale,
Within a temple shapen hauthorn wise,
He might not slepe in all the nightertale,
But " Domine labia," gan he cry and gale,
" My lippes open lord of loue I cry,
And let my mouth thy preising now bewry,"

The egle sang " Venite bodies all,
And let vs joy to loue that is our health,"
And to the deske anon they gan to fall,
And who came late he preced in by stealth:
Than sayd the faucon our own hertes wealth,
" Domine Dominus noster I wote,
Ye be the God that done vs brenne thus hote."

" Cœli enarrant," said the popingay,
" Your might is told in Heauen and firmanent,"
And than came in the gold finch freshe and gay,
And said this psalme with hertily glad intent
" Domini est terra," this laten intent,
The God of loue hath yerth in gouernaunce:
And than the wren gan scippen and to daunce.

" Jube Domino O lord of loue, I pray
Commaund me well this lesson for to rede,
This legende is of all that woulden dey
Marters for loue, God yet the souls spede:
And to thee Uenus sing we out of drede,
By influence of all thy vertue great,
Besechyng thee to keepe vs in our heat."

The second lesson robin redebrest sang,
" Haile to the god and goddes of our lay,"
And to the lectorn amorously he sprong,
" Haile now," (quod eke) " O fresh season of May,
Our moneth glad that singen on the spray,
Haile to the floures, rede, and white, and blewe,
Which by their vertue maketh our lust new."

The third lesson the turtil doue toke up,
And thereat lough the mauis in a scorne,
He said, " O God, as mote I dine or suppe,
This folish doue will giue us al an horne,
There ben right here a M better borne,
To rede this lesson, which as well as he,
And eke as hote, can loue in all degree."

The turtil doue said, " Welcom, welcom May,
Gladsom and light to louers that ben trew:
I thanke thee lord of loue that doth puruey,
For me to rede this lesson al of dewe,
For in good soth of corage I pursue,
To serue my make till death vs must depart,"
And than " Tu autem" sang he all apart.

" Te deum amoris" sang the thrustel cocke,
Tuball himselfe the first musician,
With key of armony coude not on locke,
So swete tewne as that the thrustel can:
" The lorde of loue we praysen," (quod he) than,
And so done al the foules great and lite,
" Honour we May, in fals louers dispite."

" Dominus regnauit," said the pecocke there,
The lord of loue that mighty prince iwis,
He is receyued here and euery where:
Now Iubilate sing:"—" What meaneth this?"
Said than the linet; " welcome lord of blisse:"
Out sterte the owle with " Benedicite,"
" What meaneth all this mery fare" (quod he)

" Laudate," sang the larke with voice ful shril,
And eke the kight " O admirabile,
This quere wil thorow mine ears pers and thril,
But what, welcome this May season," (quod he)
" And honour to the lord of loue mote be,
That hath this feste so solempne and so hie,"
" Amen," said al, and so said eke the pie.

And forth the cockow gan procede anon,
With " Benedictus" thanking God in hast,
That in this May would visite them echon,
And gladden them all while the feast shal last:
And therewithal a laughter out he brast,
" I thanke it God that I shuld end the song,
And all the seruice which hath ben so long."

Thus sang they all the seruice of the fest,
And that was done right erly to my dome,
And forth goth all the court both most and lest,
To fetch the floures fresh, and braunch and blome,
And namely hauthorn brought both page and grome
With fresh garlants party blew and white,
And than rejoysen in their great delite.

Eke ech at other threw the floures bright,
The primerose, the violete, and the gold,
So than as I beheld the royall sight,
My lady gan me sodenly behold,
And with a trewe loue plited many a fold:
She smote me through the very heart as bliue,
And Uenus yet I thanke I am aliue.

EXPLICIT.

CHAUCER'S DREAM,

NEVER PRINTED BEFORE THE YEAR 1597.

THAT WHICH HERETOFORE HATH GONE UNDER THE NAME OF HIS DREAM, IS THE BOOK OF THE DUTCHESS: OR THE DEATH OF BLANCH, DUTCHESS OF LANCASTER.

This Dream, devised by Chaucer, seemeth to be a covert report of the marriage of John of Gaunt the king's son, with Blanch the daughter of Henry duke of Lancaster, who, after long love, (during the time whereof the poet feigneth them to be dead) were in the end by consent of friends happily married: figured by a bird bringing in her bill an herb which restored them to life again. Here also is shewed Chaucer's match with a certain gentlewoman, who, although she was a stranger, was notwithstanding so well liked and loved of the lady Blanch and her lord, as Chaucer himself also was, that gladly they concluded a marriage between them. [All this says Tyrwhitt is a mere fancy, but there is no ground for doubting the authenticity of the poem.]

WHAN Flora the queene of pleasaunce,
Had whole achieued thobeysaunce
Of the fresh and new season,
Thorow out euery region,
And with her mantle whole couert
That winter made had discouert,
Of auenture without light,
In May I lay vpon a night
Alone, and on my lady thought,
And how the lord that her wrought,
Couth well entayle in imagery
And shewed had great maistry,
Whan he in so little space
Made such a body and a face,
So great beauty with swich features
More than in other creatures,
And in my thoughts as I lay
In a lodge out of the way,
Beside a well in a forest,
Where after hunting I tooke rest,
Nature and kind so in me wrought,
That halfe on sleepe they me brought,
And gan to dreame to my thinking,
With mind of knowliche like making,
For what I dreamed as me thought
I saw it, and I slept nought,
Wherefore is yet my full beleeue,
That some good spirit that eue,
By meane of some curious port,
Bare me, where I saw payne and sport,

But whether it were I woke or slept,
Well wot I of, I lough and wept,
Wherefore I woll in remembraunce,
Put whole the payne, and the pleasaunce,
Which was to me axen and hele,
Would God ye wist it euery dele,
Or at the least, ye might o night
Of such another haue a sight,
Although it were to you a payne,
Yet on the morow ye would be fayne,
And wish it might long dure,
Than might ye say ye had good cure,
For he that dreames, and wenes he see,
Much the better yet may hee
Wit what, and of whom, and where,
And eke the lasse it woll hindere,
To thinke I see this with mine eene,
Iwis this may not dreame kene,
But signe or signifiaunce,
Of hasty thing souning pleasaunce,
For on this wise vpon a night,
As ye haue heard without light,
Not all wakyng, ne full on sleepe
About such houre as louers weepe.
And cry after their ladies grace,
Befell me this wonder cace,
Which ye shall heare all the wise,
So wholly as I can deuise,
In playne English euill written,
For sleepe writer well ye witten,
Excused is, though he do mis,
More than one that waking is,
Wherefore here of your gentilnesse,
I you requyre my boistousnesse
Ye let passe, as thing rude
And heareth what I woll conclude,
And of the endityng taketh no heed,
Ne of the tearmes so God you speed,
But let all passe as nothing were,
For thus befell, as you shall here.
Within an yle me thought I was,
Where wall, and yate was all of glasse,
And so was closed round about,
That leauelesse none come in ne out,
Uncouth and straunge to behold,
For euery yate of fine gold,
A thousand fanes, aie turning,
Entuned had, and briddes singing,
Diuers, and on each fane a paire,
With open mouth again thaire,
And of a sute were all the toures,
Subtily coruen after floures,
Of vncouth colours during aye,
That neuer been none seene in May,
With many a small turret hie,
But man on line could I non sie,
Ne creatures, saue ladies play,
Which were such of theyr array,
That as me thought of goodlihead,
They passeden all, and womanhead,
For to behold them daunce and sing,
It seemed like none earthly thing,
Such was their vncouth countinaunce,
In euery play of right vsaunce,
And of one age euerichone,
They seemed all saue onely one,
Which had of yeeres suffisaunce,
For she might neyther sing ne daunce,
But yet her countenaunce was so glad,
As she so fewe yeeres had had,
As any lady that was there
And as little it did her dere,
Of lustines to laugh and tale
As she had full stuffed a male
Of disports and new playes:
Fayre had she been in her daies,
And maistresse seemed well to be,
Of all that lusty companie,
And so she might I you ensure
For one the conningest creature
She was, and so said euerichone,
That euer her knew, there fayled none,
For she was sober, and well auised,
And from euery fault disguised,
And nothing vsed but faith and truth,
That she nas young it was great ruth,
For euery where and in ech place,
She gouerned her, that in grace
She stode alway with poore and riche,
That at a word was none her liche,
Ne halfe so able maistres to be,
To such a lusty companie.
Befell me so, when I auised
Had, the yle that me suffised,
And whole the state euery where,
That in that lusty yle was there,
Which was more wonder to deuise,
Than the joieux paradise,
I dare well say, for floure ne tree,
Ne thing wherein pleasaunce might bee,
There fayled none, for euery wight,
Had they desired, day and night,
Riches, heale, beauty, and ease,
With euery thing that them might please,
Thinke and haue, it cost no more,
In such a country there before,
Had I not bene ne heard tell,
That lives creature might dwell,
And when I had thus all about,
The yle auised throughout,
The state, and how they were arayed,
In my heart I were well payed,
And in my selfe I me assured,
That in my body I was well ured,
Sith I might haue such a grace,
To see the ladies and the place,
Which were so faire I you ensure,
That to my dome though that nature,
Would euer striue and do her paine,
She should not con ne mow attaine,
The least feature to amend,
Though she would all her conning spend,
That to beauty might auaile,
It were but paine and lost trauaile,
Such part in their natiuity,
Was them alarged of beauty,
And eke they had a thing notable,
Unto their death, ay durable,
And was, that their beauty should dure,
Which was neuer seene in creature,
Saue onely there (as I trow)
It hath not be wist ne know,
Wherefore I praise with their conning,
That during beauty, rich thing,
Had they been of their liues certaine,
They had been quite of euery paine,
And when I wend thus all haue seene,
The state, the riches, that might beene,
That me thought impossible were,
To see one thing more than was there,

That to beauty or glad conning,
Serue or auaile might any thing.
All sodainly as I there stood,
This lady that couth so much good,
Unto me came with smiling chere,
And said "Benedicite, this yere
Saw I neuer man here but you,
Tell me how ye come hider now?
And your name, and where ye dwell?
And whom ye seeke eke mote ye tell,
And how ye come be to this place,
The soth well told may cause you grace,
And else ye mote prisoner be,
Unto the ladies here, and me,
That haue the gouernaunce of this yle:"
And with that word she gan to smile,
And so did all the lusty rout
Of ladies that stood her about.
"Madame," (quod I) "this night past,
Lodged I was and slept fast,
In a forest beside a well,
And now am here, how should I tell,
Wot I not, by whose ordinance,
But onely Fortunes purueiance,
Which puts many as I gesse,
To trauaile, paine, and businesse,
And lettes nothing for their truth,
But some sleeth eke, and that is ruth,
Wherefore I doubt her brittilnes,
Her variance and vnsteadfastnes,
So that I am as yet afraid,
And of my beying here amaid,
For wonder thing seemeth me,
Thus many fresh ladies to see,
So faire, so cunning, and so yong,
And no man dwelling them among:
Not I not how I hider come,
Madame," (quod I) "this all and some,
What should I faine a long processe
To you that seeme such a princesse,
What please you commaund or say,
Here I am you to obay,
To my power, and all fulfill,
And prisoner bide at your will,
Till you duly enformed be,
Of euery thing ye aske me."
This lady there right well apaid,
Me by the hand tooke, and said,
"Welcome prisoner aduenturus,
Right glad am I ye haue said thus,
And for ye doubt me to displease,
I will assay to do you ease:"
And with that word, ye anon,
She, and the ladies euerichon
Assembled, and to counsaile went,
And after that soone for me sent,
And to me said on this manere,
Word for word, as ye shall here.
"To see you here vs thinke maruaile,
And how without bote or saile,
By any subtilty or wyle,
Ye get haue entre in this yle,
But not for that, yet shall ye see,
That we gentill women bee,
Loth to displease any wight,
Notwithstanding our great right,
And for ye shall well vnderstond
The old custome of this lond,
Which hath continued many yere,
Ye shall well wete that with vs here
Ye may not bide, for causes twaine,
Which we be purposed you to saine.
"Thone is this, our ordinance,
Which is of long continuance,
Woll not, sothly we you tell,
That no man here among vs dwell,
Wherefore ye mote needs retourne,
In no wise may you here sojourne.
"Thother is eke, that our queene
Out of the realme, as ye may seene,
Is, and may be to vs a charge,
If we let you goe here at large,
For which cause the more we doubt,
To doe a fault while she is out,
Or suffer that may be noysaunce,
Againe our old accustomaunce."
And whan I had these causes twaine
Heard, O God what a paine
All sodainly about mine herte,
There came at ones and how smart,
In creeping soft as who should steale,
Or doe me robbe of all mine heale,
And made me in my thought so fraid,
That in courage I stode dismaid.
And standing thus, as was my grace,
A lady came more than apace,
With huge prease her about,
And told how the queene without
Was ariued and would come in,
Well were they that thider might twin,
They hied so they would not abide,
The bridling their horse to ride,
By fiue, by sixe, by two, by three,
There was not one abode with me,
The queene to meet euerichone,
They went, and bode with me not one,
And I after a soft pase,
Imagining how to purchase
Grace of the queene, there to bide,
Till good fortune some happy guide
Me send might, that would me bring
Where I was borne to my wonning,
For way ne foot knew I none,
Ne witherward I nist to gone,
For all was sea about the yle,
No wonder though me list not smile,
Seeing the case vncouth and straunge,
And so in like a perilous chaunge,
Imagining thus walking alone,
I saw the ladies euerichone,
So that I might somwhat offer,
Sone after that I drew me nere,
And tho I was ware of the queene,
And how the ladies on their kneene,
With joyous words, gladly aduised,
Her welcomed so that it suffised,
Though she princes hole had be,
Of all enuironed is with see:
And thus auising, with chere sad,
All sodainly I was glad,
That greater joy as mote I thriue,
I trow had neuer man on liue,
Than I tho, ne heart more light,
Whan of my lady I had sight,
Which with the queene come was there,
And in one clothing both they were,
A knight also there well beseene,
I saw that come was with the queene,
Of whome the ladies of that yle
Had huge wonder long while,

Till at the last right soberly,
The queene her selfe full cunningly,
With soft words in good wise,
Said to the ladies young and nise,
" My sisters how it hath befall,
I trow ye know it one and all,
That of long time here haue I beene,
Within this yle biding as queene,
Liuing at ease, that neuer wight
More parfit joy haue ne might,
And to you been of gouernance,
Such as you found in whole pleasance,
In euery thing as ye know,
After our custome and our low,
Which how they first found were,
I trow ye wote all the manere,
And who queene is of this yle,
As I haue been long while,
Ech seuen yeeres not of vsage,
Uisit the heauenly armitage,
Which on a rocke so high stonds,
In strange sea out from all londs,
That to make the pilgrimage
Is called a long perilous viage,
For if the wind be not good frend,
The journey dures to the end
Of him that it vndertakes,
Of twenty thousand one not scapes,
Upon which rock growth a tree,
That certaine yeeres beares apples three,
Which three apples who may haue,
Been from all displeasaunce saue,
That in the seuen yeere may fall,
This wote you well one and all,
For the first apple and the next,
Which growth vnto you next,
Hath three vertues notable,
And keepeth youth aie durable,
Beauty and looke, euer in one,
And is the best in euerichone,
" The second apple red and grene,
Only with lookes of your yene,
You nourishes in pleasaunce,
Better than partidge or fesaunce,
And feeds euery liues wight
Pleasantly with the sight.
" The third apple of the three,
Which groweth lowest on the tree,
Who it beares may not faile,
That to his pleasaunce may auaile,
So your pleasure and beauty rich,
Your during youth euer liche,
Your truth, your cunning, and your weale,
Hath aye floured, and your good heale,
Without sicknes or displeasaunce,
Or thing that to you was noysaunce,
So that you haue as goddesses,
Liued aboue all princesses:
Now is befall as ye may see,
To gather these said apples three,
I haue not failed againe the day,
Thitherward to take the way,
Wening to speed as I had oft,
But whan I come, I find aloft
My sister which that here stands,
Hauing those apples in her hands,
Auising them and nothing said,
But looked as she were well paid:
And as I stood her to behold,
Thinking how my joyes were cold,
Sith I those apples haue ne might,
Euen with that socame this knight,
And in his armes of me aware,
Me tooke, and to his ship me bare,
And said, though him I neuer had seen,
Yet had I long his lady been,
Wherefore I should with him wend,
And he would to his liues end
My seruaunt be, and gan to sing
As one that had wonne a rich thing,
Tho were my spirits fro me gone,
So sodainly euerichone,
That in me appeared but death,
For I felt neither life ne breath,
Ne good ne harme none I knew,
The sodaine paine me was so new,
That had not the hasty grace be
Of this lady, that fro the tree
Of her gentilnesse so hied
Me to comfort, I had died,
And of her three apples, one
In mine hand there put anone,
Which brought againe mind and breath,
And me recouered from the death,
Wherefore to her so am I hold;
That for her all things do I wold,
For she was lech of all my smart,
And from great paine so quite mine hart,
And as God wote, right as ye heare,
Me to comfort with friendly cheare,
She did her prowesse and her might,
And truly eke so did this knight,
In that he couth, and oft said,
That of my wo he was ill paid,
And cursed the ship that them there brought,
The mast, the master that it wrought,
And as ech thing mote haue an end,
My sister here your brother frend,
Con with her words so womanly
This knight entreat, and conningly,
For mine honour and his also,
And said that with her we should go
Both in her ship, where she was brought,
Which was so wonderfully wrought,
So cleane, so rich, and so araid,
That we were both content and paid,
And me to comfort and to please,
And mine herte to put at ease,
She toke great paine in little while,
And thus hath brought vs to this yle,
As ye may see, wherfore echone,
I pray you thanke her one and one,
As heartily as ye can deuise,
Or imagine in any wise,"
At once there tho men might seen
A world of ladies fall on kneen
Before my lady that there about
Was left none standing in the rout,
But altogither they went at ones
To kneele, they spared not for the stones,
Ne for estate, ne for their blood,
Well shewed there they couth much good,
For to my lady they made such feast,
With such words, that the least,
So friendly and so faithfully
Said was, and so cunningly,
That wonder was seing their youth,
To here the language they couth,
And wholly how they gouerned were,
In thanking of my lady there,

And said by will and maundement,
They were at her commaundement,
Which was to me as great a joy,
As winning of the towne of Troy
Was to the hardy Greekes strong,
Whan they it wan with siege long,
To see my lady in such a place,
So receiued as she was,
And whan they talked had a while
Of this and that, and of the yle,
My lady, and the ladies there,
Altogether as they were,
The queene her selfe began to play,
And to the aged lady say:
" Now seemeth you not good it were,
Sith we be altogither here,
To ordaine and deuise the best,
To set this knight and me at rest,
For woman is a feble wight,
To rere a warre against a knight,
And sith he here is in this place,
At my list, danger, or grace,
It were to me great villany,
To do him any tiranny,
But faine I would, now will ye here,
In his owne country that he were,
And I in peace, and he at ease,
This were a way vs both to please,
If it might be, I you beseech,
With him hereof you fall in speech."
This lady tho began to smile,
Auising her a little while,
And with glad chere she said anone,
" Madam I will vnto him gone,
And with him speake, and of him fele
What he desires euery dele:"
And soberly this lady tho,
Her selfe and other ladies two
She tooke with her, and with sad chere,
Said to the knight on this mauere,
" Sir, the princes of this yle,
Whom for your pleasance many mile,
Ye sought haue, as I vnderstond,
Till at the last ye haue her fond,
Me sent hath here, and ladies twaine,
To heare all thing that ye saine,
And for what cause ye haue her sought,
Faine would she wote, and whol your thought,
And why you do her all this wo,
And for what cause you be her fo,
And why of euery wight vnware,
By force ye to your ship her bare,
That she so nigh was agone,
That mind ne speech had she none,
But as a painfull creature,
Dying, abode her aduenture,
That her to see indure that paine,
Here weell say vnto you plaine,
Right on your selfe ye did amisse,
Seing how she a princes is."
This knight the which cowth his good,
Right of his truth meued his blood,
That pale he woxe as any lead,
And lookt as he would be dead,
Blood was there none in nother cheke,
Worldlesse he was and semed sicke,
And so it proued well he was,
For without mouing any paas,
All sodainely as thing dying,
He fell at once downe sowning,
That for his wo, this lady fraid,
Unto the queene her hyed and said,
" Cometh on anon as haue you blisse,
But ye be wise, thing is amisse,
This knight is dead or will be soone,
Lo where he lyeth in a swoone,
Without word, or answering
To that I haue said, any thing:
Wherefore I doubt, that the blame,
Might be hindering to your name,
Which floured hath so many yere,
So long, that for nothing here,
I would in no wise he dyed,
Wherefore good were that ye hyed,
His life to saue at the least,
And after that his wo be ceast,
Commaund him void, or dwell,
For in no wise dare I more mell
Of thing wherein such peril is,
As like is now to fall of this."
This queene right tho full of great feare,
With all the ladies present there,
Unto the knight came where he lay,
And made a lady to him say,
" Lo here the queene, awake for shame,
What will you doe, is this good game?
Why lye you here, what is your mind?
Now is well seene your wit is blind,
To see so many ladies here,
And ye to make none other chere,
But as ye set them all at nought,
Arise, for his loue that you bought:"
But what she said, a word not one
He spake, ne answer gaue her none.
The queene of very pitty tho,
Her worship, and his like also,
To saue there she did her paine,
And quoke for feare, and gan to saine
For woe, " Alas what shall I doe,
What shall I say this man vnto,
If he die here, lost is my name,
How shal I play this perillous game?
If any thing be here amisse,
It shall be said, it rigour is,
Whereby my name impayre might,
And like to die eke is this knight:"
And with that word her hand she laid
Upon his brest, and to him said,
" Awake my knight, lo it am I
That to you speake, now tell me why
Ye fare thus, and this paine endure,
Seing ye be in country sure,
Among such friends that would you heale,
Your hertes ease eke and your weale,
And if I wist what you might ease,
Or know the thing that you might please,
I you ensure it should not faile,
That to your heale you might auaile:
Wherefore with all my herte I pray
Ye rise, and let vs talke and play,
And see how many ladies here,
Be comen for to make good chere."
All was for nought, for still as stone,
He lay, and word spoke none,
Long while was or he might braid,
And of all that the queene had said,
He wist no word but at the last,
" Mercy," twise he cried fast,
That pitty was his voice to heare,
Or to behold his painefull cheare,

Which was not fained well was to sein,
Both by his visage and his eyn,
Which on the queene at once he cast,
And sighed as he would to brast,
And after that he shright so,
That wonder was to see his wo,
For sith that paine was first named,
Was neuer more wofull paine attained,
For with voice dead he gan to plaine,
And to himselfe these words saine,
" I wofull wight full of malure,
Am worse than dead, and yet dure,
Maugre any paine or death,
Against my will I fell my breath:
Why nam I dead sith I ne serue,
And sith my lady will me serue,
Where art thou Death art thou agast,
Well shall we meete yet at the last,
Though thou thee hide it is for nought,
For where thou dwelst thou shalt be sought,
Maugre thy subtill double face,
Here will I die right in this place,
To thy dishonour and mine ease,
Thy manner is no wight to please,
What needs thee sith I thee seche,
So thee to hide my paine to eche,
And well wost thou I will not liue,
Who would me all this world here giue,
For I haue with my cowardise,
Lost joy, and heale, and my seruise,
And made my soueraigne lady so,
That while she liues I trow my fo
She will be euer to her end,
Thus haue I neither joy ne frend,
Wote I not whether hast or sloth,
Hath caused this now by my troth,
For at the hermitage full hie,
Whan I her saw first with mine iye,
I hied till I was aloft,
And made my pace small and soft,
Till in mine armes I had her fast,
And to my ship bare at the last,
Whereof she was displeased so,
That endlesse there seemed her wo,
And I thereof had so great fere,
That me repent that I come there,
Which hast I trow gan her displease,
And is the cause of my disease:"
And with that word he gan to cry,
" Now Death, Death," twy or thry,
And motred wot I not what of slouth,
And euen with that the queene of routh,
Him in her armes tooke and said,
" Now mine owne knight be not euill apaid,
That I a lady to you sent,
To haue knowledge of your entent,
For in good faith I meant but well,
And would ye wist it euery dele,
Nor will not do to you ywis,"
And with that word she gan him kisse,
And prayed him rise, and said she would
His welfare by her truth, and told
Him how she was for his disease
Right sory, and faine would him please,
His life to saue: these words tho,
She said to him and many mo,
In comforting, for from the paine,
She would he were deliuered faine,
The knight tho vp cast his een,
And whan he saw it was the queen,
That to him had these words said,
Right in his wo he gan to braid,
And him vp dresses for to knele,
The queene auising wonder wele:
But as he rose he ouerthrew,
Wherefore the queene, yet eft anew
Him in her armes anon tooke,
And pitiously gan on him looke,
But for all that nothing she said,
Ne spake not like she were well paid,
Ne no chere made, nor sad, ne light,
But all in one to euery wight,
There was seene, conning, with estate,
In her without noise or debate,
For saue onely a looke piteous,
Of womanhead vndispiteous,
That she showed in countenance,
For seemed her herte from obeisance,
And not for that she did her reine,
Him to recure from the peine,
And his herte to put at large,
For her entent was to his barge
Him to bring against the eue,
With certaine ladies and take leue,
And pray him of his gentilnesse,
To suffer her thenceforth in peace,
As other princes had before,
And from thenceforth for euermore,
She would him worship in all wise,
That gentilnesse might deuise,
And paine her wholly to fulfill,
In honour, his pleasure and will.
And during thus this knights wo,
Present the queene and other mo,
My lady and many another wight,
Ten thousand ships at a sight,
I saw come ouer the wawy flood,
With saile and ore, that as I stood
Them to behold, I gan marualle,
From whom might come so many a saile,
For sith the time that I was bore,
Such a nauy there before,
Had I not seene, we so arayed,
That for the sight my herte played
To and fro within my brest,
For joy, long was or it would rest,
For there was sailes full of floures,
After castels with huge toures,
Seeming full of armes bright,
That wonder lusty was the sight,
With large toppes, and mastes long,
Richly depeint and rear among,
At certaine times gan repaire
Small birds downe from thaire,
And on the ships bounds about,
Sate and song with voice full out,
Ballades and layes right joyously,
As they cowth in their harmony,
That you to write that I there see,
Mine excuse is it may not be,
For why, the matter were to long
To nanse the birds and write their song,
Whereof anon the tidings there
Unto the queene soone brought were,
With many alas, and many a doubt,
Shewing the ships there without,
Tho gan the aged lady weepe,
And said " Alas our joy on sleepe
Soone shall be brought, ye long or night,
For we discried been by this knight,

For certes it may none other be,
But he is of yond companie,
And they be come him here to seche,"
And with that word her failed speche,
" Without remedy we be destroid,"
Full oft said all, and gan conclude,
Holy at once at the last,
That best was, shit their yates fast,
And arme them all in good langage,
As they had done of old vsage,
And of fayre wordes make their shot,
This was their counsaile and the knot,
And other purpose tooke they none,
But armed thus forth they gone
Toward the walles of the yle,
But or they come there long while,
They met the great lord of boue,
That called is the god of loue,
That them auised with such chere,
Right as he with them angry were,
Auailed them not their walls of glasse,
This mighty lord let not to passe,
The shutting of their yates fast,
All they had ordaind was but wast,
For whan his ships had found land,
This lord anon with bow in hand,
Into this yle with huge prease,
Hied fast and would not cease,
Till he came there the knight lay,
Of queene ne lady by the way,
Tooke he no heed but forth past,
And yet all followed at the last,
And whan he came where lay the knight,
Well shewed he, he had great might,
And forth the queene called anone,
And all the ladies enerichone,
And to them said, " Is not thus routh,
To see my seruaunt for his trouth,
Thus leane, thus sicke, and in this paine,
And wot not vnto whom to plaine,
Saue onely one without mo,
Which might him heale and is his fo,
And with that word, his heauy brow
He shewed the queene and looked row,
This mighty lord forth tho anone,
With o looke her faults echone
He can her shew in little speech,
Commaunding her to be his leech,
Withouten more shortly to say
He thought the queene soone should obay,
And in his hond he shoke his bow,
And said right soone he would be know,
And for she had so long refused
His service, and his lawes not vsed,
He let her wit that he was wroth,
And bent his bow and forth he goth
A pace or two, and euen there
A large draught, vp to his eare
He drew, and with an arrow ground
Sharpe and new, the queene a wound
He gaue, that piersed vnto the herte,
Which afterward full sore gan smart,
And was not whole of many yeare,
And euen with that " Be of good cheare,
My knight," quod he, " I will thee hele,
And thee restore to parfite wele,
And for each paine thou hast endured,
To haue two joys thou art cured,"
And forth he past by the rout,
With sober cheare walking about,
And what he said I thought to heare,
Well wist he which his seruaunts were,
And as he passed anon he fond
My lady and her tooke by the hond,
And made her chere as a goddes,
And of beaute called her princes,
Of bounte eke gaue her the name,
And said there was nothing blame
In her, but she was vertuous,
Sauing she would no pity vse,
Which was the cause that he her sought,
To put that far out of her thought,
And sith she had whole richesse
Of womanhead, and friendlinesse,
He said it was nothing fitting,
To void pity his owne legging,
And gan her preach and with her play,
And of her beauty told her aie,
And said she was a creature,
Of whom the name should endure,
And in bookes full of pleasaunce
Be put for euer in remembraunce,
And as me thought more friendly
Unto my lady, and goodlely
He spake, than any that was there,
And for the appuls, I trow it were,
That she had in possession,
Wherefore long in procession,
Many a pace arme vnder other,
He welke, and so did with none other,
But what he would commaund or say,
Forthwith needs all must obay,
And what he desired at the lest,
Of my lady, was by request,
And whan they long together had beene,
He brought my lady to the queene,
And to her said, " So God you speed,
Shew graee, consent, that is need,"
My lady tho full conningly,
Right well auised, and womanly
Downe gan to kneele vpon the floures,
Which Aprill nourished had with shoures,
And to this mighty lord gan say,
" That pleaseth you, I woll obay,
And me restraine from other thought,
As ye wolt all thyng shall be wrought,"
And with that word kneeling she quoke,
That mighty lord in armes her tooke,
And said " You haue a seruaunt one,
That truer liuing is there none,
Wherefore good were, seeing his trouth,
That on his paines ye had routh,
And purpose you to heare his speech,
Fully auised him to leech,
For of one thyng ye may be sure,
He will be yours, while he may dure,"
And with that word right on his game
Me thought he lough, and told my name,
Which was to me maruaile, and fere,
That what to do I nist there,
Ne whether was me bet or none,
There to abide, or thus to gone,
For well wend I my lady wold
Imagen, or deme, that I had told
My counsaile whole, or made complaint
Unto that lord, that mighty saint,
So verily, each thyng vnsought,
He said as he had knowne my thought,
And told my trouth and mine vnease,
Bet than I couth haue for mine ease,

Though I had studied all a weke,
Well wist that lord that I was seke,
And would be leched wonder faine,
No man me blame, mine was the paine:
And whan this lord had all said,
And long with my lady plaid,
She gan to smile with spirit glade,
This was the answere that she made,
Which put me there in double peine,
That what to do, ne what to seine
Wist I not, ne what was the best,
Ferre was my herte than fro his rest,
For as I thought, that smiling signe
Was token, that the herte encline
Would to requests reasonable,
Because smiling is favorable
To euery thing that shall thriue,
So thought I tho anon blive,
That wordlesse answere in no toun
Was tane for obligatioun,
Ne called surety in no wise,
Amongst them that called been wise.
Thus was I in a joyous dout,
Sure and vnsurest of that rout,
Right as mine herte thought it were,
So more or lesse wexe my fere,
That if one thought made it wele,
Another shent it euery dele,
Till at the last I couth no more,
But purposed as I did before,
To serue truly my liues space,
Awaiting euer the yeare of grace,
Which may fall yet or I sterue,
If it please her that I serue,
And serued haue, and woll do euer,
For thyng is none, that me is leuer,
Than her seruice, whose presence
Mine Heauen is whole, and her absence
An Hell, full of diuers paines,
Whych to the death full oft me straines,
Thus in my thoughts, as I stood,
That vnneth felt I harme ne good,
I saw the queene a little paas
Come where this mighty lord was,
And kneeled downe in presence there
Of all the ladies that there were,
With sober countenaunce auised,
In few words that well suffised,
And to this lord anon present
A bill, wherein whole her entent
Was written, and how she besought,
As he knew euery will and thought,
That of his godhead and his grace
He would forgyue all old trespace,
And vndispleased be of time past,
For she would euer be stedfast,
And in his seruice to the death
Use euery thought while she had breath,
And sight and wept, and said no more,
Within was written all the sore:
At whych bill the lord gan smyle,
And said he would within that yle
Be lord and syre, both east and west,
And cald it there his new conquest,
And in great councell tooke the queene,
Long were the tales them betweene,
And ouer her bill he read thrise,
And wonder gladly gan deuise
Her features faire, and her visage,
And bad good thrift on that image,

And sayd he trowed her compleint
Should after cause her be corseint,
And in his sleeue he put the bill,
Was there none that knew his will,
And forth he walke apace about,
Beholding all the lusty rout,
Halfe in a thought with smiling chere,
Till at the last, as ye shall here,
He turned vnto the queene ageine,
And said, " To morne, here in this pleine,
I woll ye be, and all yours,
That purposed ben to weare flours,
Or of my lusty colour vse,
It may not be to you excuse,
Ne none of yours in no wise,
That able be to my seruise,
For as I said haue here before,
I will be lord for euermore
Of you, and of this yle, and all,
And of all yours, that have shall
Joy, peace, ease, or in pleasaunce
Your liues vse without noysaunce;
Here will I in state be seene,"
And turned his visage to the queene,
" And you giue knowledge of my will,
And a full answere of your bill,"
Was there no nay, ne words none,
But very obeisaunt seemed echone,
Queene and other that were there,
Well seemed it they had great fere,
And there tooke lodging euery night,
Was none departed of that night,
And some to read old romances,
Them occupied for their pleasances,
Some to make verelaies, and laies,
And some to other diuerse plaies:
And I to me a romance tooke,
And as I reading was the booke,
Me thought the sphere had so run,
That it was rising of the Sun,
And such a prees into the plaine
Assemble gone, that with great paine
One might for other go ne stand,
Ne none take other by the hand,
Withouten they distourbed were,
So huge and great the prees was there.
And after that within two houres,
This mighty lord all in floures
Of diuers colours many a paire,
In his estate vp in the aire,
Well two fathom, as his hight,
He set him there in all their sight,
And for the queene and for the knight,
And for my lady, and euery wight,
In hast he sent, so that neuer one
Was there absent, but come echone:
And whan they thus assembled were,
As ye haue heard me say you here,
Without more tarrying on hight,
There to be seene of euery wight,
Up stood among the prees aboue
A counsayler, seruaunt of Loue,
Which seemed well, of great estate,
And shewed there, how no debate
Owe ne goodly might be vsed
In gentilnesse, and be excused,
Wherefore he said, his lords will,
Was euery wight there should be still,
And in pees, and one accord,
And thus commaunded at a word,

And can his tongue to swiche language
Turne, that yet in all mine age
Heard I neuer so conningly
Man speake, ne halfe so faithfully,
For euery thing he said there,
Seemed as it inseuled were,
Or approued for very trew:
Swiche was his cunning language new,
And well according to his chere,
That where I be, me thinke I here
Him yet alway, whan I mine one
In any place may be alone:
First con he of the lusty yle
All thastate in little while
Rehearse, and wholly euery thing,
That caused there his lords comming,
And euery wele and euery wo,
And for what cause ech thing was so,
Well shewed he there in easie speech,
And how the sicke had need of leech:
And that whole was, and in grace,
He told plainly why each thing was,
And at the last he con conclude,
Voided euery language rude,
And said, "That prince, that mighty lord,
Or his departing, would accord
All the parties there present,
And was the fine of his entent,
Witnesse his presence in your sight,
Which sits among you in his might:"
And kneeled downe withouten more,
And not o word spake he more.
Tho gan this mighty lord him dresse,
With cheare auised, to do largesse,
And said vnto this knight and me,
"Ye shall to joy restored be,
And for ye haue ben true ye twaine,
I graunt you here for euery paine
A thousand joys euery weeke,
And looke ye be no lenger seeke.
And both your ladies, lo hem here,
Take ech his own, beeth of good chere,
Your happy day is new begun,
Sith it was rising of the Sun;
And to all other in this place,
I graunt wholly to stand in grace,
That serueth truely, without slouth,
And to auaunced be by trouth."
Tho can this knight, and I downe kneele,
Wening to doe wonder wele,
"Seeing O Lord your great mercy,
Us hath enriched, so openly,
That we deserue may neuer more,
The least part, but euermore
With soule and body truely serue
You and yours till we sterue."
And to their ladies there they stood;
This knight that couth so mikel good,
Went in hast, and I also,
Ioyous, and glad were we tho;
And also rich in euery thought,
As he that all hath and ought nought,
And them besought in humble wise,
Us taccept to their seruice,
And shew vs of their friendly cheares,
Which in their treasure many yeares,
They kept had, vs to great paine,
And told how their seruants twaine,
Were and would be, and so had euer,
And to the death chaunge would we neuer,
Ne doe offence, ne thinke like ill,
But fill their ordinance and will:
And made our othes fresh new,
Our old seruice to renew,
And wholly theirs for euermore,
We there become, what might we more,
And well awaiting, that in slouth,
We made ne fault, ne in our trouth,
Nè thought not do, I you ensure,
With our will, where we may dure.
This season past, againe an eue,
This lord of the queene tooke leue,
And said he would hastely returne,
And at good leisure there sojourne,
Both for his honour, and for his ease,
Commaunding fast, the knight to please,
And gaue his statutes in papers,
And ordent diuers officers,
And forth to ship the same night
He went, and soone was out of sight.
And on the morrow whan the aire
Attempred was, and wonder faire,
Early at rising of the Sun,
After the night away was run,
Playing vs on the riuage,
My lady spake of her voyage,
And said she made small journies,
And held her in straunge countries,
And forthwith to the queene went,
And shewed her wholly her entent,
And tooke her leaue with cheare weeping;
That pitty was to see that parting:
For to the queene it was a paine,
As to a martyr new yslaine,
That for her woe, and she so tender,
Yet I weepe oft whan I remember,
She offerd there to resigne,
To my lady eight times or nine,
Thastate, the yle, shortly to tell,
If it might please her there to dwell,
And said, for euer her linage,
Should to my lady doe homage,
And hers be hole withouten more,
Ye, and all theirs for euermore:
"Nay God forbid," my lady oft,
With many conning word and soft,
Seid, "that euer such thing should beene,
That I consent should, that a queene
Of your estate, and so well named,
In any wise should be attamed:
But would be faine with all my herte,
What so befell, or how me smert,
To doe thing that you might please,
In any wise, or be your ease,"
And kissed there, and bad good night,
For which leue wept many a wight,
There might men here my lady praised,
And such a name of her araised,
What of cunning and friendlinesse,
What of beauty with gentilnesse,
What of glad and friendly cheares,
That she vsed in all her yeares,
That wonder was here euery wight
To say well, how they did their might,
And with a prees vpon the morrow,
To ship her brought, and what a sorrow
They made, whan she should vnder saile,
That and ye wist, ye would merualle.
Forth goeth the ship, out goeth the sond,
And I as wood man vnbond,

For doubt to be behind there,
Into the sea withouten fere,
Anon I ran, till with a waw,
All sodenly I was ouerthraw,
And with the water to and fro,
Backward and forward trauailed so,
That mind and breath, nigh was gone,
For good ne harme knew I none,
Til at the last with hookes tweine,
Men of the ship with mikel peine,
To saue my life, did such trauaile,
That and ye wist ye would mervaile,
And in the ship me drew on hie,
And saiden all that I would die,
And laid me long downe by the mast,
And of their clothes on me cast,
And there I made my testament,
And wist my selfe not what I ment,
But whan I said had what I would,
And to the mast my wo all told,
And tane my leaue of euery wight,
And closed mine eyen, and lost my sight,
Auised to die, without more speech,
Or any remedy to seech
Of grace new, as was great need:
My lady of my paine tooke heed,
And her bethought how that for trouth
To see me die it were great routh,
And to me came in sober wise,
And softly said, " I pray you rise,
Come on with me, let be this fare,
All shall be wel, haue ye no care,
I will obey ye and fulfill
Holy in all that lords will,
That you and me not long ago,
After his list commaunded so,
That there againe no resistence
May be without great offence,
And therefore now what I say,
I am and will be friendly aye,
Rise vp behold this auauntage,
I graunt you inheritage,
Peaceably without striue,
During the daies of your liue,"
And of her apples in my sleue
One she put, and took her leue
In words few and said, " Good hele,
He that all made you send and wele,"
Wherewith my paines all at ones
Tooke such leaue, that all my bones,
For the new durense pleasaunce,
So was they couth, desired to daunce,
And I as whole as any wight,
Up rose with joyous herte and light,
Hole and vnsicke, right wele at ease,
And all forget had my disease,
And to my lady where she plaid,
I went anone, and to her said:
" He that all joies persons to please
First ordained with parfite case,
And euery pleasure can depart,
Send you madame, as large a part,
And of his goods such plenty,
As he has done you of beauty,
With hele and all that may be thought,
He send you all as he all wrought:
Madame" (quoth I) " your seruaunt trew,
Haue I ben long, and yet will new,
Without chaunge or repentaunce,
In any wise or variaunce,
And so will do as thriue I euer,
For thing is none that me is leuer
Than you to please, how euer I fare,
Mine hertes lady and my welfare,
My life, mine hele, my lech also,
Of euery thing that doth me wo,
My helpe at need, and my surete
Of euery joy that longs to me,
My succours whole in all wise,
That may be thought or man deuise,
Your grace madame such haue I found,
Now in my need that I am bound
To you for euer so Christ me saue,
For heale and liue of you I haue,
Wherefore is reasoun I you serue,
With due obeisaunce till I sterue,
And dead and quicke be euer yours,
Late, early, and at all hours,"
Tho came my lady small alite,
And in plaine English con consite
In words few, whole her entent
She shewed me there, and how she ment
To meward in euery wise,
Wholly she came at their deuise,
Without processe or long trauell,
Charging me to keepe counsell,
As I would to her grace attaine,
Of which commaundement I was faine.
Wherefore I passe ouer at this time,
For counsell cords not well in rime,
And eke the oth that I haue swore,
To breake, me were better vnbore,
Why for untrue for euermore
I should be hold, that neuermore
Of me in place should be report
Thing that auaile might, or comfort
To mewards in any wise,
And ech wight would me dispise
In that they couth, and me repreeue,
Which were a thing sore for to greeue,
Wherefore hereof more mencion
Make I not now ne long sermon,
But shortly thus I me excuse,
To rime a councell I refuse.
Sailing thus two dayes or three,
My lady towards her countree,
Ouer the waues high and greene,
Which were large and deepe betweene,
Upon a time me called and said,
That of my hele she was well paid,
And of the queene and of the yle,
She talked with me long while,
And of all that she there had seene,
And of the state, and of the queene,
And of the ladies name by name,
Two houres or mo, this was her game,
Till at the last the wind gan rise,
And blew so fast, and in such wise,
The ship that euery wight can say,
" Madame er eue be of this day,
And God tofore, ye shall be there,
As ye would fainest that ye were,
And doubt not within sixe hours,
Ye shall be there, as all is yours,"
At which words she gan to smile,
And said that was no long while,
That they her set, and vp she rose,
And all about the ship she gose,
And made good cheare to euery wight,
Till of the land she had a sight,

Of which sight glad God it wot,
She was abashed and aboot,
And forth goeth, shortly you to tell,
Where she accustomed was to dwell,
And receiued was as good right,
With joyous cheere and hertes light,
And as a glad new auenture,
Pleasaunt to euery creature,
With which landing tho I woke,
And found my chamber full of smoke,
My cheekes seke vnto the eares,
And all my body weat with teares,
And all so feeble and in such wise,
I was, that vneth might I rise,
So fare trauailed and so faint,
That neither knew I kirke ne saint,
Ne what was what, ne who was who,
Ne auised, what way I would go,
But by a venturous grace,
I rise and walkt, sought pace and pace,
Till I a winding staire found,
And held the vice aye in my hond,
And vpward softly so gan creepe,
Till I came where I thought to sleepe
More at mine ease, and out of preace,
At my good leisure, and in peace,
Till somewhat I recomfort were
Of the trauell and great feare
That I endured had before,
This was my thought without more,
And as a wight witlesse and faint,
Without more, in a chamber paint
Full of stories old and diuers,
More than I can now rehearse,
Unto a bed full soberly,
So as I might full sothly,
Pace after other, and nothing said,
Till at the last downe I me laid,
And as my mind would giue me leue,
All that I dreamed had that eue,
Before all I can rehearse,
Right as a child at schoole his verse
Doth after that he thinketh to thriue,
Right so did I for all my liue,
I thought to haue in remembraunce,
Both the paine and the pleasaunce,
The dreame whole, as it me befell,
Which was as ye here me tell,
Thus in my thoughts as I lay,
That happy or vnhappy day,
Wot I not so haue I blame,
Of the two, which is the naine:
Befell me so, that there a thought,
By processe new on sleepe me brought,
And me gouerned so in a while,
That againe within the yle,
Me thought I was, whereof the knight,
And of the ladies I had a sight,
And were assembled on a greene,
Knight and lady, with the queene,
At which assembly there was said,
How they all content and paid,
Were wholly as in that thing,
That the knight there should be king,
And they would all for sure witnesse
Wedded be both more and lesse,
In remembraunce without more,
Thus they consent for euermore,
And was concluded that the knight
Depart should the same night,
And forthwith there tooke his voiage,
To journey for his marriage,
And returne with such an host,
That wedded might be least and most,
This was concluded, written and sealed,
That it might not be repealed
In no wise but aie be firme,
And all should be within a tearme,
Without more excusation,
Both feast and coronation,
This knight which had thereof the charge,
Anon into a little barge,
Brought was late against an eue,
Where of all he tooke his leaue,
Which barge was as a mans thought,
After his pleasure to him brought,
The queene her selfe accustomed aye
In the same barge to play,
It needeth neither mast ne rother,
I haue not heard of such another,
No maister for the gouernaunce,
Hie sayled by thought and pleasaunce,
Without labour east and west,
All was one, calme, or tempest,
And I went with at his request,
And was the first prayed to the fest.
Whan he came in his countree,
And passed had the wauy see,
In an hauen deepe and large
He left his rich and noble barge,
And to the court shortly to tell,
He went, where he wont was to dwell,
And was receiued as good right,
As heire, and for a worthy knight,
With all the states of the lond,
Which came anon at his first sond,
With glad spirits full of trouth,
Loth to do fault or with a slouth,
Attaint be in any wise,
Their riches was their old seruise,
Which euer trew had be fond,
Sith first inhabit was the lond,
And so receiued there hir king,
That forgotten was no thing,
That owe to be done ne might please,
Ne their soueraine lord do ease,
And with them so shortly to say,
As they of custome had done aye,
For seuen yere past was and more,
The father, the old wise and hore
King of the land tooke his leue
Of all his barons on an eue,
And told them how his dayes past
Were all, and comen was the last,
And hertily prayed hem to remember
His sonne, which yong was and tender,
That borne was their prince to be,
If he returne to that countree
Might, by aduenture or grace,
Within any time or space,
And to be true and friendly aye,
As they to him had bene alway:
Thus he them prayd, without more,
And tooke his leaue for euermore.
Knowen was, how tender in age,
This young prince a great viage
Uncouth and straung, honours to seche,
Tooke in hond with little speeche,
Which was to seeke a princes,
That he desired more than riches,

For her great name that floured so,
That in that time there was no mo
Of her estate, ne so well named,
For borne was none that euer her blamed:
Of which princes somewhat before,
Here haue I spoke, and some will more.
So thus befell as ye shall heare,
Unto their lord they made such cheare,
That joy was there to be present
To see their troth and how they ment,
So very glad they were ech one,
That them among there was no one,
That desired more riches,
Than for their lord such a princes,
That they might please, and that were faire,
For fast desired they an heire,
And said great surety were ywis.
And as they were speaking of this,
The prince himselfe him auised,
And in plaine English vndisguised,
Them shewed hole his journey,
And of their counsell gan them prey,
And told how he ensured was,
And how his day he might not passe,
Without diffame and great blame,
And to him for euer shame,
And of their counsell and auise,
There he prayth them once or twise,
And that they would, within ten daies,
Auise and ordaine him such waies,
So that it were no displeasaunce,
Ne to this realme ouer great grieuaunce,
And that he haue might to his feast,
Sixty thousand at the least,
For his intent within short while
Was to returne vnto his yle
That he came fro, and kepe his day,
For nothing would he be away.
To counsaile tho the lords anon,
Into a chamber euerychone,
Together went, them to deuise,
How they might best and in what wise,
Purvey for their lords pleasaunce,
And the realmes continuaunce
Of honor, which in it before
Had continued euermore,
So at the last they found the waies,
How within the next ten daies,
All might with paine and diligence
Be done, and cast what the dispence
Might draw, and in conclusion,
Made for ech thing prouision.
Whan this was done, wholly tofore
The prince, the lords all before
Come, and shewed what they had done,
And how they couth by no reason
Find, that within the ten daies
He might depart by no waies,
But would be fifteene at the least,
Or he returne might to his feast:
And shewed him euery reason why
It might not be so hastily,
As he desired, ne his day
He might not keepe by no way,
For diuers causes wonder great:
Which whan he heard, in such an heat
He fell, for sorow and was seke,
Still in his bed whole that weke,
And nigh the tother for the shame,
And for the doubt, and for the blame
That might on him be aret,
And oft vpon his brest he bet,
And said, "Alas, mine honour for aye,
Haue I here lost cleane this day,
Dead would I be, alas my name
Shall aye be more henceforth in shame,
And I dishonoured and repreued,
And neuer more shall be beleeued:"
And made swich sorow, that in trouth,
Him to behold it was great routh:
And so endured the dayes fiftene,
Till that the lords on an euen
Him come, and told they ready were,
And shewed in few words there,
How and what wise they had purueyd
For his estate, and to him said,
That twenty thousand knights of name,
And fourty thousand without blame,
All come of noble ligine,
Togider in a compane,
Were lodged on a riuers side,
Him and his pleasure there tabide,
The prince tho for joy vp rose,
And where they lodged were, he goes
Without more that same night,
And these his supper made to dight,
And with them bode till it was dey,
And forthwith to take his journey,
Leuing the streight, holding the large,
Till he came to his noble barge,
And when this prince, this lusty knight
With his people in armes bright,
Was comen where he thought to pas,
And knew well none abiding was
Behind, but all were there present,
Forthwith anon all his intent
He told them there, and made his cries
Through his oste that day twise,
Commaunding euery liues wight,
There being present in his sight,
To be the morow on the riuage,
Where he begin would his viage,
The morrow come, the cry was kept,
Few was there that night that slept,
But trussed and purueied for the morrow,
For fault of ships was all their sorrow,
For saue the barge, and other two,
Of ships there saw I no mo:
Thus in their doubts as they stood,
Waxing the sea, comming the flood,
Was cried, "To ship goe euery wight,"
Than was but hie, that hie might,
And to the barge me thought echone
They went, without was left not one,
Horse, male, trusse, ne bagage,
Salad, speare, gard brace, ne page,
But was lodged and roome ynough,
At which shipping me thought I lough,
And gan to maruaile in my thought,
How euer such a ship was wrought,
For what people that can encrease,
Ne neuer so thicke might be the prease,
But all had roome at their will,
There was not one was lodged ill,
For as I trow, my selfe the last
Was one, and lodged by the mast,
And where I looked I saw such rome,
As all were lodged in a towne.
Forth goth the ship, said was the creed,
And on their knees for their good speed,

Downe kneeled euery wight a while,
And praied fast that to the yle
They might come in safety,
The prince and all the company,
With worship and without blame,
Or disclaunder of his name,
Of the promise he should retourne,
Within the time he did sojourne,
In his lond biding his host,
This was their prayer least and most,
To keepe the day it might not been,
That he appointed had with the queen,
To returne without slouth,
And so assured had his trouth,
For which fault this prince, this knight,
During the time slept not a night,
Such was his wo and his disease,
For doubt he should the queene displease.
Forth goeth the ship with such speed,
Right as the prince for his great need
Desire would after his thought,
Till it vnto the yle him brought,
Where in hast vpon the sand,
He and his people tooke the land,
With hertes glad, and chere light,
Weening to be in Heauen that night:
But or they passed a while,
Entring in toward that yle,
All clad in blacke with chere piteous,
A lady which neuer dispiteous
Had be in all her life tofore,
With sory chere, and herte to tore,
Unto this prince where he gan ride,
Come and said, "Abide, abide,
And haue no hast, but fast retourne,
No reason is ye here sojourne,
For your vntruth hath vs discried,
Wo worth the time we vs allied
With you, that are so soone vntrew,
Alas the day that we you knew,
Alas the time that ye were bore,
For all this lond by you is lore,
Accursed be he you hider brought,
For all your joy is turnd to nought,
Your acquaintance we may complaine,
Which is the cause of all our paine."
"Alas madame," quoth tho this knight
And with that from his horse he light,
With colour pale, and cheekes lene,
"Alas what is this for to mene,
What haue ye said, why be ye wroth,
You to displease I would be loth,
Know ye not well the promesse
I made haue to your princesse,
Which to perfourme is mine intent,
So mote I speed as I haue ment,
And as I am her very trew,
Without change or thought new,
And also fully her seruand,
As creature or man liuand
May be to lady or princesse,
For she mine Heauen, and whole richesse
Is, and the lady of mine heale,
My worlds joy and all my weale,
What may this be, whence coms this speech,
Tell me madame I you beseech,
For sith the first of my liuing,
Was I so fearfull of nothing,
As I am now to heare you speake,
For dout I feele mine herte breake:
Say on madame, tell me your will,
The remnaunt is it good or ill,"
"Alas" (quod she) "that ye were bore,
For, for your loue this land is lore,
The queene is dead and that is ruth,
For sorrow of your great vntruth,
Of two partes of the lusty rout,
Of ladies that were there about,
That wont were to talke and play,
Now are dead and cleane away,
And vnder earth tane lodging new,
Alas that euer ye were vntrew,
For whan the time ye set was past,
The queene to counsaile sone in hast,
What was to doe, and said great blame,
Your acquaintaunce cause would and shame,
And the ladies of their auise
Prayed, for need was to be wise,
In eschewing tales and songs,
That by them make would ill tongs,
And sey they were lightly conquest,
And prayed to a poore feast,
And foule had their worship weiued,
Whan so vnwisely they conceiued,
Their rich treasour, and their iuele,
Their famous name, and their weale,
To put in such an auenture,
Of which the sclaunder euer dure
Was like, without helpe of appele,
Wherefore they need had of counsele,
For euery wight of them would say,
Their closed yle an open way
Was become to euery wight,
And well appreued by a knight,
Which he alas without paysaunce,
Had soone acheued thobeisaunce:
All this was moued at counsell thrise,
And concluded daily twise,
That bet was die without blame,
Than lose the riches of their name,
Wherefore the deaths acquaintaunce
They chese, and left haue their pleasaunce,
For doubt to line as repreued,
In that they you so soone beleeued,
And made their othes with one accord,
That eat, ne drinke, ne speake word,
They shonld neuer, but euer weping
Bide in a place without parting,
And use their dayes in penaunce,
Without desire of allegeaunce,
Of which the truth anon con preue,
For why the queen forth with her leue
Toke at them all that were present,
Of her defauts fully repent,
And died there withouten more,
Thus are we lost for euermore,
What should I more hereof reherse,
Comen within come see her herse,
Where ye shall see the piteous sight,
That euer yet was shewen to knight,
For ye shall see ladies stond,
Eeh with a great rod in hond,
Clad in black with visage white,
Ready each other for to smite,
If any be that will not wepe,
Or who that makes countenaunce to slepe,
They be so bet, that all so blew
They be as cloth that died is new,
Such as their parfite repentance,
And thus they kepe their ordinance,

And will do euer to the death,
While them endures any breath."
This knight tho in armes twaine,
This lady tooke and gan her saine,
" Alas my birth, wo worth my life,"
And euen with that he drew a knife,
And through gowne, doublet, and shert,
He made the blood come from his herte,
And set him downe vpon the greene,
And full repent closed his eene,
And saue that ones he drew his breath,
Without more thus he tooke his death.
For which cause the lusty hoast,
Which in a battaile on the coast,
At once for sorrow such a cry
Gan rere thorow the company,
That to the Heaven heard was the sowne,
And vnder therth als fer adowne,
That wild beasts for the feare,
So sodainly afrayed were,
That for the doubt, while they might dure,
They ran as of their lives vnsure,
From the woods vnto the plaine,
And from the valleys the high mountaine
They sought, and ran as beasts blind,
That cleane forgotten had their kind.
This wo not ceased, to counsaile went
These lords, and for that lady sent,
And of anise what was to done,
They her besought she say would sone,
Weeping full sore all clad in blake,
This lady softly to them spake,
And said, " My lords by my trouth,
This mischiefe it is of your slouth,
And if ye had that judge would right,
A prince that were a very knight,
Ye that ben of astate echone,
Die for his fault should one and one,
And if he hold had the promesse,
And done that longs to gentilnesse,
And fulfilled the princes behest,
This hasty farme had bene a feast,
And now is vnrecouerable,
And vs a slaunder aye durable,
Wherefore I say as of counsaile,
In me is none that may auaile,
But if ye list for remembraunce,
Purvey and make such ordinaunce,
That the queene that was so meke,
With all her women dede or seke,
Might in your land a chappell haue,
With some remembraunce of her graue,
Shewing her end with the pity,
In some notable old city,
Nigh unto an high way,
Where euery wight might for her pray,
And for all hers that haue ben trew,"
And euen with that she changed hew,
And twise wished, after the death,
And sight, and thus passed her breath.
Than said the lords of the host,
And so conclude least and most,
That they would euer in houses of thacke,
Their liues lead, and weare but blacke,
And forsake all their pleasaunces,
And turn all joy to penaunces,
And beare the dead prince to the barge,
And named them should haue the charge,
And to the hearse where lay the queen,
The remnaunt went and down on kneen,
Holding their honds on high gon crie,
" Mercy, mercy," euerish thrie,
And cursed the time that euer slouth
Should haue such masterdome of trouth,
And to the barge a long mile,
They bare her forth, and in a while
All the ladies one and one,
By companies were brought echone,
And past the sea and tooke the land,
And in new herses on a sand,
Put and brought were all anon,
Unto a city closed with stone,
Where it had been vsed aye
The kings of the land to lay,
After they raigned in honours,
And writ was which were conquerours,
In an abbey of nunnes which were blake,
Which accustomed were to wake,
And of vsage rise ech a night,
To pray for euery liues wight,
And so befell as in the guise,
Ordeint and said was the seruise,
Of the prince and of the queen,
So deuoutly as might been,
And after that about the herses,
Many orisons and verses,
Without note full softely,
Said were and that full heartily,
That all the night till it was day
The people in the church con pray,
Unto the holy Trinity,
Of those soules to haue pity.
And whan the night past and ronne
Was, and the new day begonne,
The yong morrow with rayes red,
Which from the Sunne ouer all con spred,
Attempered clere was and faire,
And made a time of wholsome aire,
Befell a wonder case and strange,
Among the people and gan change
Soone the word and euery woo,
Unto a joy and some to two:
A bird all fedred blew and greene,
With bright rayes like gold betweene,
As small thred ouer euery joynt,
All full of colour strange and coint,
Uncouth and wonderfull to sight,
Upon the queens herse con light,
And song full low and softely,
Three songs in her harmony,
Unletted of every wight,
Till at the last an aged knight,
Which seemed a man in great thought,
Like as he set all thing at nought,
With visage and ein all forwept,
And pale, as man long vnslept,
By the herses as he stood,
With hasty handling of his hood,
Unto a prince that by him past,
Made the bridde somewhat agast,
Wherefore she rose and left her song,
And depart from us among,
And spread her wings for to passe
By the place he entred was,
And in his hast shortly to tell,
Him hurt, that backeward downe he fell,
From a window richly peint,
With liues of many divers seint,
And bet his wings and bled fast,
And of the hurt thus died and past,

And lay there well an houre and more,
Till at the last of briddes a score,
Come and sembled at the place
Where the window broken was,
And made swiche wamentacioun,
That pity was to heare the soun,
And the warbles of their throtes,
And the complaint of their notes,
Which from joy cleane was reuersed,
And of them one the glas soone persed,
And in his beke of colours nine,
An herbe he brought flourelesse all grene,
Full of small leaues and plaine,
Swart and long with many a vaine,
And where his fellow lay thus dede,
This hearbe down laid by his hede,
And dressed it full softily,
And hong his head and stood thereby,
Which hearb in lesse than halfe an houre,
Gan ouer all knit, and after floure
Full out and wexe ripe the seed,
And right as one another feed
Would, in his beake he tooke the graine,
And in his fellowes beake certaine
It put, and thus within the third
Up stood, and pruned him the bird,
Which dead had be in all our sight,
And both togither forth their flight
Tooke singing from vs, and their leue,
Was none disturb hem would ne greue,
And whan they parted were and gone
Thabbesse the seeds soone echone
Gadred had, and in her hand
The herb she tooke, well auisand
The leafe, the seed, the stalke, the floure,
And said it had a good sauour,
And was no common herb to find,
And well approued of uncouth kind,
And than other more vertuouse,
Who so haue it might for to vse
In his need, flowre, leafe, or graine,
Of their heale might be certaine:
And laid it downe upon the berse
Where lay the queene, and gan reherse,
Echone to other that they had seene,
And taling thus the sede wex greene,
And on the dry herse gan spring,
Which me thought a wondrous thing,
And after that floure and new seed,
Of which the people all tooke heed,
And said, it was some great miracle,
Or medicine fine more than triacle,
And were well done there to assay,
If it might ease in any way,
The corses, which with torch light,
They waked had there all that night,
Soone did the lords there consent,
And all the people thereto content,
With easie words and little fare,
And made the queenes visage bare,
Which shewed was to all about,
Wherefore in swoone fell whole the rout,
And were so sory most and least,
That long of weeping they not ceast,
For of their lord the remembraunce,
Unto them was such displeasaunce,
That for to liue they called a paine,
So were they very true and plaine,
And after this the good abbesse,
Of the graine gan chese and dresse,
Three, with her fingers cleane and small,
And in the queenes mouth by tale,
One after other full easily,
She put and full conningly,
Which shewed soone such vertue,
That preued was the medicine true,
For with a smiling countenaunce
The queene vprose, and of vsaunce,
As she was wont to euery wight,
She made good cheere, for which sight,
The people kneeling on the stones,
Thought they in Heaven were soule and bones:
And to the prince where he lay,
They went to make the same assay,
And whan the queene it vnderstood,
And how the medicine was good,
She prayed she might haue the graines,
To releue him from the paines
Which she and he had both endured,
And to him went and so him cured,
That within a little space,
Lusty and fresh on liue he was,
And in good hele, and hole of speech,
And lough, and said, "Gramercy leech,"
For which the joy throughout the town,
So great was that the bels sowd
Afraied the people, a journay,
About the city every way,
And come and asked cause and why
They rongen were so stately?
And after that the queene, thabbesse
Made diligence or they would cesse,
Such, that of ladies soone a rout,
Shewing the queene was all about,
And called by name echone and told,
Was none forgotten young ne old,
There might men see joyes new,
Whan the medicine fine and trew,
Thus restored had euery wight,
So well the queene as the knight,
Unto perfit joy and hele,
That fleting they were in such wele
As folke that would in no wise,
Desire more perfit paradise.
And thus whan passed was the sorrow,
With mikel joy soone on the morrow,
The king, the queene, and euery lord,
With all the ladies by one accord,
A generall assembly
Great cry through the country,
The which after as their intent
Was turned to a parliament,
Where was ordained and auised,
Euery thing and deuised,
That please might to most and least,
And there concluded was the feast,
Within the yle to be hold
With full consent of young and old,
In the same wise as before,
As thing should be withouten more,
And shipped and thither went
And into straunge realmes sent,
To kings, queenes, and duchesses,
To diuers princes and princesses,
Of their linage and can pray,
That it might like them at that day
Of mariage, for their sport,
Come see the yle, and them disport,
Where should be jousts and turnaies,
And armes done in other waies,

Signifying ouer all the day
After Aprill within May,
And was auised that ladies tweine,
Of good estate and well beseine,
With certaine knights and squiers,
And of the queenes officers,
In manner of an embassade,
With certain letters closed and made,
Should take the barge and depart,
And seeke my lady euery part,
Till they her found for any thing,
Both charged haue queene and king,
And as their lady and maistres,
Her to beseke of gentilnes,
At the day there for to been,
And oft her recommaund the queen,
And prayes for all loues to hast,
For but she come all woll be wast,
And the feast, a businesse
Without joy or lustinesse:
And tooke them tokens and good speed
Praid God send, after their need.
Forth went the ladies and the knights,
And were out fourteene daies and nights,
And brought my lady in their barge,
And had well sped and done their charge:
Whereof the queene so hartily glad
Was that in soth such joy she had,
Whan the ship approched lond,
That she my lady on the sond
Met, and in armes so constraine,
That wonder was behold them twaine,
Which to my dome during twelue houres,
Neither for heat ne watry shoures,
Departed not no company,
Sauing themselfe but none them by,
But gaue them laysour at their ease,
To rehearse joy and disease,
After the pleasure and courages,
Of their young and tender ages:
And after with many a knight,
Brought were, where as for that night,
They parted not, for to pleasaunce,
Content, was herte and countenaunce,
Both of the queene, and my maistresse,
This was that night their businesse:
And on the morrow with huge rout,
This prince of lords him about,
Come and to my lady said,
That of her comming glad and well apaid
He was, and full conningly
Her thanked and full heartily,
And lough and smiled, and said ywis,
That was in doubt, in safety is:
And commaunded do diligence,
And spare for neither gold ne spence,
But make ready, for on the morow,
Wedded with saint John to borow,
He would be, withouten more,
And let them wite this lese and more.
The morow come, and the seruice
Of mariage in such a wise
Said was, that with more honour,
Was neuer prince ne conquerour
Wedde ne with such company,
Of gentilnesse in chiualry,
Ne of ladies so great routs
Ne so beseen as all abouts
They were there, I certifie
You on my life withouten lie.

And the feast hold was in tentis,
As to tell you mine entent is,
In a rome a large plaine
Under a wood in a champaine,
Betwixt a riuer and a well,
Where neuer had abbay, ne sell
Ben, ne kirke, house, ne village,
In time of any mans age:
And dured three months the feast,
In one estate and neuer ceast,
From early the rising of the Sonne,
Till the day spent was and yronne,
In justing, dauncing, and lustinesse,
And all that sowned to gentilnesse.
And as me thought the second morrow,
Whan ended was all old sorrow,
And in surety euery wight
Had with his lady slept a night,
The prince, the queene, and all the rest,
Unto my lady made request,
And her besought oft and praied,
To mewards to be well apaied,
And consider mine old trouth,
And on my paines haue routh,
And me accept to her seruise,
In such forme and in such wise,
That we both might be as one,
Thus prayed the queene, and enerichone:
And for there should be no nay,
They stint justing all a day,
To pray my lady and requere,
Be content and out of fere,
And with good herte make friendly cheare,
And said it was a happy yeare:
At which she smiled and said ywis,
"I trow well he my seruaunt is,
And would my welfare as I trist,
So would I his, and would he wist
How and I knew that his trouth
Continue would without slouth,
And be such as ye here report,
Restraining both courage and sport,
I couth consent at your request,
To be named of your fest,
And do after your vsaunce,
In obeying your pleasaunce,
Ac your request this I consent,
To please you in your entent,
And eke the soueraine aboue,
Commanded hath me for to loue,
And before other him prefer,
Against which prince may be no wer,
For his power ouer all raigneth,
That other would for nought him paineth,
And sith his will and yours is one.
Contrary in me shall be none,"
Tho (as me thought) the promise
Of marriage before the mese,
Desired was of euery wight,
To be made the same night,
To put away all maner douts
Of euery wight thereabouts,
And so was do, and on the morrow,
Whan euery thought and euery sorrow
Dislodged was out of mine herte,
With euery wo and euery smert,
Unto a tent prince and princes,
Me thought, brought me and my maistres,
And said we were at full age
There to conclude our marriage,

With ladies, knights, and squiers,
And a great host of ministers,
With instruments and sounes diuerse,
That long were here to rehearse,
Which tent was church perochiall,
Ordaint was in especiall,
For the feast and for the sacre,
Where archbishop, and archdiacre
Song full out the seruise,
After the custome and the guise,
And the churches ordinaunce,
And after that to dine and daunce
Brought were we, and to diuers playes,
And for our speed ech with prayes,
And merry was most and least,
And said amended was the feast,
And were right glad lady and lord,
Of the marriage and thaccord,
And wished us hertes pleasaunce,
Joy, hele, and continuaunce,
And to the ministrils made request,
That in encreasing of the fest,
They would touch their cords,
And with some new joyeux accords,
Moone the people to gladnesse,
And praiden of all gentilnesse,
Ech to paine them for the day,
To shew his cunning and his play,
Tho began sownes meruelous,
Entuned with accords joyous,
Round about all the tents,
With thousands of instruments,
That euery wight to daunce them pained,
To be merry was none that fained,
Which sowne me troubled in my sleepe,
That fro my bed forth I lepe,
Wening to be at the feast,
But whan I woke all was seast,
For there nas lady ne creature,
Saue on the wals old portraiture
Of horsmen, haukes, and hounds,
And hurt deere full of wounds,
Some like bitten, some hurt with shot,
And as my dreame seemed that was not,
And whan I wake, and knew the trouth,
And ye had seen of very routh,
Trow ye would haue wept a weke,
For neuer man yet halfe so seke,
I went escaped with the life,
And was for fault that sword ne knife
I find ne might my life tabridge,
Ne thing that kerued, ne had edge,
Wherewith I might my woful pains
Haue voided with bleeding of my vains,
Lo here my blisse, lo here my paine,
Which to my lady I do complaine,
And grace and mercy her require,
To end my wo and busie feare,
And me accept to her seruise,
After her seruice in such auise,
That of my dreame the substaunce
Might turne once to cognisaunce,
And cognisaunce to very preue,
By full consent, and good leue,
Or els without more I pray,
That this night, or it be day,
I mote vnto my dreame returne,
And sleeping so forth aie sojourne
About the yle of pleasaunce,
Under my ladies obeisaunce,
In her seruise, and in such wise,
As it please her may to deuise,
And grace ones to be accept,
Like as I dreamed whan I slept,
And dure a thousand yeare and ten,
In her good will, amen, amen.

Fairest of faire, and goodliest on liue,
All my secret to you I plaine, and shriue,
Requiring grace and of complaint,
To be healed or martyred as a saint,
For by my trouth I sweare, and by this booke,
Ye may both heale, and slea me with a looke.

Go forth mine owne true herte innocent,
And with humblesse, do thine obseruaunce,
And to thy lady on thy knees present
Thy seruise new, and think how great pleasance
It is to liue vnder thobeisance
Of her that may with her looks soft
Giue thee the blisse that thou desirest oft.

Be diligent, awake, obey, and drede,
And not too wild of thy countenaunce,
But meeke and glad, and thy nature feed,
To do each thing that may her pleasance,
Whan thou shalt sleep, haue aie in remembrance
Thimage of her which may with lookes soft
Giue thee the blisse that thou desirest oft.

And if so be that thou her name find
Written in booke, or els vpon wall,
Looke that thou as seruaunt true and kind,
Thine obeisaunce as she were therewithall,
Faining in loue is breeding of a fall
From the grace of her, whose lookes soft
May giue the blisse that thou desirest oft.

Ye that this ballede read shall,
I pray you keepe you from the fall.

THE FLOWER AND THE LEAF.

A gentlewoman out of an arbour in a grove, seeth a great company of knights and ladies in a daunce upon the greene grass: the which being ended, they all kneel down, and do honour to the daisie, some to the flower, and some to the leaf. Afterward this gentlewoman learneth by one of these ladies the meaning hereof, which is this: They which honour the flower, a thing fading with every blast, are such as look after beauty and worldly pleasure. But they that honour the leaf, which abideth with the root, notwithstanding the frosts and winter storms, are they which follow vertue and during qualities, without regard of worldly respects.

WHAN that Phebus his chaire of gold so hie
Had whirled vp the sterry sky aloft,
And in the Boole was entred certainely,
Whan shoures sweet of raine discended oft,
Causing the ground fele times and oft,
Up for to giue many an wholesome aire,
And euery plaine was clothed faire

With new green, and maketh small floures
To springen here and there in field and in mede,
So very good and wholesom be the shoures,
That it renueth that was old and dede,
In winter time and out of euery sede
Springeth the herbe, so that euery wight
Of this season wexeth glad and light.

And I so glad of the season swete,
Was happed thus vpon a certaine night,
As I lay in my bed, sleepe full vnmete
Was vnto me, but why that I ne might
Rest, I ne wist, for there nas earthly wight
As I suppose had more hertes ease
Than I, for I nad sicknesse nor disease.

Wherefore I mervail greatly of my selfe,
That I so long withouten sleepe lay,
And vp I rose thee houres after twelfe,
About the springing of the day,
And on I put my geare and mine array,
And to a pleasaunt groue I gan passe,
Long or the bright Sonne vp risen was.

In which were okes great, streight as a line,
Under the which the grasse so fresh of hew,
Was newly sprong, and an eight foot or nine
Euery tree well fro his fellow grew,
With braunches brode, lade with leues new,
That sprongen out ayen the sunne sheue,
Some very red, and some a glad light grene.

Which as me thought was right a pleasant sight,
And eke the briddes song for to here,
Would haue rejoyced any earthly wight,
And I that couth not yet in no manere
Heare the nightingale of all the yeare,
Ful busily herkened with herte and with eare,
If I her voice perceiue coud any where.

And at the last a path of little bread
I found, that greatly had not vsed be,
For it forgrowne was with grasse and weed,
That well vneth a wight might it se:
Thoght I this path some whider goth parde,
And so I followed, till it me brought
To right a pleasaunt herber well ywrought,

That benched was, and with turfes new
Freshly turued, whereof the grene gras,
So small, so thicke, so short, so fresh of hew,
That most like vnto green well wot I it was,
The hegge also that yede in compas,
And closed in all the greene herbere,
With sicamour was set and eglatere.

Wrethen in fere so well and cunningly,
That euery branch and leafe grew by mesure,
Plaine as a bord, of an height by and by,
I see neuer thing I you ensure,
So well done, for he that tooke the cure
It to make ytrow, did all his peine
To make it passe all tho that men haue seine.

And shapen was this herber roofe and all
As a prety parlour, and also
The hegge as thicke as a castle wall,
That who that list without to stond or go,
Though he would all day prien to and fro,
He should not see if there were any wight
Within or no, but one within well might
Perceiue all tho that yeden there without
In the field that was on euery side
Couered with corn and grasse, that out of doubt,
Though one would seeke all the world wide,
So rich a field coud not be espide
On no coast, as of the quantity,
For of all good thing there was plenty.

And I that all this pleasaunt sight sie,
Thought sodainly I felt so sweet an aire
Of the eglentere, that certainely
There is no herte I deme in such dispaire,
Ne with thoughts froward and contraire,
So ouerlaid, but it should soone haue bote,
If it had ones felt this sauour sote.

And as I stood and cast aside mine eie,
I was ware of the fairest medle tree
That euer yet in all my life I sie,
As full of blossomes as it might be,
Therein a goldfinch leaping pretile
Fro bough to bough, and as him list he eet
Here and there of buds and floures sweet.

And to the herber side was joyning
This faire tree, of which I haue you told,
And at the last the brid began to sing,
Whan he had eaten what he eat wold,
So passing sweetly, that by manifold
It was more pleasaunt than I coud deuise,
And whan his song was ended in this wise,

The nightingale with so merry a note
Answered him, that all the wood rong
So sodainly, that as it were a sote,
I stood astonied, so was I with the song
Thorow rauished, that till late and long,
I ne wist in what place I was, ne where,
And ayen me thought she song euen by mine ere.

Wherefore I waited about busily
On euery side, if I her might see,
And at the last I gan full well aspie
Where she sat in a fresh grene laurer tree,
On the further side euen right by me,
That gaue so passing a delicious smell,
According to the eglentere full well.

Whereof I had so inly great pleasure,
That as me thought I surely rauished was
Into Paradice, where my desire
Was for to be, and no ferther passe
As for that day, and on the sote grasse
I sat me downe, for as for mine entent,
The birds song was more conuenient,

And more pleasaunt to me by manifold,
Than meat or drinke, or any other thing,
Thereto the herber was so fresh and cold,
The wholesome sauours eke so comforting,
That as I demed, sith the beginning
Of the world was neuer seene or than
So pleasaunt a ground of none earthly man.

And as I sat the birds harkening thus,
Me thought that I heard voices sodainly,
The most sweetest and most delicious
That euer any wight I trow truly
Heard in their life, for the armony
And sweet accord was in so good musike,
That the uoice to angels most was like.

At the last out of a groue euen by,
That was right goodly and pleasant to sight,
I sie where there came singing lustily
A world of ladies, but to tell aright
Their great beauty it lieth not in my might,
Ne their array, neuerthelesse I shall
Tell you a part, though I speake not of all.

The surcotes white of veluet wele sitting,
They were in clad, and the semes echone,
As it were a manner garnishing,
Was set with emerauds one and one,
By and by, but many a rich stone
Was set on the purfles out of dout
Of colors, sleues, and traines round about.

As great pearles round and orient,
Diamonds fine and rubies red,
And many another stone, of which I went
The names now, and euerich on her head
A rich fret of gold, which without dread
Was full of stately rich stones set,
And euery lady had a chapelet

On her head of fresh and greene,
So wele wrought and so meruellously,
That it was a noble sight to seene,
Some of laurer, and some full pleasantly
Had chapelets of woodbind, and sadly
Some of agnus castus were also
Chapelets fresh, but there were many of tho

That daunced and eke song full soberly,
But all they yede in manner of compace,
But one there yede in mid the company,
Soole by her selfe, but all followed the pace
That she kept, whose heauenly figured face
So pleasant was, and her wele shape person,
That of beauty she past hem euerichone.

And more richly beseene by manifold
She was also in euery manner thing,
On her head full pleasaunt to behold,
A crowne of gold rich for any king,
A braunch of agnus castus eke bearing
In her hand, and to my sight truly,
She lady was of the company.

And she began a roundell lustely,
That "Suse le foyle, de vert moy," men call,
"Seen et mon ioly cuer en dormy,"
And than the company answered all,
With voice sweet entuned, and so small,
That me thought it the sweetest melody
That euer I heard in my life soothly.

And thus they came dauncing and singing
Into the middest of the mede echone,
Before the herber where I was sitting,
And God wot me thought I was wel bigone,
For than I might auise hem one by one,
Who fairest was, who coud best dance or sing,
Or who most womanly was in all thing.

They had not daunced but a little throw,
Whan that I heard not ferre off sodainly,
So great a noise of thundring trumps blow,
As though it should haue departed the skie,
And after that within a while I sie,
From the same groue where the ladies come out,
Of men of armes comming such a rout,

As all the men on earth had ben assembled
In that place, wele horsed for the nones,
Stering so fast, that all the earth trembled:
But for to speake of riches and stones,
And men and horse I trow the large wones,
Of Pretir John ne all his tresory,
Might not vneth haue boght the tenth party.

Of their array who so list heare more,
I shall rehearse so as I can alite:
Out of the groue that I spake of before,
I sie come first all in their clokes white,
A company that ware for their delite,
Chapelets fresh of okes seriall,
Newly sprong, and trumpets they were all.

On euery trumpe hanging a broad banere
Of fine tartarium were full richely bete,
Euery trumpet his lords armes bere
About their neckes with great pearles sete,
Collers brode for cost they would not lete,
As it would seem for their schochones echone,
Were set about with many a precious stone.

Their horse harneis was all white also,
And after them next in one company,
Came kings of armes and no mo
In clokes of white cloth of gold richly,
Chapelets of greene on their heads on hie,
The crowns that they on their scochones bere,
Were set with pearle, ruby, and saphere.

And eke great diamonds many one,
But all their horse harneis and other geare
Was in a sute according euerychone,
As ye haue heard that foresaid trumpets were,
And by seeming they were nothing to lere,
And their guiding, they did so manerly,
And after hem came a great company

Of herauds and purseuauants eke,
Arrayed in clothes of white veluet,
And hardily they were no thing to seke,
How they on hem should the harneis set,
And euery man had on a chapelet
Scochones and eke horse harneis indede,
They had in sute of hem that before hem yede.

Next after hem came in armour bright
All saue their heads, seemely knights nine,
And euery claspe and naile as to my sight
Of their harneis were of red gold fine,
With cloth of gold, and furred with ermine
Were the trappors of their stedes strong,
Wide and large, that to the ground did hong.

And euery bosse of bridle and paitrell
That they had, was worth as I would wene,
A thousand pound, and on their heads well
Dressed were crownes of laurer grene,
The best made that euer I had sene,
And euery knight had after him riding
Three henshmen on him awaiting.

Of which euery one short tronchoun
His lords helme bare, so richly dight,
That the worst was worth the ransoun
Of a king, the second a shield bright
Bare at his necke, the thred bare vpright
A mighty spere, full sharpe ground and kene,
And euery child ware of leaues grene

A fresh chapelet vpon his haires bright,
And clokes white of fine velvet they were,
Their steeds trapped and raied right
Without difference as their lords were,
And after hem on many a fresh corsere,
There came of armed knights such a rout,
That they besprad the large field about.

And all they ware after their degrees
Chaplets new made of laurer grene,
Some of oke, and some of other trees,
Some in their honds bare boughs shene,
Some of laurer, and some of okes kene,
Some of hauthorne, and some of woodbind,
And many mo which I had not in mind.

And so they came their horses freshly stering
With bloody sownes of hir trompes loud,
There sie I many an vncouth disguising
In the array of these knights proud,
And at the last as euenly as they could,
They took their places in middes of the mede,
And euery knight turned his horse hede

To his fellow, and lightly laid a spere
In the rest, and so justes began
On euery part about here and there,
Some brake his spere, some drew down hors and man;
About the field astray the steeds ran,
And to behold their rule and gouernaunce,
I you ensure it was a great pleasaunce.

And so the justs last an houre and more,
But tho that crowned were in laurer grene,
Wan the prise, their dints were so sore,
That there was none ayenst hem might sustene,
And the justing all was left off clene,
And fro their horse the ninth alight anone,
And so did all the remnant euerichone.

And forth they yede togider twain and twain,
That to behold it was a worthy sight
Toward the ladies on the greene plaine,
That song and daunced as I said now right:
The ladies as soone as they goodly might,
They brake of both the song and dance,
And yede to meet hem with ful glad semblance.

And euery lady tooke full womanly
By the hond a knight, and forth they yede
Unto a faire laurer that stood fast by,
With leues lade the boughes of great brede,
And to my dome there neuer was indede
Man, that had seene halfe so faire a tree,
For vnderneath there might it well haue be

An hundred persons at their owne plesance
Shadowed fro the heat of Phebus bright,
So that they should haue felt no grevance
Of raine ne haile that hem hurt might,
The sauour eke rejoice would any wight,
That had be sicke or melancolius,
It was so very good and vertuous.

And with great reuerence they enclining low
To the tree so soot and faire of hew,
And after that within a little throw
They began to sing and daunce of new,
Some song of loue, some plaining of vntrew,
Enuironning the tree that stood vpright,
And euer yede a lady and a knight.

And at the last I cast mine eye aside,
And was ware of a lusty company
That came roming out of the field wide,
Hond in hond a knight and a lady,
The ladies all in surcotes, that richely
Purfiled were with many a rich stone,
And euery knight of green ware mantles on,

Embrouded well so as the surcotes were,
And euerich had a chapelet on her hed,
Which did right well vpon the shining here,
Made of goodly floures white and red,
The knights eke that they in hond led
In sute of hem ware chapelets euerychone,
And before hem went minstrels many one,

As harpes, pipes, lutes, and sautry
All in greene, and on their heads bare
Of diuers floures made full craftely
All in a sute goodly chapelets they ware,
And so dauncing into the mede they fare,
In mid the which they found a tuft that was
All ouersprad with floures in compas.

Whereto they enclined euerychone
With great reuerence, and that full humbly,
And at the last there began anone
A lady for to sing right womanly
A bargaret in praising the daisie,
For as me thought among her notes swete,
She said "Si douset et la Margarete."

Than they all answered her in fere,
So passingly well, and so pleasauntly,
That it was a blisful noise to here,
But I not it happed suddainly,
As about noone the Sonne so feruently
Waxe hote, that the prety tender floures
Had lost the beauty of hir fresh colours.

For shronke with heat, the ladies eke to brent,
That they ne wist where they hem might bestow,
The knights swelt for lack of shade nie shent,
And after that within a little throw,
The wind began so sturdily to blow,
That down goeth all the floures euerichone,
So that in all the mede there laft not one,

Save such as succoured were among the leues,
Fro euery storme that might hem assaile,
Growing vnder hedges and thicke greues,
And after that there came a storme of haile,
And raine in fere, so that withouten faile,
The ladies ne the knights nade o threed
Drie on them, so dropping was hir weed.

And whan the storm was cleane passed away,
Tho in white that stood vnder the tree,
They felt nothing of the great affray,
That they in greene without had in ybe,
To them they yede for routh and pite,
Them to comfort after their great disease,
So faine they were the helplesse for to ease.

Than I was ware how one of hem in grene
Had on a crowne rich and well sitting,
Wherefore I demed well she was a quene,
And tho in greene on her were awaiting,
The ladies than in white that were comming
Toward them, and the knights in fere
Began to comfort hem, and make hem chere.

The queen in white, that was of great beauty,
Took by the hond the queen that was in grene,
And said, " Suster, I have right great pitie
Of your annoy, and of the troublous tene,
Wherein ye and your company haue bene
So long alas, and if that it you please
To go with me, I shall do you the ease,

" In all the pleasure that I can or may,"
Whereof the tother humbly as she might,
Thanked her, for in right ill array
She was with storm and heat I you behight,
And euery lady than anone right
That were in white, one of them took in grene
By the hond, which whan the knights had sene,

In likewise ech of them tooke a knight
Clad in greene, and forth with hem they fare,
To an hegge, where they anon right
To make their justs they would not spare
Boughes to hew down, and eke trees square,
Wherwith they made hem stately fires great,
To dry their clothes that were wringing weat.

And after that of hearbs that there grew,
They made for blisters of the Sunne brenning,
Very good and wholesome ointments new,
Where that they yede the sick fast anointing,
And after that they yede about gadering
Pleasaunt salades which they made hem eat,
For to refresh their great vnkindly heat.

The lady of the Leafe than began to pray
Her of the Floure (for so to my seeming
They should be as by their array)
To soupe with her, and eke for any thing,
That she should with her all her people bring:
And she ayen in right goodly manere,
Thanketh her of her most friendly cheare,

Saying plainely that she would obay
With all her herte all her commaundement,
And than anon without lenger delay
The lady of the Leafe hath one ysent
For a palfray, after her intent,
Arrayed well and faire in harneis of gold,
For nothing lacked, that to him long shold.

And after that to all her company
She made to puruey horse and euery thing
That they needed, and than full lustily,
Euen by the herber where I was sitting
They passed all so pleasantly singing,
That it would haue comforted any wight,
But than I sie a passing wonder sight.

For than the nightingale, that all the day
Had in the laurer sete, and did her might
The whole seruice to sing longing to May,
All suddinly gan to take her flight,
And to the lady of the Leafe forthright
She flew, and set her on her hond softly,
Which was a thing I marueled of greatly.

The goldfinch eke, that fro the medle tree
Was fled for heat into the bushes cold,
Unto the lady of the Flower gan flee,
And on her hond he set him as he wold,
And pleasauntly his wings gan to fold,
And for to sing they pained hem both as sore,
As they had do of all the day before.

And so these ladies rode forth a great pace,
And all the rout of knights eke in fere,
And I that had seen all this wonder case,
Thought I would assay in some manere,
To know fully the trouth of this matere,
And what they were that rode so pleasantly,
And whan they were the herber passed by,

I drest me forth, and happed to mete anone
Right a faire lady I you ensure,
And she come riding by her selfe alone,
All in white, with semblance ful demure:
I saluted her, and bad her good auenture
Might her befall, as I coud most humbly,
And she answered, " My doughter gramercy."

" Madame" (quod I) " if that I durst enquere
Of you I would faine of that company
Wit what they be that past by this arbere,"
And she ayen answered right friendly:
" My faire doughter, all tho that passed here by
In white clothing, be seruaunts euerichone
Unto the Leafe, and I my selfe am one.

" See ye not her that crowned is" (quod she)
" All in white ?"—" Madame" (quod I) " yes:"
" That is Diane, goddesse of chastite,
And for because that she a maiden is,
In her hond the braunch she beareth this,
That agnus castus men call properly,
And all the ladies in her company

" Which ye se of that hearb chaplets weare,
Be such as han kept alway hir maidenheed:
And all they that of laurer chaplets beare,
Be such as hardy were and manly indeed,
Uictorious name which neuer may be dede,
And all they were so worthy of their hond,
In hir time that none might hem withstond.

" And tho that weare chaplets on their hede
Of fresh woodbind, be such as neuer were
To loue vntrue in word, thought, ne dede,
But aye stedfast, ne for pleasance ne fere,
Thogh that they shuld their hertes all to tere,
Would neuer flit but euer were stedfast,
Till that their liues there asunder brast."

" Now faire madame" (quod I) " yet I would pray,
Your ladiship if that it might be,
That I might know by some maner way,
Sith that it hath liked your beaute,
The trouth of these ladies for to tell me,
What that these knights be in rich armour,
And what tho be in grene and weare the flour?

" And why that some did reuerence to that tre,
And some vnto the plot of floures faire:"
" With right good will my fair doghter" (quod she)
" Sith your desire is good and debonaire,
Tho nine crowned be very exemplaire,
Of all honour longing to chiualry,
And those certaine be called the nine worthy,

" Which ye may see riding all before,
That in hir time did many a noble dede,
And for their worthinesse full oft haue bore
The crowne of laurer leaues on their hede,
As ye may in your old bookes rede,
And how that he that was a conqueroure,
Had by laurer alway his most honour.

" And tho that beare bowes in their hond
Of the precious laurer so notable,
Be such as were I woll ye vnderstond,
Noble knights of the round table,
And eke the dousepëris honourable,
Which they beare in signe of victory,
It is witnesse of their deeds mightily.

" Eke there be knights old of the garter,
That in hir time did right worthily,
And the honour they did to the laurer,
Is for by they haue their laud wholly,
Their triumph eke, and marshall glory,
Which vnto them is more parfit richesse,
Than any wight imagine can or gesse.

" For one leafe giuen of that noble tree
To any wight that hath done worthily,
And it be done so as it ought to be,
Is more honour than any thing earthly,
Witnesse of Rome that founder was truly
Of all knighthood and deeds maruelous,
Record I take of Titus Liuius.

" And as for her that crowned is in greene,
It is Flora, of these floures goddesse,
And all that here on her awaiting beene,
It are such that loued idlenesse,
And not delite of no businesse,
But for to hunt and hauke, and pley in medes,
And many other such idle dedes.

And for the great delite and pleasaunce
They haue to the floure, and so reuerently
They vnto it do such obeisaunce
As ye may see."—" Now faire Madame" (quod I)
" if I durst aske what is the cause and why,
That knights haue the signe of honour,
Rather by the leafe than the flour."

" Soothly doughter" (quod she) " this is the trouth,
For knights euer should be persouering,
To seeke honour without feintise or slouth,
Fro wele to better in all manner thing,
In signe of which with leaues aye lasting,
They be rewarded after their degree,
Whose lusty green May, may not appaired be,

" But aie keping their beautie fresh and greene,
For there nis storme that may hem deface,
Haile nor snow, wind nor frosts kene,
Wherfore they haue this property and grace
And for the floure within a little space
Woll be lost, so simple of nature
They be, that they no greeuance may endure.

" And euery storme will blow them soone away,
Ne they last not but for a season,
That is the cause, the very trouth to say,
That they may not by no way of reason
Be put to no such occupation."
" Madame" (quod I) " with all mine whole seruise,
I thanke you now in my most humble wise.

" For now I am ascertained throughly,
Of euery thing I desired to know."
I am right glad that I haue said soothly
Ought to your pleasure if ye will me trow:"
(Quod she ayen) " but to whom do ye owe
Your seruice, and which will ye honour,
Tel me I pray, this yere, the Leafe or the Flour."

" Madame" (quod I) " though I least worthy,
Unto the Leafe I owe mine obseruaunce:"
" That is" (quod she) " right well done certainly,
And I pray God to honour you auaunce,
And kepe you fro the wicked remembraunce
Of male bouch, and all his crueltie,
And all that good and well conditioned be.

" For here may I no lenger now abide,
I must follow the great company
That ye may see yonder before you ride,"
And forth as I couth most humbly,
I tooke my leue of her as she gan hie,
After them as fast as euer she might,
And I drow homeward, for it was nigh night

And put all that I had seene in writing
Under support of them that lust it to rede.
O little booke, thou art so vnconning,
How darst thou put thy self in prees for drede,
It is wonder that thou wexest not rede,
Sith that thou wost full lite who shall behold
Thy rude language, full boistously vnfold.

EXPLICIT.

CHAUCER'S A. B. C.

CALLED

LA PRIERE DE NOSTRE DAME.

Chaucer's A. B. C. called La Priere de nostre Dame: made, as some say, at the request of Blanch, duchess of Lancaster, as a prayer for her private use, being a woman in her religion very devout.

A.

ALMIGHTY and all merciable queene,
To whom all this world fleeth for succour,
To haue release of sinne, of sorrow, of tene,
Glorious Virgine of all flouris flour,
To thee I flee confounded in errour,
Helpe and releeue almighty debonaire,
Haue mercy of mine perillous langour,
Uenquist me hath my cruell aduersaire.

B.

Bounty so fixe hath in my herte his tent,
That well I wote thou will my succour be,
Thou canst not warn that with good entent,
Axith thine helpe, thine herte is aye so free:
Thou art largesse of plaine felicite,
Hauen and refute of quiete and of rest,
Lo how that theuis seuen chasen me,
Helpe lady bright, or that mine ship to brest.

C.

Comfort is none, but in you lady dere,
For lo mine sinne and mine confusiom,
Which ought not in thine presence for to apere,
Han taken on me a greeueous actioun,
Of veray right and disperatioun,
And as by right they mighten well sustene,
That I were worthy mine damnatioun,
Nere mercy of you blisfull queene.

D.

Dout is there none, queen of misericord,
That thou nart cause of grace and mercy here,
God vouchedsafe through thee with vs to accord:
For certis, Christ is blisful modir dere,
Were now the bow bent in swiche manere,
As it was first of justice and of ire,
The rightfull God would of no mercy here:
But through thee han we grace as we desire.

E.

Euer hath mine hope of refute in thee be:
For here before full oft in many a wise,
Unto mercy hast thou receiued me,
But mercy lady at the great assise,
Whan we shall come before the high justise,
So little freut shall than in me ben found,
That but thou or that day correct me,
Of very right mine werk will me confound.

F.

Flying, I flee for succour to thine tent,
Me for to hide fro tempest full of drede,
Beseking you, that ye you not absent,
Though I be wick: O help yet at this nede,
All haue I been a beast in wit and dede,
Yet lady thou mee close in with thine own grace,
Thine enemy and mine, lady take hede,
Unto mine death in point is me to chase.

G.

Gracious maid and modir, which that neuer
Were bitter nor in earth nor in see,
But full of sweetnesse and of mercy euer,
Help that mine fader be not wroth with me:
Speake thou, for I ne dare him not see,
So haue I done in earth, alas the while,
That certes but if thou mine succour be,
To sinke eterne he will mine ghost exile.

H.

He vouchedesafe, tell him, as was his will,
Become a man as for our alliaunce,
And with his blood he wrote that blisfull bill
Upon the crosse as generall acquetaunce,
To euery penitent in full criaunce:
And therefore lady bright, thou for vs prey,
Than shalt thou stent all his greeuaunce,
And maken our foe to failen of his prey.

I.

I wote well thou wilt been our succour,
Thou art so full of bounty in certaine,
For whan a soule falleth in errour,
Thine pity goeth, and haleth him againe,
Than maketh thou his peace with his souerain,
And bringest him out of the crooked strete:
Who so thee loueth, shall not loue in vaine,
That shall be find, as he the life shall lete.

K.

Kalenderis enlumined been they,
That in this world been lighted with thine name,
And who so goith with thee the right wey,
Him that not drede in soule to been lame,
Now queen of comfort, sith thou art the same,
To whom I seech for my medicine:
Let not mine fo no more mine wound entame,
Mine hele into thine hond all I resine.

L.

Lady, thine sorrow can I not portrey
Under that crosse, ne his greuous pennaunce:
But for your bothis peine, I you prey,
Let not our alder fo make his bostaunce,
That he hath in his lestis with mischaunce,
Conuict that, ye both han bought so dere:
As I said erst, thou ground of substaunce,
Continue on vs thine pitous eyen clere.

M.

Moyses that saw the bosh of flambis rede
Brenning, of which than neuer a sticke brend,
Was sign of thine unwemmed maidenhede,
Thou art the bosh, on which there can descend
The Holyghost, which that Moyses weend
Had been on fire: and this was in figure.
Now lady from the fire vs defend,
Which that in Hell eternally shall dure.

N.

Noble princesse, that neuer haddest pere,
Certes if any comfort in vs bee,
That commeth of thee, Christis moder dere,
We han none other melody ne glee,
Us to rejoyce in our aduersite,
Ne aduocat none, that will and dare so prey,
For vs, and that for as little hire as ye,
That helpen for an Auemary or twey.

O.

O very light of eyen tho been blind,
O very lust of labour and distresse,
O treasorere of bounty to mankind,
The whom God chese to moder for humblesse,
From his ancelle he made thee maistresse
Of Heauen and Earth, our bill vp to bede,
This world awaiteth euer on thine goodnes,
For thou ne failedest neuer wight at nede.

P.

Purpose I haue sometime for to enquere,
Wherefore and why the Holyghost thee sought,
Whan Gabrielis voice come to thine ere,
He not to werre vs swich a wonder wrought,
But for to save vs, that sithen bought:
Than needeth vs no weapon vs to saue,
But onely there we did not as vs ought,
Do penitence, and mercy aske and haue.

Q

Queen of comfort, right whan I me bethink,
That I agilt haue both him and thee,
And that mine soule is worthy for to sinke:
Alas I caitife, wheder shall I flee,
Who shall vnto thine sonne mine mean be?
Who but thine selfe, that art of pity well,
Thou hast more routh on our aduersitie,
Than in this world might any tongue tell.

R.

Redresse me moder, and eke me chastise,
For certainly my faders chastising
Ne dare I not abiden in no wise,
So hideous is his full reckening,
Moder of whom our joy gan to spring,
Be ye mine judge, and eke my soules leech,
For euer in you is pity abounding,
To eaoh that of pity will you beseech.

S.

Sooth is, he ne grauntcth no pity
Without thee: for God of his goodnesse
Forgiueth none, but it like vnto thee:
He hath thee made vicaire and maistresse
Of all this world, and eke gouernesse
Of Heauen: and represseth his justise
After thine will: and therefore in witnesse
He hath thee crowned in so royal wise.

T.

Temple deuout, ther God chese his wonning,
For which these misbeleeued depriued been,
To you mine soule penitent I bring,
Receiue me, for I can no ferther fleen.
With thornis venemous, Heauen queen,
For which the erth accursed was ful sore,
I am so wounded, as ye may well seene,
That I am lost almost, it smert so sore.

V.

Uirgine that art so noble of apparaile,
That leadest vs into the high toure
Of Paradise, thou me wish and counsaile,
How I may haue thy grace and thy succour:
All haue I been in filth and in errour,
Lady on that countrey thou me adjourne,
That cleaped is thine bench of fresh flour,
There as that mercy euer shall sojourne.

X.

Xpen thine sonne that in this world alight
Upon a crosse to suffer his passioun,
And suffred eke that Longeus his hart pight,
And made his herte blood renne adoun,
And all this was for my saluatioun:
And I to him am fals and eke unkind,
And yet he will not mine dampnatioun:
This thanke I you, succour of all mankind.

Y.

Ysaac was figure of his death certaine,
That so ferre forth his fader would obey,
That him ne raught nothing for to be slain:
Right so thy sonne list a lambe to dey:
Now lady full of mercy I you prey,
Sith he his mercy sured me so large,
Be ye not scant, for all we sing or say,
That ye been fro vengeaunce aye our targe.

Z.

Zacharie you clepith the open well,
That wisht sinfull soule out of his guilt,
Therefore this lesson out I will to tell,
That nere thine tender heart, we were spilt.
Now lady bright, sith thou canst and wilt
Been to the seed of Adam merciable,
Bring vs to that paleis that is built
To penitentis, that ben to mercie able.

EXPLICIT.

CERTAIN BALLADES.

Sometime the world so stedfast was and stable,
That mans word was an obligatioun,
And now it is so false and deceivable,
That word and deed as in conclusioun
Is nothing like, for tourned is vp so doun
All the world, through mede and fikelnesse,
That all is lost for lack of stedfastnesse.

What maketh the world to be so variable
But lust, that men haue in dissension,
For among vs a man is hold vnable,
But if he can by some collusion
Doe his neighbour wrong and oppression:
What causeth this but wilfull wretchednesse,
That all is lost for lack of stedfastnesse.

Trouth is put downe, reason is hold fable,
Uertue hath now no domination,
Pity is exiled, no man is merciable,
Through couetise is blent discretion,
The world hath made a permutation,
Fro right to wrong, fro trouth to fikelnesse,
That all is lost for lacke of stedfastnesse.

LENVOYE.

Prince desire to be honourable,
Cherish thy folke, and hate extortion,
Suffer nothing that may be reprouable
To thine estate, done in thy region,
Shew forth the yerd of castigation,
Drede God, do law, loue trouth and worthinesse,
And wed thy folke ayen to stedfastnesse.

EXPLICIT.

GOOD COUNSAIL OF CHAUCER.

Fly fro the prease, and dwell with soothfastnesse,
Suffise vnto thy good though it be small,
For horde hath hate, and climbing tikelnesse,
Prease hath enuy, and wele is blent ouer all,
Sauour no more than thee behoue shall,
Rede well thy selfe that other folke canst rede,
And trouth thee shall deliuer, it is no drede.

Paine thee not ech crooked to redresse
In trust of her that tourneth as a ball,
Great rest standeth in little businesse,
Beware also to spurn againe a nall,
Striue not as doth a crocke with a wall,
Deme thy selfe that demest others dede,
And trouth thee shall deliuer it is no drede.

That thee is sent receiue in buxomnesse,
The wrastling of this world asketh a fall,
Here is no home, here is but wildernesse,
Forth pilgrime, forth beast out of thy stall,
Looke vp on high, and thanke God of all,
Weiue thy lusts, and let thy ghost thee lede,
And trouth thee shall deliuer, it is no drede.

EXPLICIT.

A BALLADE

OF THE VILLAGE WITHOUT PAINTING.

PLAINTIFE TO FORTUNE.

This wretched worldes transmutation,
As wele and wo, now poor, and now honour,
Without order or due discretion,
Gouerned is by Fortunes errour,
But natheless the lacke of her fauour
Ne may not doe me sing, though that I die,
L'ay tout pardu, mon temps et labour,
For finally fortune I defie.

Yet is me left the sight of my reasoun,
To know friend fro foe in thy mirrour,
So much hath yet thy tourning vp and doun
Ytaught me to knowen in an hour,

But truly no force of thy reddour
To him that ouer himselfe hath maistre,
My suffisaunce shall be my succour,
For finally fortune I defie.

O Socrates, thou stedfast champion,
She might neuer be thy turmentour,
Thou neuer dredest her oppression,
Ne in her chere found thou no fauour,
Thou knew the deceit of her colour,
And that her most worship is for to lie,
I know her eke a false dissimulour,
For finally fortune I defie.

THE ANSWERE OF FORTUNE.

No man is wretched, but himselfe it wene,
Ne that hath in himselfe suffisaunce,
Why saist thou than I am to thee so kene,
That hast thy selfe out of my gouernance?
Say thus, graunt mercy of thine habundance
That thou hast lent or this, thou shalt not striue,
What wost thou yet how I thee woll auaunce,
And eke thou hast thy best friend aliue.

I haue thee taught deuision betweene
Friend of effect, and friend of countenaunce,
Thee needeth not the gall of anhine,
That cureth eyen darke for her pennaunce
Now seest thou clere that were in ignoraunce,
Yet holt thine anker, and yet thou maist arriue
There bounty beareth the key of my substance,
And eke thou hast thy best friend aliue.

How many haue I refused to sustene,
Sith I haue thee fostred in thy pleasaunce,
Wolt thou than make a statute on thy quene,
That I shall be aye at thine ordinaunce,
Thou born art in my reigne of variaunce,
About the whele with other must thou driue,
My lóre is bet, than wicke is thy greuaunce,
And eke thou hast thy best friend aliue.

THE ANSWERE TO FORTUNE.

Thy lore I dampne, it is aduersity,
My frend maist thou not reue blind goddesse,
That I thy friends know, I thanke it thee,
Take hem againe, let hem go lie a presse,
The niggardes in keeping hir richesse,
Pronostike is, thou wolt hir toure assaile,
Wicke appetite commeth aye before sicknesse,
In general this rule may not faile.

FORTUNE.

Thou pinchest at my mutability,
For I thee lent a droppe of my richesse,
And now me liketh to withdraw me,
Why shouldest thou my royalty oppresse,
The sea may ebbe and flow more and lesse,
The welken hath might to shine, rain, and hail,
Right so must I kithe my brotilnesse,
In generall this rule may not fail.

THE PLAINTIFE.

Lo, the execution of the majesty,
That all purueigheth of his rightwisenesse,
That same thing fortune clepen ye,
Ye blind beasts full of leaudnesse,
The Heauen hath property of sikernesse,
This world hath euer restlesse trauaile,
The last day is end of mine entresse,
In generall this rule may not faile.

THENUOYE OF FORTUNE.

Princes I pray you of your gentilesse,
Let not this man, and me thus cry and plain,
And I shall quite you this business,
And if ye liste releue him of his pain,
Pray ye his best frende of his noblesse,
That to some better state he may attain.

LENUOY.

To broken been the statutes hie in Heaven,
That create were eternally to dure,
Sithe that I see the bright goddes seuen,
Mowe wepe and waile, and passion endure,
As may in yearth a mortall creature:
Alas, fro whens may this thing proceede,
Of which errour I die almost for drede.

By word eterne whilom was it shape,
That fro the fifth cercle in no manere,
Ne might of teares doune escape,
But now so weepeth Uenus in her sphere,
That with her teares she wol drench vs here,
Alas Scogan this is for thine offence,
Thou causest this deluge of pestilence.

Hast thou not said in blasphemeof the goddis,
Through pride, or through thy gret rekelnes,
Such things as in the law of loue forbode is,
That for thy lady saw not thy distresse,
Therfore thou yaue her vp at Mighelmesse?
Alas Scogan of olde folke ne yong,
Was neuer erst Scogan blamed for his tong.

Thou drew in scorne Cupide eke to record,
Of thilke rebell word that thou hast spoken,
For which he woll no lenger be thy lord,
And Scogan, though his bow be not broken,
He woll not with his arowes be ywroken
On thee ne me, ne none of our figure,
We shall of him haue neither hurte ne cure.

Now certes frend I drede of thine vnhape,
Lest for thy gilte the wreche of loue procede
On all hem that been hore and round of shape,
That be so likely folke to spede,
Than we shall of our labour haue our mede,
But well I wot thou wolt answere and say,
Lo old Grisell list to renne and play.

Nay Scogan say not so, for I me excuse,
God helpe me so, in no rime doubtles,
Ne thinke I neuer of sleepe wake my muse,
That rusteth in my sheath still in pees,
While I was yong I put her forth in prees,
But all shall passe that men prose or rime,
Take euery man his tourne as for his time.

Scogan thou knelest at the stremes hedde
Of grace, of all honour, and of worthiness,
In thende of which I am dull as dedde,
Forgotten in solitary wildernesse,
Yet Scogan thinke on Tullius kindness,
Mind thy frende there it may fructifie,
Farewel, and looke thou neuer eft loue defie.

EXPLICIT.

Go forth king, rule thee by sapience,
Bishop be able to minister doctrine,
Lorde to true counsaile yeue audience,
Womanhode to chastity euer encline,
Knight let thy deedes worship determine,
Be righteous judge in sauing thy name,
Rich do almose, lest thou lese bliss with shame.

People obey your king and the law,
Age be ruled by good religion,
True seruaunt be dredful and kepe thee vnder aw,
And thou poore, fie on presumpcion,
Inobedience to youth is vtter destruction,
Remember you how God hath set you lo,
And doe your part as ye be ordeined to.

TO HIS EMPTY PURSE.

To you my purse and to none other wight
Complaine I, for ye be my lady dere,
I am sorry now that ye be light,
For certes ye now make me heauy chere,
Me were as lefe laid vpon a bere,
For which vnto your mercy thus I crie,
Be heauy againe or els mote I die.

Now vouchsafe this day or it be night,
That I of you the blissful sowne may here,
Or see your colour like the Sunne bright,
That of yelowness had neuer pere,
Ye be my life, ye be my hertes stere,
Queene of comfort and of good compaine,
Be heauy againe, or els mote I die.

Now purse that art to me my liues light,
And sauiour, as downe in this world here,
Out of this towne helpe me by your might,
Sith that you woll not be my treasure,
For I am shaue as nere as any frere,
But I pray vnto your curtesie,
Be heauy againe, or els mote I die.

EXPLICIT.

A BALLAD

MADE BY CHAUCER, TEACHING WHAT IS GENTILNESS, OR WHOM IS WORTHY TO BE CALLED GENTILL.

The first stocke father of gentilnes,
What man desireth gentil for to bee,
Must followe his trace, and all his wittes dreis,
Uertue to love, and vices for to flee,
For vnto vertue longeth dignitee,
And not the revers falsly dare I deme,
All weare he miter, crowne or diademe,

This first stocke was full of rightwisnes,
Trewe of his worde, sober, pitous and free,
Clene of his goste and loved besinesse,
Against the vice of slouth in honeste,
And but his eyre love vertue as did he,
He is not gentill though he rich seme,
All weare he miter, crowne or diademe.

Uicesse may well be heir to old richesse,
But there may no man, as men may wel see,
Bvquethe his eyre his vertues noblenessé,
That is appropried vnto no degree,
But to the first father in majestee,
That maketh his eyres them that him queme
All weare he miter, crowne or diademe.

EXPLICIT.

A PROVERB

AGAINST COVETISE AND NEGLIGENCE.

What shall these clothes manifold
Lo this hote somers day,
After great heat commeth cold,
No man cast his pilch away,
Of all this world the large compasse
It will not in mine armes twaine,
Who so mokel woll enbrace,
Litel thereof he shall distraine.

EXPLICIT.

A BALLAD

WHICH CHAUCER MADE AGAINST WOMEN UNCONSTANT.

Madame, for your new fangleness,
Many a servaunt have you put out of your grace,
I take my leave of your unstedfastness,
For well I wote, while ye to live haue space,
Ye cannot love full half yere in a place,
To new things your lust is ever kene,
In stede of blew, thus may ye wear all grene.

Right as a mirrour that nothing may 'enpressè,
But lightly as it cometh, so mote it passe,
So fares your love, your works bear witnes
There is no faith may your herte enbrace,
But as a wedercocke, that turneth his face
With euery wind, ye fare, and that is seene,
In stede of blew, thus may ye weare all grene.

Ye might be shrined, for your brothilnes,
Better than Dalyda, Cresseide, or Candace,
For ever in changing stondeth your sikernes,
That catche may no wight, from your herte a race,
If ye lose one, ye can well twein purchace
Al light for somar, ye wot well what I meene,
In stede of blew, thus may ye weare all grene.

EXPLICIT.

CHAUCER'S WORDS

UNTO HIS OWN SCRIVENER.

Adam Scriuener if ever it thee befall,
Boece or Troiles for to write new,
Under thy long locks thou maist haue the scall,
But after my making thou write more trew,
So oft a day I mote thy werke renew,
It to correct and eke to rubbe and scrape,
And all is thorow thy negligence and rape.

END OF THE GENUINE POETICAL WORKS OF CHAUCER.

THE

PROSE WORKS

OF

CHAUCER.

THE

PROSE WORKS

GEOFFREY CHAUCER.

BOECIUS

DE CONSOLATIONE PHILOSOPHIÆ.

Carmina qui quondam studio florenti peregi,
Flebilis heu mœstos cogor inire modos.

ALAS, I wepyng am constrained to begin verse of sorowefull matter, that whilom in florishyng studie made delitable ditees. For lo, rendyng muses of poetes, enditen to me thinges to be writen, and drerie teares. At laste no drede ne might ouercome tho muses, that thei ne werren fellowes, and folowden my waie, that is to saie: whan I was exiled, thei that weren of my youthe, whilom weelfull and grene, comforten now sorowfull wierdes, of me old man: for elde is comen vnwarely vpon me, hasted by the harmes that I haue, and sorowe hath commaunded his age to bee in me. Heeres hore aren shad ouertime liche vpon my head: and the slacke skinne trembleth of mine empted bodie. Thilke death of men is welefull, that ne commeth not in yeres that be swet, but cometh to wretches often icleped: alas, alas, with how defe an eare death cruell turneth awaie fro wretches, and naieth for to close wepyng iyen. While fortune vnfaithfull, fauoured me with light goodes, that sorowfull houre, that is to saie, the death, had almoste drente myne hedde: but now for fortune cloudie, hath chaunged her deceiuable chere to mewarde, myne vnpitous life draweth along vngreable dwellynges. O ye my frendes, what, or wherto auaunted ye me to been welfull? For he that hath fallen, stode in no stedfast degree.

Hæc dum mecum tacitus ipse reputarem, queremoniamque lacrimabilem stili officio designarem: adtitisse mihi supra verticem visa est mulier, reverendi admodum vultus, oculis ardentibus, et ultra communem, &c.

IN the meane while that I stil recorded these thynges with my self, and marked my wepelie complainte, with office of poinctell: I sought stondyng abouen the hight of mine hed a woman of full greate reuerence, by semblaunt. Her iyen brennying, and clere, seyng ouer the common might of menne, with a liuely colour, and with soche vigour and strength that it ne might not been nempned, all were it so, that she were full of so greate age, that menne woulden not trowen in no manere, that she were of our elde.

The stature of her, was of doutous judgemente, for sometyme she constrained and shronke her seluen, like to the common measure of menne: and sometyme it semed, that she touched the Heauen, with the hight of her hedde. And whan she houe her hedde higher, she perced the self Heauen, so that the sight of menne lookyng was in idell: her clothes wer maked of right delie thredes, and subtel craft of perdurable mattier. The whiche clothes, she had wouen with her owne handes, as I knewe well after, by her self declaryng, and shewyng to me the beautie: the whiche clothes a darkenesse of a forleten and dispised elde, had dusked and darked, as it is wonte to darke by smoked images.

In the netherest hemme or border of these clothes, menne redde iwouen therein a Grekishe A. that signifieth the life actiue, and aboue that letter, in the hiest bordure, a Grekishe C. that signifieth the life contemplatife. And betwene these twoo letters, there were seen degrees nobly wrought, in

maner of ladders, by whiche degrees, menne might climben from the netherest letter, to the vpperest: *nathelesse* handes of some men, hadden kerue that clothe, by violence or by strength, and eueriche manne of hem, had borne awaie soche pecces, as he might getten. And forsothe this foresaied woman, bare smale bookes in her right hande, and in her left hand, she bare a scepter. And whan she sawe these poeticall muses, approchyng aboute my bed, and endityng wordes to my wepynges, she was a litle amoued, and glowed with cruell iyen. Who (quod she) hath suffered approchen to this sicke manne, these common strompettes, of which is the place, that menne call theatre, the whiche onely ne asswagen not his sorowes with remedies, but thei would feden and norishe hym with swete venime? Forsothe, that been tho that with thornes, and prickynges of talentes of affeccions, whiche that been nothyngs fructous nor profitable, distroien the corne, plentuous of fruictes of reason. For thei holden hertes of men in vsage, but thei ne deliuer no folke fro maladie. But if the muses had withdrawen fro me with your flatteries, any an vnconnyng and vnprofitable manne, as been wont to finde commenly emong the people, I would well suffre the lasse greuously. For why, in soche an vnprofitable man, myne ententes were nothyng endamaged. But ye withdrowen fro me this man, that he hath been nourished in my studies or scoles of Cleaticis, and of Achademicis in Grece. But goeth now rather awaie ye mermaidens, whiche that been swete, till it be at the last, and suffreth this man to be cured and healed by my muses, that is to say, by my notefull sciences. And thus this companie of muses iblamed, casten wrothly the chere, dounward to the yearth, and shewing by rednesse hir shame, thei passeden sorowfully the thresholde. And I of whom the sight plounged in teares was darked, so that I ne might not know, what that woman was, of so imperiall auctoritie, I woxe all abashed and stonied, and cast my sight doune to the yerth, and began still for to abide what she would doen afterward. Then came she nere, and set her doune vpon the vttermost corner of my bed, and she beholdyng my chere, that was cast to the yearth, heauie and greuous of wepyng, complained with these woords (that I shall saine) the perturbacion of my thought.

Heu quam precipiti mersa profundo Mens hebet, et propria luce relicta, Tendit in externas ire tenebras, Terrenis quoties flatibus aucta Crescit in immensum noxia cura. Hic quondam cœlo liber aperto.

Alas, howe the thought of this man, dreinte in ouerthrowyng depenesse, dulleth and forleteth his proper clerenesse, mintyng to gone into forain darkenesse, as ofte as his anoious besines wexeth without measure, that is driuen with worldlie mindes. This man that whilome was free, to whom the Heauen was open and knowen, and was wont to gone in heauenly pathes, and sawe the lightnesse of the redde Sunne, and behelde the sterres of the colde Moone, and whiche sterre in Heauen, vseth wanderyng recourses iflitte by diuers spheres. This manne ouercomer had comprehended all this thyng, by nomber of accompting in astronomie. And ouer this, he was wont to seken the causes, whens the sowning windes mouen, and besien the smothe water of the sea. And what spirite tourneth the stable Heauen. And why the sterre riseth out of the red east, to fallen in the westeren waues. And what attempreth the lustie houres of the first sommer season, and highteth and apparaileth the yearth with rosie floures. And who maketh the plumtuous autumpne, in full yeres fleeten with heauie grapes. And eke this manne was wonte, to tell the diuers causes of nature that were hidde. Alas, how lightlie is empted the light of his thought, and his necke is pressed with heauie chaines, and beareth his chere enclined adowne for the greate weight, and is constrained to looken on the fole yearth.

Sed magis medicinæ (inquit) tempus est quam querelæ. Boe. Tum vero totis in me intenta luminibus. Philo. Tu ne ille es (ait) qui nostro quondam lacte nutritus, nostris educatus alimentis, in virilis animi robur evaseras? &c.

But tyme is now of medicine (quod she) more then complainte. Forsothe than she entendynge to me warde, with all the lookyng of her iyen saied. Art not thou he (quod she) that whilome I nourished with my milke, and fostred with my meates, were escaped and commen to the courage of a parfaite manne: Certes, I yaue thee soche armours, that if thou thyself, ne haddest firste caste hem a waie, thei shoulden haue defended thee in sikernesse, that maie not bee ouercomen. Knowest thou not me? why art thou still: is it for shame, or for astoniyng? It were me leuer it were for shame, but it semeth me that astoniyng hath oppressed thee. And when she sawe me not onely stil, but rather without office of tongue, and all dombe, she laied her hande softelie vpon my breast, and saied: Here is no perill (quod she) he is fallen into a litrage, whiche that is a common sickenesse, to hertes that been deceiued. He hath a little foryeten hymself. But certes he shall light lie remembren hymself, if so bee that he hath knowen me er nowe. And that he maie doen so, I will wipe his iyen a little, that be darked by the cloude of mortall thynges. These woordes saied she, and with the lappe of her garneniente, iplited in a frounce she dried myne iyen, that weren full of the wawes of my wepynges.

Tunc me discussa liquerunt nocte tenebræ, Luminibusque prior rediit vigor. Ut cum præcipiti glomerantur sidera Choro, Nimbosisque polus stetit imbribus. Sol latet, ac non dum cœlo venientibus astris, &c.

Thus whan that nighte was discussed awaie, darkenesse forlete me, and to my iyen repaired again her first strength. And right as by ensample, as the Sunne is hidde when the sterres been couerde with cloudes, by a swifte winde that hight Chorus, and the firmamente stante dercked by weate plungie cloudes. And that the sterres not apperen vpon the heauen, so that the night semed sprad vpon the yearth. If then the wind that hight Boreas, isent out of the caue, of the countrey of Trace, beateth this night, that is to saine, chas-

eth it awaie, and discouereth the closed daie. Than shineth Phebus, ishaken with sodaine light, and smiteth with his beames in marueilyng iyen.

Haud aliter tristitiæ nebulis dissolutis, hausi cœlum, et ad cognoscendam medicantis faciem, mentem recepi. Itaque ubi in eam deduxi oculos, intuitumque defixi, respicio nutricem meam, in cujus ab adolescentia, &c.

Right so and none otherwise, the cloudes of sorowe dissolued. and dooen awaie, I tooke heauen, and receiued mynde to knowen the face of my phisicien: so that I sette myne iyen vpon her, and fastened my lookyng. I beheld my nourice Philosophie, in whose house I had conuersed fro my youthe, and I saied thus. O thou maistresse of all vertues, discended from the souerain seate, why art thou commen into this solitarie place of myne exile: art thou comen, for thou art made coulpable with me of false blames. O (quod she) my nourice, should I forsake thee now, and should I not parten with thee by commen trauaile, the charge that thou haste suffered for enuie of my name? Certes, it were not lefull ne sittyng to Philosophie, to leten without companie, the waie of hym that is innocente: should I then redout my blame, and agrise as though there wer befallen a newe thing? for trowest thou that Philosophie, bee now alderfirst assailed in perilles, by folke of wicked maner? haue I not striuen with full grate strief, in olde tyme, before the age of my Plato, ayenst the foolehardinesse of foly: and eke the same Plato liuyng, his maister Socrates, deserued victorie of vnrightfull death in my presence. The heritage of the whiche Socrates, the heritage, is to saine the doctrine, of the which Socrates, in his opinion of felicite, that I cleape welefulnesse: whan that the people of Epicuriens and Stoicines, and many other, enforced theim to go rauish, euery man for his parte, that is to saine: that euerich of hem would drawen, to the defence of his opinion, the wordes of Socrates. Thei as in partie of their praie, to droune me, criyng and debatyng there ayenste, and eoruen and renten my clothes, that I had wouen with myne owne handes. And with tho clothes that thei had araced out of my clothes, thei wenten awaie, wenyng that I had gone with hem euery dele. In whiche Epicuriens and Stoiciens, for as moche as there semed some traces and steppes of my habite. The folie of wenyng tho Epicuriens and Stoiciens, my familiers, peruerted some, through the errour of the wicked multitude of hem: this is to sain, for thei semed philosophers, thei weren pursued to the death and slaine. So if thou hast not knowen the exilyng of Anaxagoras, ne the enpoisoning of Socrates, ne the tourmentes of Zeno, for thei weren straungers, yet mightest thou haue knowen the Senecas, the Canios, and the Soranos: of whiche folke, the renome is neither ouer olde ne vnsolempne. The whiche menne nothyng els ne brought to the death, but onely for thei were enformed of my maners, and semeden mooste vnlike to the studies of wicked folke. And for thy thou oughtest not to wondren, though that I in the bitter sea, be driuen with tempestes blowing about. In the whiche this is my moste purpose, that is to sain, to displeasen wicked men. Of whiche shrewes, all be the hooste neuer so greate, it is to dispise, for it is not gouerned with no leader of reason, but it is rauished onely by fletyng errour, folilie and lightlie. And if thei sometyme, make an hooste ayenst vs, assaile vs as strenger: our leader draweth together, his richesses into his toure, and thei been ententife, about sarpleris or sachelles, vnprofitable for to taken. But we than been high abouen, siker from all tumulte and woode noise, warenestored and enclosed in soche a Paleis, whither as the clateryng or anoiyng folie, maie not attaine, we scorne soche raueners, and henters of foulest thynges.

Quisquis composito serenus æuo, Fatum sub pedibus egit superbum: Fortunamque tuens utramque rectus, Invictum potuit tenere vultum, &c.

Who so it bee that cleare of vertue, sadde, and well ordinate of liuyng, that hath putte vnder foote the proude wierdes, and looketh vpright vppon either Fortune, he maie holden his chere vndiscomfited.

The rages ne the manaces of the sea, commouyng and chasyng vnware, heat from the bottome, ne shall not moue that manne, ne the vnstable mountaigne that hight Uesenus, that writheth out through his broken chimeneis, smokyng fires, ne the waie of thonder leite, that is wonte to smiten high toures, ne shall not moue that man. Whereto than wretches drede ye tirauntes, that been wood, and felonnous with any strength? hope after nothyng, ne drede thou not: and so shalte thou disarmen the ire of thilke vnmightie tiraunte. But who that quakyng dredeth, or desireth thyng that is not stable of his right, that manne that so dooeth, hath caste awaie his shilde, and is remoued fro his place, and enlaseth hym in the chaine, with the whiche he maie be drawen.

Sentis ne (inquit) hæc? atque animo illabuntur tuo? expers ne es lyræ? quid fles? quid lachrimis manas? si operam medicantis expectas, oportet ut vultus detegas tuum. &c.

Felest thou (quod she) these thyngs: and entrer thei aught in thy courage? art thou like an asse to the harp? why wepest thou? why spilleste thou teares: if thou abidest after helpe of the leche, thee behoueth discouer thy wounde? Tho I had gathered strength in my courage, and answered and saied. And nedeth it (quod I) of rehearsyng, or of amonicion, and sheweth it not inough by hymself, the sharpenes that wexeth woode against me. Ne moueth it not thee to se the face, or the maner of this place? Is this the librarie that thou haddest chosen for a right certain liege, to thee in mine hous there as thou disputest oft with me, of the science of thynges, touchyng diuinite, and touchynge mankynde? was than myne habite soche as it is now, was my face or chere, soch as it is now, whan I sought with the secretes of nature, whan thou enformedest my maners, and the reason of all my life, to the ensample of thorder of Heauen? Is not this the guerdone that I referre to thee, to whom I haue be obeisaunt? Certes, thou enformedest by the mouthe of Plato this sentence, that is to saine: that comen

thinges or comunalties weren blisfull, if thei that had studied all fully to wisedome, gouerneden thilke thynges: or els if it so befell, that the gouernours of communalties, studien to gette wisedome. Thou saidest eke by the mouthe of the saied Plato, that it was a necessarie cause, wise menne to taken and desiren the gouernaunce of comen thynges, for that the gouernaunce of citees, ileft in the handes of felonous tourmentors, citezeins ne shoulden not bringen in pestilence and distruccion to good folke. And therefore I followyng thilke aucthours, desired to put forthe in execucion and in acte, of comen administracion thilke thinges, that I had learned of thee, emong my secrete resting whiles, thou and God, that put in the thoughtes of wise folke, been knowen with me, that nothyng ne brought me to mastrie or dignitie, but the common studie of all goodnesse. And therfore cometh it, that betwene wicked folk and me, haue been greuous discordes, that ne mighten not bee released by praiers: for this libertie hath the fredome of conscience, that the wrathe of more mightie folke, hath alwaie been dispised of me, for sauacion of right. How oft haue I resisted and withstande, that man that hight Canigast, that made alwaie thassaut, ayenst the prosper fortunes of poor feoble folke? How eft eke haue I put of or cast out hym Triguill, prouoste of the kynges hous, bothe of the wronges that he had begonne to doen, and eke fully performed? How often haue I couered and defended by the auctoritie of me, put ayenst perilles, that is to saine: put myne auctoritie in peril, for the wretched poore folke, that the couetise of straungers vnpunished, turmenteden alwaie with miseases, and greuaunces out of nomber? Neuer manne yet drowe me fro right to wrong. Whan I sawe the fortunes and the richesses of the people of the prouinces, been harmed and amenused, either by priuie rauines, or by comen tributes or cariages, as sory was I as thei that suffreden the harme. Glose. Whan Theoderike king of Gothes in a dedde yere had his garners full of corne, and commaunded that no man should buye no corne, till his corne wer sold, and at a greuous dere prise: Boece withstoode that ordinaunce, and ouercame it, knowyng all this the king Theodorike hymself. Coempcion is to saie, comen achate or buiyng together, that were established vpon the people, by soche a maner imposicion, as who so bought a bushell of corne, he must yeuen the kyng the fiueth parte. Textus. Whan it was in the sore hongrie tyme, there was established greuous and vnprofitable coempcion, that men seen well, it shuld greatlie tourmenten and endomagen all the prouince of Campaine. I tooke strife ayenst the prouost of the pretorie, for the common profite. And the knowyng of it, I ouercame it, so that the coempcion was not asked, ne tooke effecte.

Pauline a counsailour of Roome, the richesses of the whiche Pauline, the hondes of the paleis, that is to saie, the officers woulden haue deuoured by hope and couetise: yet drowe I out of the iowes, of hem that gapeden. And for as moche as the paine of the accusacion a judged beforne, ne should not sodainly henten, ne punishen wrongfully Albine a counsailour of Roome, I putte me ayenst the hates, and indignacions of the accusour Ciprian. Is it not then inough, seus that I haue purchased great discordes ayenst myself? but I ought bee more assured ayenst other folke, that for the loue of right wisnesse I neuer reserued nothyng to myself, to hemwarde of the kynges halle, by whiche I were the more siker. But through the same accusours accusyng, I am condempned. Of the nomber of whiche accusours, one Basilius that whilome was chased out of the kynges seruice, is now compelled in accusyng of my name, for nede of foraine money.

Also, Opilion and Gaudencius, haue accused me: all be it, so that the justice regall had whilome demed theim bothe, to gone into exile, for hir tretcheries and fraudes without nomber. To whiche judgement thei nolden not obeye, but defended hem by the sikernesse of holie houses, that is to saine, fledden into seinte warie: and than whan this was apperceiued by the kynge, he commaunded, but if thei auoided the citee of Rauenne, by certayne daye assigned, that menne should marken hem on the forehedde, with an hotte yron, and chasen hem out of the toune. Now what thyng semeth might be likened to this crueltie, for certes, this same daie was receiued, the accusing of my name, by thilke same accusoures? What maie bee saied hereto? Hath my studie and my connynge deserued thus, or els the foresaied dampnacion of me, made theim rightfull accusours or no? Was not fortune ashamed of this? Certes, all had not fortune ben ashamed, that innocence was accused, yet ought she haue had shame of the filthe of myne accusours. But aske thou in some, of what gilte I am accused. Men saine that I would sauen the companie of the senatours. And desirest thou to heren, in what maner I am accused, that I should haue distourbed the accusour to bearen letters, by whiche he should haue made the senatours giltie, ayenst the kynges roiall maiestie. O maistresse, what demest thou of this? Shall I forsake this blame, that I ne bee no shame to thee? Certes, I haue would it (that is to saie) the sauacion of the senate, ne I shall neuer let to wihe it, and that I confesse and am a knowe, but the entente of the accusour to been distourbed, shall cease. Shall I clepe that a felonie or a synne, that I haue desired the sauacion of the order of the senate. And certes, had thilke same senate, doen through hir decretes and hir iudgementes, as though it wer a sinne and a felonie, that is to wilne the sauacion of them. But folie that lieth alwaie to hymself, maie not chaunge the merite of thynges, ne I trowe not by the iudgemente of Socrates, that it were lefull to me, to hide the sothe, ne assente to leasynges: but certes, how so euer it bee of this, I putte it to gessen or prisen, of the iudgement of thee, and of wise folke, of whiche thynge all the ordinaunce and the sothe (for as moche as folke that been to comen after our daies, shal knowen it) I haue putte it in scripture, and in remembraunce. For touchyng the letters falsely made, by whiche letters I am accused, to haue hoped the freedome of Roome, what apertaineth me to speaken thereof. Of whiche letters, the fraude had been shewed apertlie, if I had had libertie for to haue vsed and been at confession of mine accusours, the whiche thyng in all nedes hath great strength, for what other fredom maie menne hopen? Certes, I would that some other freedome might be hoped, I would than haue aunswered, by the woordes of a man, that hight Camus: for whan he was accused of Canius, Cesar

Germanes soonne, that he was knowyng and consentyng, of a coniuracion made ayenst hym. This Canius aunswered thus: If I had wiste it, thou haddest not wiste it. In whiche thyng, sorowe hath not so dulled my witte, that I plain onely, that shreude folke apparailen felonies againste vertue, but I wonder greatly, how that thei maie performe thinges that thei haue hoped for to deon, for why ne wil ne shreudnesse that cometh paraventure of our defaute. But it is like a monster and a marueile, how that in the presente sight of God, maie been acheued and performed soche thynges, as euery felenous manne, hath conceiued in his thought againste innocentes. For whiche thynge, one of thy familers not vnskilfull, asked thus: If God is: whens comen wicked thynges. But all had it been lefull that felonous folk, that nowe desiren the blood, and the death of all good menne. And eke of the senate, haue wilned to gone distroyen me, whom thei haue seen alwaie batailen and defenden good men and eke all the senate, that had not deserued of the fathers (that is to saine of the senatours) that thei shoulden will my destruccion. Thou remembreste well as I gesse, that whan I would doen or saine any thyng, thou thyself alwaie presente ruledest me.

At the citee of Werone, whan that the king gredie of comen slaughter, caste hym to transporten vpon al thorder of the senate, the gilte of his roial maiestie, of the whiche gilte, that Albin was accused, with how greate sikernesse of perill to me, defended I all the senate: thou wotest well that I saie sothe, ne I ne auaunted me neuer in praisyng of myself. For alwaie, whan any wight receiueth precious renome, in auauntyng of hymself, or his werkes, he amenuseth the secree of his conscience.

But now thou maiest well seen, to what ende I am comen for myne innocencie, I receiue paine of false felonie; for gwerdone of verie vertue. And what open confession of felonie had euer judges, so accordaunte in cruelte, that is to saine, as myne accusyng hath, that either errour of mannes witte, or els condicion of fortune, that is vncertaine to all mortall folke, ne submitted some of hem, that is to saie, that it ne enclined some judge to haue pite or compassion. For although I had been accused, that I would brenne holie houses, and strangle priestes with wicked swearde, or that I had greithed death to all good men, algates the sentence should haue punished me presente confessed and conuicte.

But now I am remoued from the citee of Rome, almoste fine hundred thousand paas, I am without defence dampned, to proscripcion and to death, for the studies and bounties that I haue doen to the senate. But o well been thei worthie of merite, as who saieth: naie, there might yet neuer none of hem bee conuict of soche a blame as mine is. Of whiche trespace mine accusours seen full wel the dignite for thei would darken it with medling of some felonie. Thei baren me on hond and saied, that I had polute and defouled my conscience with sacrilege, for couetise of dignitie: and certes, thou thyself that art planted in me, chacedest out of the siege of my corage, all couetise of mortall thynges, ne sacrilege, ne had no leaue to haue a place in me bofore thyne iyes. For thou droppedest euery daie in mine eares, and in my thought thilke commaundemente of Pythagoras, that is to saie: *menne* shall seruen to God, and not to goddes Ne it was not conueniente ne none neede, to taken helpe of the foulest spirites, I that thou hast ordeined, and set in soche excellence, that thou madest me like to God, and ouer this, the right cleane secrete chamber of myne hous, that is to saie, my wife, and the companie of mine honest frendes, and my wiues father, as well holie as worthy to bee reuerensed for his deedes, defenden me from all soche suspeccion of soche blame. But oh malice. For thei that accusen me, taken of the philosophie faith of so great blame, for thei trowen that I haue had affinite to malifice or enchauntment, bicause that I am replenished, and fulfilled with thy teachynges, and enformed of thy maners. And thus it suffiseth not onely, that thy reuerence ne auaile me naught, but if thou of thy frewill, rather bee blemished with mine offencion. But certes, to the harmes that I haue, there betideth yet this encrease of harme, that the gessyng and the iudgemente of moche folke, ne looken no thyng to the desertes of thinges, but onely to the auenture of fortune, and iudgen that only soche thinges been purueied of God, which that temporalle wilfulnesse commaundeth. Glosa. As thus, that if a wight haue prosperite, he is a good manne, and worthie to haue that prosperitie, and who so hath aduersitie, he is a wicked manne, and God hath forsake hym, and he is worthie to haue that aduersitie. This is the opinion of some folke, and therof cometh that good gessing, first of all thing forsaked wretches. Certes, it greueth me to thinke right now, in diuers sentences that the people saith of me: and thus moche I saie, that the last charge of contrarious fortune is this, that whan any blame is laied vpon a caitife, men women, that he hath deserued that he suffereth. And I that am put a waie from good men, and dispoiled of dignities, and defouled of my name by gessyng, haue suffred turmentes for my good deedes. Certes, me seemeth that I see the felonous couines of wicked men habounden in ioie and in gladnesse, and I se that euery lorell, shapeth hym to finde newe fraudes, for to accuse good folk, and I se that good folke bee ouerthrowen, for drede of my perill, and euery luxurious turmentour, dare dooen all felonie vnpunished, and bee excited thereto by yeftes, and innocentes be not onely dispoiled of sikernesse, but of defence, and therto me list to crien to God in this maner.

O stelliferi conditor orbis, Qui perpetuo nixus solio, Rapido cælum turbine versus, Legemque pati sidera cogis, Ut nunc pleno lucida cornu. Tobis fratris et obvia flammis. Condat stellas luna minores: Nunc obscuro pallida cornu Phœbo proprior lumina perdat, &c.

Thou maker of the wheele, that beareth the sterres, which that art fastened to thy perdurable chaire, and turnest the Heauen with a raueshyng sweigh, and constrainest the sterres to suffre thy lawe: so that the Moone some tyme shining with her full hornes, metyng with al the beames of the Sunne her brother, hideth the sterres that been lesse. And sometime whan the Moone pale, with her darke hornes approcheth the Sunne, leseth her lightes: and that the euin sterre Hesperus, whiche that in the first tyme of the night, bringeth firste

her colde arising, cometh eft ayen her vsed course and is pale by the morowe at risynge of the Sunne, and is then icleped Lucifer. Thou restrainest the daie by shorter dwellyng, in the tyme of the colde winter, that maketh the leaues fall. Thou diuidest the swifte tides of the night, when the hote sommer is comen. Thy might attempreth the variaunt seasons of the yere, so that Zepherus, the debonaire winde, bringeth ayen in the firste sommer season, the leaues that the winde that highte Boreas, hath reft awaie in autumpne, that is to saie, the last ende of sommer, and the sedes that the sterre that hight Arcitures sew, bee woxen high cornes, whan the sterre Sirius enchaseth hem. There is nothyng vnbounden from this olde lawe, ne forletteth the werke of his proper estate.

O thou gouernour, *gouerning all thinges* by certaine ende, why refusest thou onely to gouerne the werkes of menne by due maner: why suffrest thou, that slidyng fortune tourneth so greate enterchaunges of thynges, so that anoyous paine that should duelie punishe felones, punissheth innocentes: and folke of wicked maners, sitten in high chaires, and ennoyeng folke treden (and that vnrightfully) on the neckes of holy men. And vertue clere and shinyng naturally, is hid in derke derkenesses, and the rightful man beareth the paine and the blame of the felons. Ne the forsweringe, ne the fraude couerde and kempt with a false coloure, ne annoyeth not to shrewedenesse, the which shrewdnesse, whan hem list vsen hir strength, they reioysen hem to put vnder hem the soueraine kynges, which that the people without nombre dreden. O you what so euer thou be that knyttest al bondes of thinges, loke on these wretches, erthes, we men that been not a foule partie, but a fayre parte of so great a werke: we ben tourmented in this see of fortune. Thou gouernour, with drawe, and restreine the rauishing flodes, and fasten and ferme these yearthes stable, wyth thilke bonde, wyth whiche thou gouerneste heuen that is so large.

Hæc ubi continuato dolore delatravi: illa vultu placido nihilque meis questibus mota. Phi. Cum te (inquit) mœstum, lacrimantemque vidissem: illico miserum exulemque, cognovi. Sed quam id longinquum esset erilium.

Whan I had with a contynuall sorowe sobbed, or broken oute these thinges, she with her chere pesible and nothinge amoued with my complaintes, said thus. Whan I say ye (quod she) sorowful and weping, I wist anon that thou wer a wretch and exiled; but I wist neuer how fere thin exile was, yf the tale ne had yshewed it me. But certes al be thou ferre fro thy countrey, that nart not put oute of it, but thou hast failed of thy way and gone a mysse. And if thou hast leuer for to wene that thou be put out of thy countre, than haste thou put out thyselfe, rather than any other wight hath, for no wight (but thou thyself) ne might neuer haue done that to thee: for yf thou remembre thee of what countre thou art borne, it nis nat gouerned by emperours ne by gouernement of multitude, as weren the countreis of hem of Athenes, but one lorde and one kyng, and that is God, that is lord of thy countrey, which that reioyseth him of the dwelling of his cytezins and not for to put hem in exile. Of the which lord it is a fredome to be gouerned by the bridle of hym, and obey to his iustice. Hast thou forgotten thilke olde lawe of thy cyte, in the which cyte it is ordeined and established, that what wyght hath leuer founde therein his seete or his house than els wher, he maie nat be exiled by no righte from that place? For who so that is conteined within the palais of thilke cyte, there is no drede that he maye deserue to be exiled. But who that letteth thee wil tenhabite there, he forletteth also to deserue to be a citezein of thilke cite. So that I say, that the face of this place ne mouethe me not so mykel, as thyne owne face. Ne I ne aske not rather the walles of thy librarie, apparayled and wrought with yuory and with glasse, than after the seete of thy thought, in whiche I put nat whilon bookes, but I put that, that maketh bookes worthy of price or precious: that is to say, sentence of my bokes. And certainly of thy desertes bestowed in comen good, thou haste sayd soth, but after the multitude of thy good dedes, thou haste sayd fewe. And of the honestie or of the falsenesse of thinges that bene opposed against the, thou haste remembred thinges that be knowen to all folke. And of the felonies and fraudes of thin accusours, it semeth the to haue touched it, forsoth rightfully and shortly: al mighten tho same thinges better and more plentuously ben couthe in the mouthe of the people, that knowethe all this. Thou haste eke blamed greatlye and complained of the wrongefull deede of the senate. And thou haste sorowed for my blame, and thou hast wopen for the dommage of thy renoun that is apeired, and thy last sorowe enchased ayen fortune, complaynest the guerdons ne be not euenly yolden to the deserts of folke. And in thy latter ende of thy woode muse, thou praydeste that thylke peace that gouernethe the Heuen, shulde gouerne the erthe. But for that many tribulacions of affections haue assailled the, and sorow and yre and weping to drawen the diuersly, as you art now feeble of thought, mightier remedies ne shulden not yet touchen the, for which we willen somdele vsen lyghter medicynes, so that thylke passions that be waxen harde in swellynge by perturbacions flowynge into thy thoughte, mowen were easy and softe, to receiue the strength of a more mighty and more egre medicyne by an easier touchyng.

Cum Phœbi radiis grave Cancri sidus inestuat, Tum qui larga negantibus Sulcis semina credidit, Elusus Cereris fide, Quernas pergat ad arbores. Nunquam purpureum nemus Lecturus violas petas, &c.

Whan that the heuy sterre of the Cancre enchaseth by the beames of Phebus: that is to saine. Whan that Phebus the sonne is in the signe of Cancre, who so yeuethe than largeli his sedes to the felds that refusen to receiue hem, let him gon begiled of trust that he had to his corne, to akehorns of okes. Yf thou wilte gather violettes, ne go thou nat to the purple wedde, whan the feld chirkinge agrisethe of colde, by the felnesse of the winde that hight Aquilone. Yf thou desyrest or wilt vsen grapes, ne seke thou nat a gloutons honde to straine and presse the stalkes of the vyne

in the firste sommer ceason. For Baccus the god of wine, hathe rather yeuen his yeftes to Autumpne the latter ende of sommer. God tokeneth and assyneth the tymes ablynge hem to hir propre offyces, ne he suffreth not the stoundes, which that him selfe hath deuyded and contrayned, to ben ymedled togider: and for thy he that forletteth certaine ordinaunce of doynge by ouerthrowing way, he ne hath no glad issue or ende of his werkes.

Primum igitur, paterisne me pauculis rogationibus statum tuæ mentis attingere, atque tenture? ut qui modus sit tuæ curationis intelligam, &c.

Firste woldest thou suffre me to touche and assaye, the estate of thought by a fewe demaundes, so that I may vnderstand by, the maner of thy curacion? Aske me (quod I) at thy will, that thou wolt, and I shal answer. Tho saide she thus: Whether wenest thou (quod she) that this world be gouerned folishly by happes and fortunes, or els wenest thou that there be in it any gouernement of reason? B. Certes (quod I) I ne trowe nat in no mauer that so certaine thinges shulde be moued by fortunous fortune. But I wote wel that God, maker and maister is gouernour of his werke, ne was neuer yet day that might put me out of the sothnesse of that sentence. P. So is it (quod she) for the same thing sange thou a litel here beforne, and bewailedest and weptest, that onely men were put out of the cure of God, for of all other thinges thou ne doutest nat, that they nere gouerned by reason. But oughe, I wonder certes gretly why that thou art sicke, sens that thou arte put in so holsome a sentence: but let vs seken deper. I conieete that there lacketh I not what. But say me this. Sens that thou ne doutest not that this worlde be gouerned by god, with whiche gouernayle takest thou hede that it is gouerned? Unneth (quod I) know I the sentence of thy question, so that I ne maie not yet answeren to thy demaundes. I was not disceiued (quod she) that there ne failed some what by whiche the malady of perturbacion is crepte into thy thought, so as the strength of thy paleys shinynge is open: but saye me this. Remembrest thou what is thende of of thynges: and whider thentencion of al kinde tendeth. I haue herde tolde it some tyme (quod I) but drerinesse hathe dulled my memory. Certes (quod she) thou wotest well whence all thinges be comen and proceden, I wote wel (quod I) and aunswerde, that god is beginninge of al. And howe may this be (quod she) that sens thou knowest the beginning of thinges, that thou knoweste nat what is the ende of thinges, but soche ben the customes of perturbacion, and this power thei han that they may moue a man from his place, that is to say, from the stablenesse and perfection of his knowinge, but certes they may nat al aracc him, ne alien him in all: but I wold that thou woldest answere to this. Remembrest thou that thou arte a man: B. Why shulde I not remembre that (quod I) Phi. Mayst thou not tel me than (quod she) what thinge is a man? Askest thou not me (quod I) whether that I be a reasonable mortall best, I wote well and confesse that I am it. Wiste thou neuer yet that thou were anye other thinge (quod she). No (quod I). Nowe well knowe I (quod she) other cause of thy maladye, and that righte great: thou haste lefte for to knowne thy selfe what thou art, through whiche I haue plainly founden the cause of thy maladie, or els the entre of recouering of thy heale. For why? for thou art confounded with foryetynge of thy selfe: for thou sorowdeste that thou art exiled of thy propre goods. And for thou ne wyste what is thende of thinges, for thy demest thou that felonous and wiked men, be mighty and welful: and for thou hast forleten by which gouernementes the world is gouerned, for thy wenest thou that these mutations of fortune fleten without gouernour. These be the causes not onely to malady, but certes gret causes to deth: but I thanke the actour, and the maker of heale, that nature hath not al forleten the. I haue great nourishyng of thin heale, and that is the sothe sentence of gouernaunce of the world, that thou bileuest that the gouerning of it is not subiecte ne vnderput to the folie of these happes auenturous, but to the reason of God, and therfore doute the nothing, for of this litel spark thine heate of lyfe shall shyne. But for as moch as it is not time yet of faster remedies, and the nature is of thoughtes thus disceiued that as ofte as they caste awaye sothe opinions, they clothen hem in false opinions. Of the which false opinions the derkenesse of pertourbacion wexeth vp, that confoundeth the very in sight. And that darkenesse shal I som what assaye to maken thinne and weake, by lyght and meaneliche remedies, so that after that the derkenesse of disseiuynge thinges be dooen awaye, thou maye knowe the shyning of very lyght.

Nubibus atris Condita nullum Fundere possunt Sydera lumen. Si mare volvens Turbidus Auster Misceat æstum: Vitrea dudum, Parque serenis, &c.

The sterres couered with blacke cloudes ne mowe yeten adoun no light, if the trouble wynde that hyght Auster, turnynge and walowynge the see medeleth the hete, that is to sayne the boylynge vp from the botome. The wawes that were whylome cleare as glasse, and lyke to the fayre bright dayes, wythstante anon the syghtes of men, by the fylthe and ordure that is resolued. And the fletyng streme that reileth doune diuersly from high mountaignes is arrested and resisted ofte tyme by the encountryng of a stone, that is departed and fallen from some roche. And for thy, yf thou wilte loken and deme sothe with clere light, and holden the way with a right path weiue thou ioy, driue fro drede, fleme thou hope, ne let no sorow approche, that is to sayne: let non of these four passyons ouercome or blende the. For cloudy and derke is thilke thoughte and bounde with bridels wher as these thinges reignen.

EXPLICIT LIBER PRIMUS.

BOOK II.

Post hæc paulisper obticuit, atque ubi attentionem meam modesta taciturnitate collegit, sic exorsa est. Si penitus ægritudinis tuæ causas, habitumque, &c.

After this she stinte a littlé, and after that she had gadered by a temper stylnesse myne attencion, as who so might sayn thus: After these thynges she stynte a lytell, and whan she apperceiued by a temper stilnesse, that I was ententife to heren her, she began to speke in this wise. If I (quod she) haue vnderstonden and knowen vtterly, the causes and the habite of thy maladye, thou languishest and art defected for desire and talent of thy rather fortune. She that ylke fortune onelye that is chaunged as thou fainest to the warde, hath peruerted the clerenesse and the estate of thy courage I vnderstonding the felle or many folde colours and disceites of thilke meruaillous monstre fortune, and how she vseth ful flateryng familiarite with hem that she enforceth to begile, so long, til that she confound with vnsufferable sorow, hem that she hath lefe in dispaire vnpurueied. And if thou remembrest well the kinde, the maneres, and the deserte of thilke fortune, thou shalt wel knowe that as in here thou neuer ne hadest. ne haste yloste anye faire thinge: but (as I trowe) I shal not greatly trauailen to done thee remembren on these thinges. For thou were wont to hurtelen and dispisen her with many woordes, whan she was blandishyng and presente, and pursudest her with sentences that weren drawen oute of myne entre, that is to saye, of mine enformacion: but no sodaine mutacion ne betideth not without a maner chaunging of corages. And so it is befal, that thou arte a lytel departed fro the peace of thy thoughte, but now is tyme that thou drinke and ataste some softe and delitable thynges, so that whan they bee entred within thee, it mowen make way o strenger drinkes of medecyns. Come now forthe therfore the suasion of swetnes rethorien, which that goeth onely the right waie, while she forsaketh not myne estatutes. And with rhetorike come forthe musyke a damosell of oure house, that singeth nowe lighter modes or prolacions and now heauier. What eileth the man? What it is that hath caste the in to mourning and in to weping? I trowe that thou haste sene some new thing and vncouthe? Thou wenest that fortune be chaunged ayen me, but thou wenest wrong if that thou wene alway tho bene her maners. She hathe rather kept as to thee warde, her propre stablenesse in the chaunging of her selfe: right soch was she whan she flatterede thee and disceiued the, with vnleful likinges and false wilfulnesse. Thou haste nowe knowen and atteinte the doubtous or double visage of thilk blinde goddesse fortune. She that yet couereth aud wymplethe her to other folke, hath shewed her self euerydele to thee: yf thou approuest her and thinkest that she is good, vse her maners and plaine the nat, and yf thou agriseste her false trecherye, dispise and caste away her that playeth so harmefully, for she that is now cause of so moch sorowe to thee, shulde be to thee cause of peace and of ioye. She hath forsaken the forsoth, the which that neuer man may be syker, that she ne shal forsaken nim. Glose. But nathelesse some bookes haue the texte thus. Forsothe she hath forsaken the, ne ther nys no man siker that she ne hath not forsaken. Holdest thou than thylke welefulnesse precious to the that shal passen, and is present fortune dereworth to that, which that nys not faithfull for to dwel, and whan she goth awaye, that she bringeth a wight in sorowe. For sens she may not be with holden at a mannes wyll, she maketh him a wretche whan she departethe fro hym. What other thinge is flyttinge fortune; but a maner shewing of wretchidnesse that is to come. Ne it suffiseth not onely to loken on thing that is presente before the eyen of a man, but wysedom loketh and mesureth thende of thinges, and the same chaungyng from one to another, that is to saine, from aduersite in to prosperite, maketh that the manaces of fortune ne ben not for to dreden, ne the flateringe to be desired. Thus at laste it behoueth thee to suffren with euen wil in pacience, all that is done within the floore of fortune, that is to saye, in this worlde, sithe thou hast ones put thy necke vnder the yoke of her. For if thou wolt writen a lawe of wonding and of dwelling to fortune, which that thou hast chosen frely to ben thy lady: arte thou nat wrongful in that, and makest fortune wroth and asper by thine impacience, and yet thou mayst nat chaungen her?

Yf thou committest and betakest thy sayles to the wynde, thou shalt be shouen, nat thider that thou woldest, but whider that the wind shoueth the. Yf thou castest thy seedes in the feldes, thou shuldeste haue in minde that the yeres bene amonges other while plentuous, and other while bareins. Thou hast betaken thy selfe to the gouernaunce of fortune, and for thy it behoueth thee to ben obeisaunt to the maners of thy lady. Enforcest thou the to aresten or witholden the swyftnesse and the sweygh of her tourning whele: O thou fole of all mortal fooles, if fortune began to dwel stable, she cessed than to ben fortune.

Hæc cum superba verterit vices dextra, Exæstuantis more fertur Euripi. Dudum tremendos æva proterit reges, Humilemque victi sublevat fallax vultum. Non illa dura miseros audit, haud curat fletus.

When fortune wyth a proude righte hand, with tourned her chaunging stounds, she fareth like the maners of the boiling Euripe.

Glosa. Euripe is an arme of the see, that ebbethe and floweth, and some tyme the streme is on o side, and somtime on that other.

Texte. She crewel fortune casteth adoun kynges, that whylom weren ydrade, and she deceiuable enhaunceth vp the humble chere of him that is discomfited: ne she neither hereth ne recketh of wretched wepinges. And she is so hard, that she laugheth and scorneth the weping of hem, the whiche she hathe maked to wepe with her fre will. Thus she playeth and thus she proueth her strengthes, and sheweth a great wonder to al her seruauntes if that a wighte is seen welefull, and ouerthrowe in an houre.

Vellem autem pauca tecum, fortunæ ipsius verbis agitare. Tu igitur an jus postulet animadverte. P. Quid tu o homo ream me agis cotidianis querelis. &c.

Certes I wold pleden with the a fewe thynges, vsynge the wordes of fortune: take bede nowe thy selfe, yf that she aske right. O thou man, wherfore makest thou me gyltie by thyn euery dayes plainynges:

What wrong haue I done the? what goodes haue I beraft that were thyn? Stryue or plete with me before what iuge that thou wylt, of the possessyon, of richesses, or of dignities, and if thou maist shewen me, that euer any mortal manne hath receiued any of tho thinges to ben his in propre, than wil I graunt frely, that thilke thinges were thine, which that thou askest. Whan that nature brought the forth out of thy mothers wombe, I receyued the naked and nedy of all thinges, and I nourished the with al my richesses, and was redy and ententife through my fauour to sustaine the: and that maketh the nowe impacient ayenst me. And I enuironned the with al haboundaunce and shinynge of al goodes, that ben in my righte: nowe it lyketh me to withdrawe min honde. Thou hast had grace as he that hath vsed forayne goodes. Thou haste no right to playne the, as though thou haddest vtterly forlorne al thy thynges. Why plainest thou thanne? I haue done to the no wronge. Rychesses, honours, and soche other thinges ben of my right. My seruauntes knowen me for hir lady: they come with me and departen whan I wende. I dare well afferme hardely, that if tho thinges, of whiche thou playnest that thou hast forlorn had ben thin, thou ne haddest not forlorn hem. Shall I than be defended only to vse my right? Certes it is leful to the Heuen to make clere daies, and after that to ouercome tho same daies with derke nightes. The yere hath eke leaue to apparaile the visage of the erthe, now with floures, and nowe with fruite, and to confounde hem somtime with raines and with colde.

The see hath eke his right, to ben somtime caulme and blandishinge, with smothe water, and sometime to be horrible with wawes and with tempests. But coueitise of men, that may not be staunched, shall it binde me to be stedfaste, sythen that stedfastenesse is vncouthe to my maners. Soche is my strength, and soche play I play comenly. I turne the whirlinge whele with the turning cerkle, I am glad to chaungen the lowest to the hyest, and the hiest to the lowest. Worth vp if thou wolte, so it be by this lawe, that thou ne hold nat that I do the wrong, though thou discende adown, whan the reason of my play askethe it. Wiste thou not howe Cresus kyng of Lidiens, of whiche king Cyrus was full sore agaste, a lytel beforne that this Cresus was caughte of Cyrus, and ledde to the fyre to be brende, but that a rayne discended from Heuen that rescowed him? And it is out of mynde howe that Paulus counsul of Rome, whan he had taken the king of Perciens, weped petously for the captiuite of the selfe kinge? What other thing bewaylen the crienges of tragedies, but onely the dedes of fortune, that with an aukwarde stroke ouerturneth the realmes of greate nobleye. Glose. Tragedie is to saine, a ditee of a prosperite for a tyme, that endeth in wretchednesse. Lernedest not thou in Grece whan thou wer yonge, that in the entre or in the secler of Jupiter, there ben couched two tonnes, that one is ful of good, that other is full of harme? What right hast thou to plaine, if thou haste taken more plentously of the good syde, that is to sayne of richesse and prosperite? and what eke if I be not all departed fro the? what eke if my mutabylite yeueth the right-full cause of hope to haue yet better thinges? Natheles dismaye the not in thy thought. And thou that arte put in the comune realme of al, ne desyre not to lyuen by thin owne proper right.

Si quantas rapidis flatibus incitus Pontus versat arenas. Aut quot stelliferis edita noctibus Cœlo sidera fulgent: Tantas fundat opes, nec retrahat manum Pleno copia cornu: Humanum miseras haud ideo genus Cesset flere querelas, &c.

Thoughe plenty goddesse of riches, hylde adowne wyth a full horne, and with drawe not her hande, as manye richesse as the see turnethe vpwarde sandes, whan it is moued with rauyshinge blastes, or elles as manye rychesses as there shinen bright sterres in the Heuen on the sterry nightes: yet for all that mankinde nold not cesse to wepe wretched plaints. And al be it so that God receiued hir prayers, and yeueth hem as foole large moche golde, and appraileth couetous folke with noble or clere honours: yet semeth him haue gotten nothing. But alway cruel rauyne deuouringe al that they haue gotten, sheweth other gapinges, that is to saye, gapen and desiren yet after mo rychesses. What brideles might with holden to any certaine ende the disordinate couetise of men whan eyer the rather that it fleteth in large yeftes, the more brennethe in hem the luste of hauing? Certes he that quaking and dredefull weneth him selfe nedy, he ne liueth neuermore riche.

His igitur, si pro se tecum, verbis fortuna loqueretur, quid profecto contrahisceres, non habes. At si quid est quo querelam tuam iure tuearis, proferas oportet.

Therfore if that fortune speake with thee for her selfe in this maner, forsothe thou ne haddest nat what thou mighteste answere. And yf thou hast any thinge, wherwith thou mayst rightfully defenden thy complainte, it behoueth the to shewen, and I woll yeven to the space to tellent it. Boece. Certainli (quod I) than, these ben faire ythinges, and anointed with hony swetnesse of rhetorike and musike, and onely while they ben herde and sowne in eeres they ben delicious. But to wretches it is a deperfelynge of harme, this is to sain, that wretches felen the harmes that they suffre more greuously, than the remedies or the delites of these wordes may gladden or conforten hem. So that whan these thinges stinten for to sown in eares, that sorow that is inset greueth the thought. P. Right so it dothe (quod she.) For these ne ben yet no remedies of the malady, but they ben a maner norishinge of thy sorowes, that rebel ayenst thy curacion. For whan tyme is, I shal moue and aiust soch thinges, that precen hem ful depe. But nathlesse, that thou shalt not wilne to leten thy selfe a wretche. Haste thou forleten the numbre

and the manner of thy welfulnesse, I speake not how that the soueraigne men of the citye, toke thee in cure and keping, whan thou were orphelyn of father and of mother and were chosen in affynite of princes of the cite. And thou beganne rather to be lefe and dere than for to be a neighbour, the which thing is the moste precious kinde of any propinquite or aliance that maye ben. Who is it that ne sayde tho that thou ne were righte welefu1, with so great nobley as thy fathers in lawe, and with the chastite of thy wyfe, and with thoportunite and noblesse of thy masculine children, that is to sayn, thy sonnes. And ouer all thys (me lyste to passen of common thinges) how thou haddest in thy youth dignities, that were warned to old men, but it deliteth me nowe to comon to the singuler vpheapinge of thy welfulnesse. If any frute of mortal thinges may haue any wighte, or price of welefulnesse myghtest thou euer foryeten for any charge of harme that mighte befal, the remembraunce of thilke daye, that thou saw thy two sonnes made counsailours, and ladde togyther from thy house, vnder so great assemble of senatours, and vnder the blithnesse of the people? and whan thou saw hem sette in the court in hye chaires of dignities. Thou rhetorien or pronouncer of kinges praisinges, deseruedest glory of witte and of eloquence, whan thou sittinge bitwene thy two sonnes counsailours, in the place that hight Circo, and fulfilledest the bydding of the multitude of people that was sprade about the with so large praysynge and laude, as men synge in victories. Tho yaue thou to fortune as I trowe, that is to say, tho feoffedest thou fortune with glorious wordes, and deceiuedest her, whan she acoyed and norisheed the as her owne delices. Thou bare away of fortune a yefte, that is to say, soche guerdon that she neuer yaue to priuate man. Wilt thou therefore laye a rekeninge with fortune? She hath nowe first twyncled vpon the with a wicked eye. If thou consider the nombre and the manner of thy blisses and of thy sorows, thou maist nat forsaken that nart yet blisful. For if therfore thou wenest thy selfe not weleful for tho thinges that semeden ioyful ben passed ther nis not why thou shuldest seme thy selfe a wretch, for thinges that semed now sory, passen also. Art thou now comen a sodayne gest into the shadow or tabernacle of this life? or trowest thou that any stedfastnesse, be in mannes thinges? Whan oft a swifte houre dissolueth the same man, that is to saie, whan the soule departed from the body. For al though that selde is there any faithe that fortunous thynges would dwellen, yet nathelesse the last daye of a mannes lyfe is a maner deathe to fortune, and also to thike that hath dwelt. And therefore what wenest thou dare recke, if thou forlet her in diynge, or els that she fortune forlete the in fleyn awaye.

Cum polo Phœbus, roseis quadrigis Lucem spergere cœperit, Pallet albentes hebetata vultus Flammis stella prementibus, &c.

WHAN Phebus, the sonne beginnethe to prede hys clerenesse with rosen charlettes, thane the sterre dymmed palethe her white cheres by the flambes of the sonne that ouercommethe the sterre light, that is to sayne whan the sonne is rysen, the daye sterre wexethe pale and leseth her light. For the great lightnesse of the son, whan the wode wexeth rodi of rosen floures in the first sommer ceason, through the breth of the winde Zepherus that wexeth warme, if the cloudie wind Auster blowe felliche, than goeth away farinesse of thornes. Oft the see is clere and caulme with mouing floodes, and ofte the horrible wind Aquilon moueth boiling tempeste aud ouerwhelueth the see. If the forme of this world is so seld stable, and if it turneth by so many enterchaunges: wylt thou than trusten in the tomblyng fortunes of men? Wylt thou trowen on flyttynge goodes? It is certain and established by lawe perdurable, that nothing that is engendred is stedfast ne stable.

Tum ego, vera inquam, commemoras ó virtutum omnium nutrix: nec inficiari possum prosperitatis meæ velocissimum cursum. Sed hoc est, quid, &c.

THAN said I thus: O nourice of all vertues, thou saiest ful sothe ne I may not forsake the right swift course of my prosperitie that is to saine, that the prosperitie, ne becomen to me wonder swiftlie and sone. But this is a thynge that greatlie smarteth me, whan it remembreth me. For in all aduersities of fortune, the moste vnselie kynde of contrarious fortune, is to haue been welefull. Phi. But that thou abiest thus (quod she) the tourmente of thy false opinion, that maiest thou not rightfullie blamen, ne aretten to thynges, as who saieth, that thou hast yet many haboundances of thynges. Textus. For all be it so, that the idell name of auenturous welefulnesse, moueth thee now, it is lefull that thou reken with me, of howe many thynges, thou haste yet plentie. And therefore, if that thilke thing that thou haddest for more precious, in al thy richesse of fortune, be kept to thee, yet by the grace of God, vnwemmed and vndefouled: maiest thou than plaine rightfully, vpon the mischief of fortune, sithen thou hast yet thy best thinges? Certes, yet liueth in good point thilke precious honour of mankinde, Symachus thy wiues father, whiche that is a man made of al sapience and vertue, the whiche manne thou wouldest buye, with the price of thyne owne life, he bewaileth the wronges, that menne doen to thee, and not for himself. For he liveth in sikernesse, of any sentence put ayenst hym. And yet liueth thy wife, that is attempre of witte, and passyng other women, in clennesse of chastitie. And for I would closen shortlie her bounties, she is like her father: I tell thee, that she liueth lothe of this life, and kepeth to thee onelie her ghoste, and is all mate, and ouercome by wepyng and sorowe, for desire of thee. In the whiche thyng onelie, I mote graunten thee, that thy wilfulnesse is amenused. What shall I saine eke of thy two sonnes counsailours, of which as of children of hir age, there shineth the likenesse of the witte of hir father, and of hir eld father? And sithen the soueraine cure of all mortall folke, is to sauen hir owne liues, if thou knowe thy self, thy gooddes make thee more welefull. For yet ben there things dwelled to thee ward, that no man doubteth, that thei ne been more dereworthe to thee, than thyne owne life. And for thy drie teares, for

yet is not euery fortune, hatefull to thee ward: ne ouer greate tempest, ne hath not yet fallen vpon thee, whan thyne ancres cleuen faste: that neither woll suffren the coumfort of this tyme presente, ne the hope of tyme comyng, to passen ne to fallen. Bo. And I praie (quod I) that faste mote thei holden: for the whiles that they holden, how so euer that thynges been, I shall well fleten forthe and escapen. But thou maiest well seen, how great apparailes and araie, that me lacked, that be passed awaie from me. P. I haue somwhat auaunced and furthered thee (quod she) if that thou anoie not, or forthinke not of all thy fortune, as who saieth, I haue somewhat comforted thee, so that thou tempest not thee thus, with all thy fortune, sithen thou hast yet thy beste thinges. But I maie not suffren thy delices, that plainest so wepyng and anguishous, for that there lacketh somwhat to thy welfulnes. For what man is he that is so sad, or of great parfite welefulnesse, that he ne striueth and plaineth, on some halfe ayen the qualitie of his estate? For why, full anguishous thing is the condicion of mannes goodes. For either it cometh not al togither to a wight, or els it ne lasteth not perpetuell. For some man hath greate richesse, but he is asbamed of his vngentill linage. And some man is gnomed of noblesse of kinrede, but he is enclosed, in so greate anguishe of nede of thynges, that hym were leauer that he wer vnknowe. And some man haboundeth bothe in richesse and noblesse, but yet he bewaileth his chaste life, for he ne hath no wife. And some man is, and selily maried, but he hath no children, and nourisheth his richesses to straunge folke. And some man is gladed with children, but he wepteth full sore, for the trespace of his soonne, or of his doughter. And for this there ne accordeth no wight lighly, to that condicion of his fortune. For alwaie to euery man, there is in somwhat that vnassaied, he ne wotte noughte, or els he dredeth that he hath assaied. And adde this also, that euery welefull man, hath a full delicate feling: so that but if all thinges befallen at his own will, he is impacient, or is not vsed to haue none aduersitie, anon he is throwen adoune for enery little thing. And full little thinges been tho, that withdrawen the somme or the perfeccion of blisfulnesse, fro hem that been moste fortunate. Howe many man trowest thou, would demen hemself, to been almost in Heauen, if thei mighten attain to the least partie, of the remnaunte of thy fortune? This same place that thou cleapeste exile, is countrey to them that enhabiten here. And for thy nothyng wretched, but whan thou wenest it, as who saith: thou thy self ne no wight els nis a wretch, but whan he weneth himself he is a wretch, by reputacion of his courage. And ayenward: al fortune is blisfull to a man, by the agreabilitie, or by the egalitie of hym that suffreth it. What man is that, that is so welefal, that nolde chaungen his estate whan he hath loste his pacience? The swetenesse of manes welefulnesse, is spraint with many bitternesses. The which welefulnesse, although it seme swete and ioiful, to him that vseth it, yet maie it not been with holden, that it ne goeth awaie whan it wol. Than it is well seen, how wretched is the blisfulnesse of mortall things that neither it dureth perpetuell with hem, that euery fortune receiuen agreablie or egally, ne it deliteth not in all to hem that been anguisshous. O ye mortall folke, what seeke ye than blisfulnesse out of your owne selfe: whiche is puf in your self? Errour and folie confoundeth you. I shall shewe thee shortlie the poincte of soueraine blisfulnesse.

Is there any thyng to thee, more precious than thy life? Thou wilte aunswere naie. Than, if it so bee that thou art mightie ouer thy self, that is to saine, by tranquilitie of thy soule, than haste thou thynge in thy power, that thou noldest neuer lesen: ne fortune maie not bynemme it thee. And that thou maiest knowe that blisfulnesse, ne maie not stande in thynges, that been fortunous and temporell, now vnderstande, and gather it together thus. If blisfulnesse be the soueraine good of nature, that liueth by reason: ne thilke thyng is not soueraine good, that maie be taken awaie in any wise.

For more worthie thing is, and more digne thilke thing, that maie not be taken awaie. Than sheweth it well, that the unstablenesse of fortune, maie not attaine to receiue verie blisfulnesse. And yet more ouer, what manne that this tomblyng welefulnesse leadeth, either he wote that it is chaungeable, or els he wote it not: and if he wote it not, what blisfull fortune maie there been in the blindnes of ignorance: and if he wot, that it is chaungeable, he mote alwaie been a dradde, that he ne lese that thing, that he ne douteth not, but that he maie lesen it. As who saieth, he mote alwaie be agast, least he lese that, that he woteth right well he maie lese. For whiche the continuell dreade that he hath, ne suffereth hym not to be welefull. Or els if he lese it, he weneth to bee dispised and foreleten. Certes, eke that is a ful litle good, that is borne with euen herte, whan it is losse, that is to saine, that men dooe no more force of the losse, than of the hauyng. And for as moche as thou thy self arte he, to whom it hath bee shewed, and preued by full many demonstracions, as I wotte well, that the soules of menne, ne mowen not dien in no wise. And eke sens it is cleare and certaine, that fortunous welefulnesse, endeth by the death of the bodie: it maie not be douted, that if death maie take awaie blisfulnesse, that all the kind of mortal thing ne discendeth into wretchednesse, by the ende of death. And sithen we know well, that many a manne hath sought the fruict of blisfulnesse, not onely with sufferyng of death, but eke with sufferyng of paines and tourmentes: howe might than this presente life make men blisfull, sens that thilke self life ended, it ne maketh folke no wretches.

Quisquis volet perennem
Cautus ponere sedem,
Stabilisque nec sonori
Sterni flatibus Euri,
Et fluctibus minantem
Curat spernere pontum:
Montis cacumen alti,
Bibulas vitet arenas. &c.

What maner of folke, ware and stable, that woll founden hem a pardurable seate, and ne wil not bee caste doune with the loude blastes of the winde Eurus, and will dispise the sea, menasyng with floudes: lette hym eschue to builden on the coppe of the mountaigne, or in the moiste sandes.

For if the fell winde Auster, tourmenteth the coppe of the mountaignes, with all her strengthes, and the lose sandes, refusen to beare the heauy weightes. And for thy if thou wolte flien the perillous auenture, that is to saie, of the worlde: haue mynde certainlie, to set thyne house of a merie seate in a lowe stone. For all though the wynde troublyng the sea, thonder with ouerthrowyng, thou that arte putte in quiete and welefull, by strength of thy paleis, shalt leade a cleare age, scornynge the woodnesse, and the ires of the aire.

Sed quoniam rationum jam in te mearum fomenta descendunt, paulo validioribus utendum puto. Age enim. Si jam caduca ac momentaria Fortunæ, &c.

But for as moch, as the nourishynges of my reason, discenden now into thee, I trowe it wer tyme to vsen a littell strenger medicens. Nowe vnderstande here, all were it so that the yeftes of fortune, ne were not brittle ne transitorie, what is there in hem, that maie be thin in any tyme: or els that it ne is foule, if that it be looked, and considered perfitlie. Richesses, been thei precious by the nature of them self, or els by the nature of thee: what is most worthe of richesse? Is it not gold, or might of money assembled: certes, that gold and that money shineth, and yeueth better renome to theim that dispenden it, than to thilke folke that mockeren it: for auarice maketh alwaie muckerers to been hated, and largesse maketh folke clere of renome. For sithe that soch thingse as been transfered, from one man to an other: ne maie not dwell with no manne: certes, than is that money precious, whan it is translated into other folke, and stinten to be had by vsage of large yeuyng, of hym that hath yeuen it. And also if all the money that is ouer all, in al the worlde, were gadered toward one man, it should make all other men to bee nedie as of that. And certes, a voice all hole, that is to saine, without amenusyng, fulfilleth together the hearing of moch folk. And whan thei been apassed, needes thei maken hem poore, that forgone tho richesses.

O, straite and nedy clepe I these richesses, sens that many folke ne maie not haue it all, ne al ne maie it not comen to one man, without pouertie of all other folke, And the shining of gemmes, that I call precious stones, draweth it not the iyen of folke to hemward, that is to saine, for the beautie. But certes, if there were beautie, or bountie in shinyng of stones, thilke clerenesse is of the stones hemself, and not of menne. For whiche I wonder greatlie, that men marueilen on soche thynges. For why, what thyng is it, that if it wanteth mouyng, and ioyncture of soule and bodie, that by right might semen a faire creature, to hym that hath a soule of reason. For al be it so, that gemmes drawen to hem self, a little of the last beautie of the world, through thentent of hir creatour, and the distinccion of hemself, yet for as mikell, as thei been put vnder your excellence, thei ne haue not deserued by no waie, that ye should marueilen on hem. And the beautie of fieldes, deliteth it not mikell vnto you:

B. Why should it not deliten vs, sithe that it is a right faire porcion, of the right faire werke, that is to saine, of this worlde? And right so been we gladded somtime, of the face of the sea, whan it is cleare: and also marueilen wee on the Heauen and on the starres, and on the Sunne, and on the Moone. Phi. Appertaineth (quod she) any of thilke thynges to thee: why darest thou glorifie thee, in the shinyng of any soche thynges? Arte thou distingued and embelised, by the springyng floures of the first sommer season? Or swelleth thy plentie in fruictes of sommer? Why art thou rauished with idle ioies: why embracest thou straunge goodes, as they wer thine: fortune ne shall neuer make, that soche thinges been thyne. that nature of thynges, hath maked foraine fro thee? Sothe it is, that, withouten doubte, the fruictes of the yearth, owen to be to the nourishyng of beastes. And if thou wolt fulfill thy neade, after that it suffiseth to nature, than is it no neade, that thou seke after the superfluitie of fortune. For with full fewe thynges, and with full litle thynges, nature hath her apaied. And if thou wolte achoken the fulfillyng of nature with superfluities: certes thilke thinges that thou wolt thresten or pouren into nature, shullen been vnioyful to thee, or els anoious. Wenest thou eke, that it bee a faire thing, to shine with diuers clothinges? Of whiche clothing, if the beaute be agreable to loken vpon, I woll marueilen on the nature, of the matter of thilke clothes, or els on the woorke man that wrought hem. Doeth also a long route of meine, make thee a blisfull man? The whiche seruauntes if thei been vicious of condicions, it is a great charge, and distruccion to the hous, and a great enemie to the lorde himself. And if thei been good men, how shal straunge and forain goodnesse, be put in the nomber of thy richesses? So that by all these foresaied thynges, it is clearelie shewed, that neuer one of thilke thinges, that thou accomptedest for thy goodes, nas not thy good. In whiche thinges, if there bee no beautie to be desired, why shouldest thou be sorie to lese them? Or why shouldest thou reioyce thee to hold hem? For if thei been faire of their own kind, what appertaineth that to thee: for also well shoulden thei haue been faire by themself, though thei wer departed from all the richesses. For why, faire ne precious wer thei not, for that thei comen emong the richesses. But for thei semed faire and precious, therefore thou haddest leuer reken hem emonges thy richesses. But what desirest thou of fortune, with so greate afare? I trow thou sekest to driue awaie nede, with habundaunce of thynges, but certes, it tourneth you all into the contrarie. For why, certes it nedeth of full many helpinges, to kepen the diuersite of precious hostilementes. And sothe it is, that of many thynges thei haue neede, that many thynges haue. And ayen warde, of little thyng nedeth hym, that measureth his fill, after the nede of kind, and not after outrage of couetise. It is so than, that ye menne haue no proper good set in you, for soche ye moten seeke outwarde, in forain and subiect thinges. So is than the condicion of thinges tourned vp so doun, that a man that is a diuine beast, by merit of his reason, thinketh that hymself nis neitheir faire ne noble, but if it bee through possession of hostilimentes, that ne han no souls, and certes al other thynges been apaied of hir owne beauties: but ye men, that be semblable to God, by your reasonable thought, desiren to aparailen your excellent kinde of the lowest thinges. Ne ye vnderstanden not how greate a wrong is dooen to your creatour. For he

would that mankinde were moste worthie, and noble of any yearthly thing: and ye threeten doun your dignities binethen the lowest thynges. For if that all the good of euery thing be more precious, than is thilke thing, whose that the good is, sith ye demen that the foulest thynges, been your goodesse: than submitten ye, and put your seluen vnder the foulest thinges, by your estimacion. And certes, this betideth not, without your desert. For certes, soche is the condicion of all mankinde, that onely whan he hath knowyng of it self, than passeth it in noblesse, all other thinges. And whan it forletteth, the knowyng of it self, than it is brought benethen all beastes. For why, all other liuing beastes, han of kind to knowen not himself. But whan that men letten the knowyng of hem self, it cometh hem of vice. But how brode sheweth the errour, and the folie of you men, that wenen that any thynge, maie been apparеled, with straunge apparelmentes? But forsothe that maie not be doen. For if a wight shineth with thinges that been put to hym: as thus. If thilke thinges shinen with which a man is apparelled: certes thilke thinges been commended and praised, with which he is apparelled: but nathelesse, thyng that is couered, and wrapped vnder that, dwelling in his filthe. And I deny that thilke thing be good, that annoieth hym that hath it. Gabbe I of this? Thou wolte saie naie. Certes, richesses haue anoied full ofte hem, that han had tho richesse. Sithe that euery wicked shrewe, is for his wickednesse, the more greadie after other folkes richesses, where so euer it be in any place, bee it golde or precious stones, and weneth hym onely moste worthie that hath hem. Thou than that so busie, dredest nowe the sweard and the speare, if thou haddest entred in the pathe of this life, anoied waifaring man, than wouldest thou sing before the thefe, as who saith, a poor man that beareth no richesse on hym by the waie, male boldly sing beforne theues, for he hath not wherof to bee robbed. O precious and right cleare, is the blisfulnesse of mortall richesse, that whan thou haste gotten it, than hast thou lorne thy sikernesse.

Felix nimium prior ætas, Contenta fidelibus arvis, Nec inerti perdita luxu; Facilique sera solebat Jejunia solvere glande. Nec Bacchica munera norat, Liquido confundere melle, Nec lucida vellera serum, &c.

Blisfull was the first age of men, thei helden hem apaied with the meates that the true feldes broughten foorthe, thei ne destroied, nor deceiued not hem self without rage, thei weren wonte lightlie to slaken hir hurger at euin, with akehornes of okes, thei ne conde not medell the yefte of Baccus, to the cleare honie, that is to saine, thei could make ne piemente or clarre: ne thei could not medell the bright fleeces of the countrey of Seriens, with the venime of Tiry, this is to sain, thei conde not dien white fleces of Syrien countrey, with the bloode of a maner shelfishe, that men finden in Tirie, with whiche blood men dien purple.

Thei slepten holsome slepes vpon the grasse, and dronken of the rennyng waters, and lien vnder the shadowes of the hie pine trees. Ne no geste or straunger, ne carfe yet the hie sea, with oores or with shippes, ne thei ne hadden sein yet no newe strondes, to leden marchandise, into diuers countreis. Tho weren the cruell clarions full hust, and full still. Ne blood ishad by egre hate, ne had deied yet armures. For where to, or which woodnesse of enemies would firste mouen armes, whan thei sawen cruell woudes, ne none meedes be of blood yshad? I would that our tymes should tourne ayen to the old maners. But the anguishous loue of hauyng in folke, burneth more cruelly, than the mountain of Ethna, that are brenneth. Alas, what was he that firste dalfe vp, the gobbettes or the weightes of golde, couered vnder yerth, and the precious stones, that woulden haue be hidde? He dalfe vp precious perilles, that is to sain, that he that hem first vp dalfe, he dalfe vp a precious perill, for why for the preciousnes of soche thyng, hath many man been in perill.

Quid autem de dignitatibus, potentiaque disseram quas vos, veræ dignitatis, ac potestatis inscii, cælo exequatis? Quæ si in improbissimum quemque, ceciderint, &c.

But what shall I saie of dignities and powers, the whiche ye men that neither knowen verie dignitie, ne verie power, areisen hem as high as the Heauen? The which dignities and powers, if thei comen to any wicked manne, thei dooen as greate damages and destruccions, as doeth the flambe of the mountaigne Ethna, whan the flambe waloweth vp, ne no deluuy ne dooeth so cruell harmes. Certes ye remember well (as I trow) that thilke dignitie, that men cleape the imperie of counsailours, the whiche whilome was, beginnyng of fredome, your elders coueited to haue doen awaie that dignitie, for the pride of the counsailours. And right for that same, your elders before that tyme, had doen awaie out of the citiee of Roome, the kynges name, that is to saine, thei nolde haue no lenger no king. But now, if so be that dignities and powers, been yeuen to good men, the whiche thyng is full selde, what agreable thynges is there, in the dignities and powers, but onely the goodnes of folke that vsen hem? And therefore is it thus, that honour cometh not to vertue, bicause of dignitie: and ayen ward, honour cometh of dignitie, for cause of vertue. But whiche is thilke your dereworth power, that is so clere, and so requirable? O ye yearthly beastes, consider ye not ouer whiche thyng, that it semeth that ye haue power? Nowe, if thou sawe a mouse, emong other mise, that chalenged to hym selfwarde, right and power ouer all other mice, how greate scorne wouldest thou haue of it? Glosa. So fareth it by men, the bodie hath power ouer the bodie: for if thou looke well vpon the bodie of a wight, what thyng shalt thou find more fraile, than is mankinde: the whiche menne full ofte be slaine, by bityng of flies, or els with entring or creping wormes, into the priuities of mannes bodie. But where shall men finden any man, that maie exercisen or hanten any right vpon an other man, but onely on his body, or els vppon thynges, that been lower than the bodie, the which I cleape fortunes possessions? Maiest thou haue euer any commaundment, ouer a free corage? Maiest thou remeue fro thestate of his proper rest, a thought that is cleauyng togither in hymself, by stedfaste reason? as whilome a tiraunt wened, to confounde a freman of courage, and wend to constrain hym

by tourmentes, to maken him discoueren and accusen folke, that wisten of a coniuracion, whiche I cleape a confederacie, that was easte ayenst this tiraunte: but this freman bote of his owne tongue, and easte it in the visage of thilke woode tiraunte. So that the tourmentes, that this wood tiraunt wende to haue made matter of crueltie: this wise man made it matter of vertue. But what thyng is it, that a man maie doe to an other man, that he ne may receiuen the same thing of other folke in himself? Or thus: what may a man doen to folke, that folke ne maie doen to hym the same? I haue heard tolde of Busirides, that was wont to slean his gestes, that herbroden in his hous: and he was slain hymself by Hercules that was his geste.

Regulus had taken in battaile, many men of Affrike, and cast hem into fetters: but sone after, he must yeuen his handes to be bound, with the cheines of hem, that he had whilome ouercomen. Weneste thou than, that he bee mightie, that hath power to dooen a thyng, that other ne maie doen in hym, that he hath in other? And yet more ouer, if so were, that these dignitees of powers, hadden any proper or naturell goodnesse in hem, neuer nold thei comen to shrewes. For contrarious thinges, ne been wonte to been ifelowshipped togithers. Nature refuseth that contrarious thynges been ioyned. And so as I am in certaine, that wicked folke haue dignitees ofte tyme, than sheweth it wel that dignitees and powers, ne been not good of hir owne kinde, sens that thei sufferen hem self to cleauen, or ioynen hem self to shrewes. And certaine the same thing maie I moste dignely iudgen, and saine of all the yeftes of fortune, that moste plenteouslie comen to shrewes, of whiche yeftes I trowe, it ought be considered, that no man doubteth that he is strong, in whom he seeth strength: and in whom swiftnesse is, sothe it is that he is swifte.

Also musike maketh musiciens, and phisike maketh phisiciens, and rhetorike eke rhetoriciens. For why, the nature of euery thing maketh his propertie, ne it is not entremedled, with the effecte of contrarious thynges. But certes, richesses maie not restraine auarice vnstanched. Ne power ne maketh not a man mightie ouer hymself, whiche that vicious lustes: holden destrained with chaines, that ne mowen not be vnbounden. And dignitees, that be yeuen to shreude folke, not onely ne maketh hem not digne: but sheweth rather all openly, that thei been vnworthy and indigne. And it is thus. For certes, ye haue ioye to cleape thinges with false names, that beareu hem in all the countrey, the whiche names been full oft reproued, by the effecte of the same thinges. So that these ilke richesses, ne oughten not by right, to bee cleped richesses, ne soche power, ne ought not to bee cleped power, ne soche dignitee, ne ought not to be cleped dignite. And at laste I maie conclude, the same thyng of all the yeftes of fortune: in which there nis nothyng to be desired, ne that hath in hymself naturell bountie, as it is well iseen, for neither thei ioynen hem not alwaie to good men, ne maken hem alwaie good, to whom thei been ioyned.

Novimus quantas dederit ruinas, Urbe flammata, patribusque cæsis, Fratre qui quondam ferus interempto, Matris effuso maduit cruore. Corpus et visu gelidum pererrans. Ora non tinxit lachrimis; sed esse. Censor extincti potuit decoris, &c.

We haue well knowen, how many greate harmes and distinccions, were doen by the emperour Nero. He let brennen the citee of Roome, and made slea the senatours, and he cruell whilome sloughe his brother. And he was made moiste with the bloode of his mother, that is to saie, he lette sleen and slitten the wombe of his mother, to seen where he was conceiued, and he loked on euery halue of her dedde colde body, ne no teare wette his face, but he was so harde hearted, that he might be domes manne, or judge of her dedde beautie. And nathelesse, yet gouerned this Nero by scepter, al the people that Phebus maie seen commyng, from his vterest arisyng, till he hid his beames vnder the wawes, that is to saine, he gouerned all the peoples, by ceptre imperiall, that the Sunne goeth about fro east to west. And eke this Nero gouerned by ceptre, all the peoples that be vnder the colde sterres, that highten the Septentrions, that is to sain, he gouerned all the peoples, that be vnder the partie of the north. And eke Nero gouerned all the peoples, that the violent wind Nothus skorcilth, and baketh the brennyng sandes, by his drie heate, that is to saie, al the peoples in the southe. But yet ne might not all his power, tourne the woodenesse of this wicked Nero. Alas it is a greuous fortune, as oft as a wicked sweard, is ioyned to cruell venime, that is to saie, venemous crueltie, to lordeshippe.

Tũc ego. Sis (inquam) ipsa, minimum nobis ambitionem mortalium rerum fuisse dominatam. Sed materiam gerendis rebus optavimus, quo ne virtus tacita consenesceret. P. Et ilia. Atqui hoc unum est, &c.

Then said I thus. Thou wotest well thy self, that the couetise of mortall thinges, ne hadden neuer lordshippe in me. But I haue well desired matter of thinges to doen, as who saith, I desire to haue matter of gouernaunces, ouer cominalties, for vertue still should not elden: that is to saine, that lest er that he wexte old, his vertue that laie now stil, ne shuld not perishe vnexercised, in gouernaunce of commune: for whiche men might speaken or writen, of his good gouernement. Phi. Forsothe (quod she) and that is a thyng that maie drawen to gouernaunce, soche hertes as been worthie and noble of hir nature: but nathlesse it maie not drawen, or tellen soche hertes, as been ybrought to the full perfeccion of vertue, that is to saine, couetise of glorie and renome, to haue well administred the eommon thinges, or dooen good desertes, to profite of the common. For se now and consider, how little and how voide of all price is thilke glorie, certain thing is as thou hast learned, by the demonstracion of astronomie, that all the enuironning of the yearth about, ne halt but the reason of a pricke, at the regard of the greatnesse of the Heauen, that is to sain, that if ther wer maked, comparison of the yerth, to the greatnes of Heauen,

men would iudgen in al that ne held no spâce. Of the whiche little region of this world, the iiii. part of the yerth is inhabited with liuing beastes that we knowen, as thou hast thy self ilerned by Ptholome that proueth it. And if thou haddest withdrawen and abated in thy thoughte for thilke fourthe partye, as moche space as the see and the mareis conteynen and ouergone: as moche space as the region of drought ouerstreteheth, that is so sain sandes and desertes, well vnneth shuld there dwellen a right straite place to the habitacion of men. And ye that be enuironned and closed with the leste pricke of thilke pricke, thinken ye manifesten or publishen your renome and done your name for to ben borne forthe. But your glory that is so narowe and so strayte throngen into so litel boundes, howe mykell conteineth it in larges and in great doynge. And also sette therto, that many a nacion dyuers of tonge and of maners, and eke of reason of hir lyuinge, ben inhabited in the close of thike habitacle, the which nacyons what for difficulte of wayes, and what for diuersyte of langage, and what for defaulte of vnusage, and entrecomuninge of marchandyse: not onely the names of singuler men ne may not stretchen, but eke the fame of cities maie not stretchen. At the last, certes in the time of Marcus Tullius, as him selfe wrytte in hys boke that the renom of the common of Rome, ne had not yet passed ne clomben ouer the mountaine that hight Caucasus, and yet was Rome well waxen and redoubted of the Parthes, and eke of other folke enhabyting about.

Seest thou not than howe straite and howe compressed is thilke glorie that ye trauailen, aboute to sheuen and to moulteplye? Maye than the glory of a synguler Romaine stretchen thider as the fame of the name of Rome maye not clymben ne passen? And eke seest thou not that the maners of diuers folke and hir lawes ben discordant amonges hemself, so that thilke thing that sum men iudge worthy of praysing, other folke iudgen that, that is worthy of tourment. And herof cometh it that though a man deliteth him in praisyng of his renome, he may not in no wise bringen forthe ne spreden his name to manye maner peoples, and therfore euery man ought to be apaide of his glory, that is published among his owne neyghbours, and thylke noble renome shal be restrained within the boundes of tho maner folke. But howe manye a man that was ful noble in his tyme, hath the wretches and nedy forietinge of writers put oute of minde and don away, al be it so that certes thilke thinges profiten litel, the which thinges and writinges long and derke elde do away both hem and eke hir auctours. But ye menne semen to getten you a perdurabilitie whan ye thinken in time coming your fame shal lasten. But nathelesse, if thou wilt make comparison to the endlesse spaces of eternite. What thing haste thou, by which thou maist reioycen thee of longe lastinge of thy name? For if there were made comparison of the abyding of a momente to ten thousande winter, for as moche as bothe tho spaces ben ended, for yet hath the momente some porcion of it, although it be litel? But nathelesse thilke selfe nombre of yeres, and eke as many yeres as therto may be multiplied, ne may not certes be comparisoned to the perdurabilite that is endelesse. For of thinges whiche that haue ende may be made comparison, but of thinges which that ben withouten ende, to thinges that haue ende, may be maked no comparison. And for thy is it that although renome as of long tyme, as euer the liste to thinken, wer thought, to the regard of the eternite, that is vnstaunchеable and infinite, it ne should not onelie seme littel, but plainlie right nought. But ye semen certes ye can do nothing a right but if it be for the audience of the people, and for yle rumours. And ye forsaken the great worthinesse of conscience and of vertue, and ye seken your guerdons of the smale wordes of straunge folke. Haue nowe here and vnderstande in the lightnesse of soche pride and veine glory, howe a man skorned festynally and meryly soche vanite. Whylom there was a man that had assayed with stryuynge wordes an other man, the which not for vsage of very vertue, but for proude vayne glorye, had taken vpon him falsely the name of a philosophre. This rather man that I speake of, thought he wold assay, wheder he thilke wer a philosophre or no that is to saye: yf that he woulde haue suffred lightlye, in pacence, the wronges that were done to him. This fained philosophre toke pacience a litell while: and whan he had receiued wordes of outrage, he as in striuinge ayen and reioysing of him selfe, sayde at laste thus. Understandest thou not, that I am a philosophre? That other man answerde againe bitingly and said: I had well vnderstand it, if thou haddest holden thy tong stil. But what is it to these noble worthy men for certes of soch folk speke I that seken glorie with vertue? What is it (quod she) what atteyneth fame to soch folke, whan the body is resolued by the deth at the last? for if so be that men dien in al, that is to say body and soule, the which thing oure reason defendeth vs to byleue: than is there no glory in no wise.

For what shulde thilke glory be, whan he, of whom thilke glorie is saide to be, nys right naught in no wyse. And yf the soule whiche that hath in it selfe science of good werkes, vnbounden from the prison of the yerth, wendeth frely to the Heuen, dispiseth it not than al erthly occupacion, and being in heuen reioyseth that it is exempte from al erthly thynges? as who saith, than recketh the soule neuer of no glory of renome of this world.

Quicumque solam mente præcipiti petit, Summumque credit gloriam, Luce patentes ætheris cernat plagas, Arctumque terrarum situm, Brevem replere non valentis ambitum, &c.

Who so that wyth ouerthrowinge thoughte onely seketh glori of fame, and weneth that it be soueraine good, let him loken vpon the brode shewing countreis of the Heuen, and vpon the strayte seete of this Erthe, and he shal be a shamed of thencrease of his name, that maye not fulfil the litel compas of the erthe. O what coueyten proude folke to liften vp hir neekes in ydle, in the deedly yoke of thys worlde? For all though that renome ysprad passyng toforn peoples, goth by diuers tonges, and although great houses of kinredes shynen by clere tytles of honours, yet nathelesse deth dispiseth al high glory of fame, and doth wrappeth togithers the high heedes and the lowe, and maketh equal and even the hyest with the lowest.

Where wonnen now the bones of trew Fabricius? What is nowe Brutus, or sterne Caton? The thynne

fame yet lastyng of hir ydle names, is marked with a few letters. But although that we haue knowen the faire wordes of the fame of hem, it is not yeuen to know hem that be ded and consumpt. Liggeth than styl al vtterlye vnknowable, ne fame ne maketh you not knowe. And yf ye wene to lyue the lenger for winde of youre mortall name, whan one orueł day shal rauishe you: than is the seconde dwellyng to you close. The first dethe he clepeth here the departing of the body and the seconde dethe here the stintyng of the renome of fame.

Sed ne me inexorabile contra fortunam gerere bellum putes, est aliquando, cum de hominibus fallax illa nonnihil bene mereatur: tum scilicet cum se aperit, &c.

But for as moch as thou shalt not wenen (quod she) that I beare an vntretable bataỳle ayenst fortune, yet somtims it befalleth that she (disceiuable) deseruethe to haue ryght good thanke of men: and that is whan she her self openeth, and whan she discouereth her front, and sheweth her maners. Peraventure yet understandest thou not that I shall say. It is a wondre that I desire to tell, and therfore vneth may I vnpliten my sentence with wordes. For I deme that contrarious fortune profiteth more to men than fortune debonayre. For alway whan fortune semeth debonayre, than she lieth falsely, biheting the hope of welfulnesse. But forsoche contrarious fortune is alwaye sothfaste, whan she sheweth her selfe vnstable throughe her chaungyng. The amiable fortune deceiueth folke: the contrary fortune leacheth. The amiable fortune blindeth with the beautie of her false goodes, the hertes of folkes that vsen hem. The contrarie fortune vnbindeth hem with the knowing of freele welefulnesse. Thamyable fortune maiste thou sene alway wyndy and flowyng, and euer misknowing of her self. The contrary fortune is attempre and restrayned and wyse, thorowe exercise of her aduersyte. At the laste amiable fortune with her flaterynges draweth myswandryng men fro the soueraine good: the contrarious fortune leadeth ofte folke ayen to sothefaste goodes, and halteth hem ayen as with an hoke. Wenest thou than that thou oughtest to leten this a lytel thing, that this aspre and horrible fortune hath discouered to the, the thoughts of thy trew frendes? for why, this ilke fortune hath departed and vncouered to the both the certaine visages, and eke the doutous visages of thy felawes. Whan she departed away fro the, she toke away her frendes and laft the thy frendes. Nowe whan thou were riche and weleful, as the semed, with howe mykel woldest thou haue bought the full knowing of this, that is to sayne, the knowing of thy very frendes? Nowe plaine the not than of richesse lorne, sithe thou haste found the most precious kynd of richesse, that is to saine, thy very frendes.

Quod modus stabili fide, Concordes variat vices, Quod pugnantia semina, Fœdus perpetuum tenent, &c.

That the worlde with stable faithe varieth accordable chaungynges, that the contratious qualytees of elementes holden amonge hem selfe atyeun perdurable, that Phebus the sonne with his golde chariot bringeth forth the rosy day, that the Moone hath commaundement ouer the nightes: which nightes Esperus the euen sterre hath, that the sea gredy to flowen constraineth with a certain ende his floodes, so that it is not lefull to stretch his brode termes or boundes vpon the yearth: al this ordinaunce of thynges is boundes with loue, that gouerneth erthe and see, and also hath commaundement to the heuen. And yf this loue slaked the bridels, al thinges that now louen hem togithers wolden make bataile contynuelly, and striuen to fordone the facion of this world, the which they now leden in accordable faith, by faire mouynges. This loue holdeth togider people ioyned with an holy bond, and knitteth sacrament of mariage of chast loues. And loue endeth laws to true felaws. O welefull were mankinde if thilke loue that gouerneth the Heuen, gouerned your corages.

HERE ENDETH THE SECONDE BOKE AND HERE FELOWETH THE THIRDE.

Jam cantum illa finierat, cum me audiendi avidum, stupentemque arrectis adhuc auribus carminis mulcedo defixerat. Itaque paulo post, O inquam summum lassorum solamen animorum, quantum me, &c.

By this she had ended her songe: whan the swetnesse of her dyte had through percedde me, that was desyrous of herkenynge. And I astonyed had yet streyght mine eares, that is to saine, to herken the bet what she shuld say, so that litel here after I sayd thus. O thou that art souerain comfort of corages anguisshous, so thou hast remounted and nourisshed me with the weight of thy sentences, an with delite of singyng, so that I trowe not that I be vnperegall to the strokes of fortune: as who saith, I dare wel now suffren al thassautes of fortune, and well defende me from her. And tho remedies which that thou saidest here beforne, that weren right sharpe, not onelye that I am not agrisen of hem nowe, but I desyrous of hearyng, aske greatly to hearen the remedies. Than saied she thus. That feled I well (quod she) whan that thou ententife and styl, rauysshedest my wordes: and I abode tyll thou haddest soche habyte of thy thought, as thou hast now, or els tyll that, I my selfe had maked it to the same habite, whiche that is a more very thyng. And certes the remenaunt of thinges that ben yet to say ben soch, that first whan men taste hem, they bene byting: but whan they bene receiued within a wight, than ben they swete. But for thou saist that thou art so desyrous to hearken hem, with how greate brennyng woldest thou glowen, if thou wistes whider I wolde leden the: B. Whider is that (quod I). P. To thilke verie blisfulnesse (quod she) of whiche thine hart dremeth. But for as moche as thy sight is occupied and distourbed of erthly thinges, thou maiest not yet sene thilke self welefulnesse. B. Doe (quod I) and shewe me what thilke very welfulnes is, I pray the without tarieng. P. That wol I gladly done (quod she) for cause of thee. But I wol first marken by wordes, and I wil enforcen me to enforme the thilke false cause of blisfulnesse, which that thou more knowest: so that whan thou hast beholden thilke false goodes, and turned

thin iyen so to that other side, thou maye knowen the clerenesse of very blysfulnesse.

Qui serere ingenium volet agrum, Liberat arva prius fruticibus, Falce rubos, filicemque resecat, &c.

Whoso woll sowe a felde plenteous, let him firste deliueren it of thornes, and kerue asonder with his hoke the busshes and the ferne, so that the corn may commen heuie of eres and of greines. Hony is the more swete if mouths haue firste tasted sauours that be wycke. The sterres shinen more agreably whan the wynde Nothus letteth his plungi blastes. And after that Lucifer the day sterre hath chased away the darke nyght, the day the fairer ledeth the rosen horse of the Sonne. And right so thou, beholdyng first the false goodes begyn to withdrawe thy necke fro the yearthly affeccions, and afterwardes the very goodes shullen entren into thy corage.

Tum defixo paululum visu, et velut in angustam suæ mentis sedem recepta: sic cæpit. P. Omnis mortalium cura, quam multiplicium studiorum labor exercet, &c.

Tho fastened she a litel the syght of her eien, and she withdrew her, right as it wer into the strayte seete of her thought, and began to speake right, thus. Al the cures (quod she) of mortal folk, which that trauailen hem in many maner studies, gon certes by diuers waies: but nathels they enforcen hem all to comen onely to thende of blisfulnes. And blisfulnes is soche a good, that who so hath gotten it, he ne maye ouer that thing more desire. And thys thyng forsoth is so soueraine good, that it conteineth in him selfe al maner of goodes, to the which good if there failed any thing, it myghte not ben souerain good, for than were some good out of this soueraine good, that might be desyred. Nowe is it clere and certaine that blisfulnesse is a parfyte state, by the congregacion of all goodes, the whiche blisfulnesse (as I haue sayd) al mortal folke enforcen hem to gette by diuers waies. For why, the couetise of euery good is naturelli planted in the hertes of men: but the miswandryng errour, misledeth hem into false goodes. Of the whiche men, some of hem wenen that souerain good be to liuen without nede of any thinge. And other men demen, that soueraine good be right digne of reuerence, and enforcen hem to be reuerenced amonge hir neighbours, by the honours that they haue goten. And some folke there ben that holden that right hye power be soverain good, and enforcen hem for to reignen, or els to ioynen hem to hem that reignen. And it semeth to other folke, that noblesse of renome be the souerain good, and hasten hem to getten hem glorious name by the artes of werre or of peace. And many folke mesuren and gessen, that soueryne good be ioye and gladnesse, and wenen that it be right blisful thing to plongen in voluptuous delites. And there bene some folke, that entrechaungen the causes and the endes of these forsaide goods: as they that desyren richesses to haue power and delites, or elles they desyre power for to haue money, or for cause of renome. In these thynges and soche other is turned all the entencion of desyrynges and werkes of men, as thus: noblesse and fauoure of people, which that yeueth to all menne, as it semeth hem, a maner clerenesse of renomme, and wife and children, that men desyren, for cause of delyte and merynesse. But forsoth frendes ne shullen not be rekened amonge the goodes of fortune, but of vertue, for it is a ful holy maner thing. All these other thinges, forsoth be taken for cause of power, or elles for cause of delite. Certes now am I redy to referren the goodes of the body, to these forsayd thynges abouen: for it semeth that strength and gretnesse of body yeuen power and worthynesse, and that beaute and swiftnesse yeuen glorye and renome: and helth of body semeth to yeuen delite. In al these thinges it semeth only that blysfulnesse is desyred: for why, thylke thyng that euery man desireth moste ouer al thinges, he demeth that it be souerain good. But I haue defined, that blisfulnesse is soueraine good, for whiche euery wight demeth the thilke estate that he desireth ouer al thinges that it be blisfulnesse. Nowe hast thou than before thin eyen almoste al that purposed forme of the welefulnesse of mankynde, that is to saine, richesse, honours, power, glorie and delites, the which delite only considred he Epieurus, and iudged and established that delite is the soueraine good: for as moche as all other thinges, as him thought, byreft awaye ioy and mirthe from the herte. But I returne againe to the studies of men, of whiche men the corage alway reherseth and seketh the soueraine good, al be it so that it be with a dyrked memorie, but he note by whiche pathe, right as a droken man note nought by whiche pathe he may returne home to his house. Semeth it than that folke forleyen and erren to enforcen hem to haue nede of nothing. Certs there is none other thing, that may so moche performen blisfulnesse, as an estate plenteous of al goodes, that ne hath nede of none other thing, but that is suffisaunt of himselfe vnto himself. And foliert soch folke than that wenen, that thilke thing that is right good, that it is eke right worthy of honor, and of reuerence: certes nay. For that thinge nys neither foul ne worthy to be dispised, that wel nigh al the entencion of mortal folke trauailen to get it. And power eke ought not to be rekened amonges goodes. What els? for it nis not to wene, that thilke thing that is moste worthy of all thinges, be feble and without strength. And clerenesse of renome, ought that to ben dispised: certes ther may no man forsake, that al thinge that is right excellent and noble, that it ne semeth be right clere and renomed. For certes it nedeth not to sai, that blisfulnesse be anguishous ne drerye, ne subiect to greuaunces ne sorowes, sens that in right lytel thinges folke seken to haue and to vsen that may delyten hem. Certs these ben the thinges that men willen and desiren to getten: and for this cause desiren thei richesses, dignities, reignes, glorie, and delites. For therby wenen they to haue suffisaunce, honoure, power, renomme, and gladnesse. Than is it good, that men seken thus by so many diuers studies, in whyche desire, it many not lightely be shewed, howe great is the strengthe of nature. For howe so men haue diuers sentences and discordinges, algates men accorden all in louinge the ende of good.

Quantas rerum flectit habenas Natura potens, quibus immensum, Legibus orbem provida servet, Stringatque ligans irresoluto, Singula nexu, placet arguto, Fidibus lentis promere cantu, &c.

It lyketh me to shewe by subtyll song, with slacke and delitable sowne of stynges, howe that nature mightelie enclineth and fliteth by the gouernement of thinges, and by soche lawe she purueiable kepeth the great worlde, and howe she bindynge restrainethe all thynges by a bonde that maie not be vnbounden. All be it so that the lions of the countreye of Pene, beren the faire chaines, and taken meates of the handes of folke, that yeuen it hem, and dreden hir sturdie maisters, of whiche they be wont to suffre beatinges, yf that hir horrible mouthes ben bledde, that is to sain, of beestes deuoured: hir corage of time passed that hath been idle and rested, repaireth ayen and thei roren greuously, and remembren on hir nature, and slaken hir neckes from hir chaines vnbounde, and hir maister firste to torne with blody teth, assayeth the woode wrathes of hem, that is to saine, thei fretten hir maister. And the ianglyng birde that singeth on the hye braunches, that is to saine, in the wodde, and after is enclosed in a straite cage although the plienge besinesse of men yeue hem honied drinkes, and large meates with swete study: yet natheles if thilke birde shipping out of her straite cage, seeth the agreable shadowes of the wodes, she defouleth with her feete her meate ishad, and seketh on morning onely the woode, and twirethe desiring the woode with her swete wife. The yerde of a tre that is haled adowne by mightie strength boweth redily the croppe adown: but if that the hande that is bente let it gone againe, anon the croppe loketh vpright to the heuen. Thei sonne Phebus that falleth at euen in the westren wawes, returneth aien eftsones his carte by a priuy pathe there as it is wonte arise. Al thinges seken ayen to hir proper course and al thinges reioysen on hir returning againe to hir nature: ne none ordinaunce is betaken to thinges, but that hath ioyned the ende to the beginninge, and hath made the course itselfe stable, that it chaunge not fro his proper kinde.

Vos quoque o terrena animalia, tenui licet imagine, vestrum tamen principium somniatis, verumque illum beatitudinis finem, licet minime perspicaci, &c.

Certes also ye men that ben erthly beastes dreamen alwaye your beginning, although it be with a thin imaginacion, and by a maner thought, albeit nat clereli ne perfetly, ye loken from a ferre to thilke verifine of blisfulnes. And therfore naturel entencion leadeth you to thilke very good, but many maner errours misteurneth you therfro. Consider now if that be thilke thinges, by which a man weneth to get him blisfulnesse if that he may comen to thilke ende that he weneth to come to by nature. For if that money honours, or these other forsaid thinges bringen men to soch a thing that no good ne faile them ne semeth to faile: Certes than wold I graunt that they be maked blisful by thinges that they haue gotten. But if so be that thilke thinges ne mowen not performe that thei byheten, and that there be defaut of many goodes, sheweth it not than clereli the false beaute of blisfulnesse is knowen and atteint in thilke thinges? first and forward thou thyself, that haddest haboundaunce of richesse nat longe agon, I aske the that in thaboundance of al thilk riches, if thou were neuer anguishous or sorrie in thy courage of any wrong or greuaunce that betyd the in any syde. B. Certes (quod I) it ne remembrethe me not, that euer I was so fre of my thought, that I ne was alwaye in anguishe of som what. P. And was that not (quod she) for that the lacked somwhat that thou noldest not haue lacked? Or els thou haddest that thou noldest haue had? B. Right so it is (quod I). P. Than desirest thou the presence of the one, and thabsence of that other: B. I graunte well (quod I). Phi. Forsothe (quod she) than nedeth there som what that euery man desireth. B. Ye there nedeth (quod I). P. Certes (quod she) and he that hath lacke or neede of aught, nis not in euery way suffisaunt to himself. B. No (quod I). P. And thou (quod she) in all the plente of thy richesse haddest thilke lacke of suffisaunce? B. What els (quod I). P. Than may not riches maken that a man is nedi, ne that he be sufficient to him selfe: and yet that was it that they beheten as it semed. And eke certes I trowe that this be greatlie to consider, that money hath not in his owne kynde, that it ne maie been binomed of hem, that haue it maugre hem. Boecius. I knowe it well (quod I). Philo. Why shouldest thou not beknowen it (quod she) when euerydaie the strenger folke, benomen it from the feobler maugre hem: from whens come els, all these foraine complaintes, quarels, or pleadynges, but for that menne aśken her money, that hath been binomed hem, by strength or by gile, and alwaie maugre hem? Boecius. Right so it is (quod I). Philosophie. Then hath a man neede (quod she) to seeken hym foraine helpe, by whiche he maie defende his money. Boecius. Who maie saie naie (quod I). Philosophie. Certes (quod she) and hym needed none helpe, if he ne had no money, that he might lese. Boecius. That is doubtles (quod I). Philosophie. Then is this thyng tourned into the contrary (quod she) for richesse, that menne wemen, should maken suffisaunce, thei maken a man rather haue nede of forain helpe. Whiche is the maner or the gise (quod she) that richesse maie driuen awaie nede? Riche folke maie thei neither haue honger ne thurste? These riche menne, maie thei fele no colde on their limes in winter? But thou wilte aunswere, that riche menne haue inough, wherwith thei maie staunchen hir honger, and slaken hir thurst, and doen awaie colde.

In this wise, maie neede been coumforted by richesse, but certes: neede ne maie not all vtterlie be doen awaie. For if this nede, that alwaie is gaping and gredy, be fulfilled with richesse, and any other thynge, yet dwelleth than a nede, that mote be fulfilled, I hold me still, and tell not how that litle thyng, suffiseth to nature: but certes, to auarice suffiseth not inough of nothyng. For sine that riches, ne maie not all dooen awaie neede, and thei maken their owne neede: what maie it than bee, that ye wenen that richesses, mowen yeuen you suffisaunce?

Quamvis fluente dives auri gurgite, Non expleturas cogat avarus opes, &c.

All were it so, that a noble couetous manne had a riuer, or a gutter fletyng al of gold, yet should it neuer staunche his couetise: and although he had his necke charged, with precious stones of the redde sea: and though he dooe ere his fieldes plenteous, with an hundred oxen, neuer ne shall his bityng busines forleten hym, while he liueth, ne the light richesses, ne shall not bearen hym compaignie whan he is dedde.

Sed dignitates honorabilem, reverendumque cui provenerint, reddunt. Num vis ea est magistratibus, ut utentium mentibus virtutes inserant, vitia depellant, &c.

But dignities to whome they be comen, maken they him honorable and reuerent? Haue they not so great strength that thei maie putten vertue in hertes of folkes that vsen the lordship of hem, or els may they don away the vices. Certes they be not wont to don away wickednes, but they be went rather to shew wickednesse. And therof cometh it that I haue right great disdain, that dignities ben yeuen to wicked men. For whiche thing Catullius cleped a consul of Rome (that hight Nonyus) postome of boche, as who saith, he cleped him a congregacion of vices in his brest, as a postome is full of corrupcion: all were Nonius set in a chaire of dignitie. Seest thou not than, how greate vilonies dignities done to wiked men? certes vnworthinesse of wicked men shulde be the lasse sene, if they nere remoued of non honour. Certes thou thyself ne mightest not be brought with as many perils as thou myghtest suffre, that thou woldest beare the magistrate with decorate, that is to saine, that for peril that myght befall thee by offence of the king. Theodorike, thou noldest not be felawe in gouernaunce with Decorate, whan thou saw that he had wicked corage of a lycorous shrew and of an accusour. Ne I may not for soche honours iudgen hem worthy of reuerence, that I deme and hold vnworthy to haue thylke same honours. Now if thou sawe a manne, that wer fulfilde of wisedome, certes, thou ne mightest not deme, that he wer vnworthie to that honour, or els to the wisedome of whiche, he is fulfilled. Boecius. No (quod I). Philosophie. Certes (quod she) dignities appertainen properlie to vertue, and vertue transporteth dignitie anon to thilke man, to whiche she herself is conioyned. And for as moche as honours of people, ne maie not make folke digne of honour, it is well seen clerely, that thei ne haue no proper beautie of dignitie. And yet menne oughten take more heede in this: for if a wight be in so moche the more outcast, that he is dispised of moste folke, so as dignite ne maye not maken shrewes worthy of no reuerence, than maketh dignitie shrewes rather dispised than praised, the which shrewes dignite sheweth to moch folke. And forsothe not vnpunished, that is to sayn, that shrewes reuengen hem ayenward vpon dignities. For they yelden ayen to dignities as greate guerdons, whan they *dispotten and* defoulen dignities with hir vilonie. And for as moche as thou nowe knowest, that thilke very reuerence ne maye nat comen by these shadowy transitorye dignities, vnderstonde nowe thus: that if a man had vsed and had many maner dignities of consuls and were parauenture comen amonge straunge nacions, shulde thilke honour maken him worshipfull and redouted of straunge folke: certes if that honour of people were a naturel yefte to dignities, it ne might neuer cessen no where amonge no maner folke to done his office. Right as a fyre in euery countrey ne stinteth not to enchaufen and maken hete. But for as moche as for to ben honorable or reuerent, ne cometh not to folke of hir proper strength of nature, but onely of the false opinion of folke, that is to saine, that wenen that dignities maken folke digne of honours: anone therfore whan they comen ther as folke ne knowen not thilk dignities, hir honours vanishen awaye and that anon. But that is amonge straunge folke maist thou sain. Ne amonges hem ther they were borne, ne dured not thilke dignities alwaye. Certes the dignite of the prouostry of Rome was whilon a great power: nowe is it nothinge but an ydle name, and the rente of the senatorie a great charge. And if a wight whilom had thoffice to taken hede to the vitailes of the people, as of corne and of other thinges, he was holden amonges hem great. But what thing is more now out caste than thilke prouostrie. As I haue said a lytel here beforene, that thilke thing that hath no proper beaute of itself, receiueth sometime price and shining, and sometim leseth it by thopinion of vsaunces. Now if that dignities than ne mowe not make folke digne of reuerence, and if that dignites wexe foule of hir wyll, by the fylthe of shrewes. And yf dignities lesen hir shininge by chaunginge of tymes, and yf they wexen foule by estimacion of people, what is it that they han in hem selfe of beaute, that ought to be desired?, as who saithe none: than ne mowen they yeuen no beaute of dignitie to none other.

Quamvis se Tyrio superbus ostro Comeret et niveis lapillis, &c.

At be it so, that the proude Nero wyth all his wode luxure, kembe him and apparelled him with faire purpure of Tirie, and with white peerles. Algates yet therof he hateful to al folk that is to say that all was he behated of all folkes, yet this wicked Nero had great lorshippe. And yafe whilome to the reuerent senatours the vnworshypfull seates of dignities. Unworshipfull seates he clepeth here, for that Nero that was so wicked yafe the dignities.

Who woulde than resonablye wenen, that blisfulnesse were in soche honours, as been yeuen by vicious shrewes,

An vero regna, regnumque, familiaritas efficere potentem valent? Quidni, &c.

But reignes and familiarities of kynges, maie thei maken a man to ben mighty? how els: whan his blisfulnesse durethe perpetuallie. But certes, the olde age of time passed, and eke of present time nowe, is ful of ensamples, how that kinges haue chaunged in to wretchednesse, out of hir welfulnes.

O, a noble thing and a clere thinge is power; that nis not founden mighty to kepe it self. And if that power of realmes be authour and maker of blisfulnesse, if thilke power lackethe on any syde, amenuseth it nat thilke blisfulnesse, and bringeth in wretchednes? But yet al be it so, that the realmes of mankinde stretchen brode, yet mote ther nede ben moche folke, ouer whiche that euery king ne hath no lordship ne commaundement. And certes vpon thilkside that power falleth, which that makteh folke blisful. Right on that same side no power entreth vnderneth that maketh hem wretches. In this maner than moten kinges haue more porcion of wretchednesse than of welfulnesse.

A tiraunt that was kinge of Cecyle, that had assayed the perill of his estate, shewed by similitude the dredes of realmes by gastenesse of a swerde, that honge ouer the heed of his familier. What thinge is than this power, that maye not done awaye the bitynges of besinesse, ne eschewe the prickes of dredes.

And certes yet wolden they lyuen in sykernesse, but they maye nat. And yet they glorifyen hem in hir power. Holdest thou than that thilke man be mighty, that thou seest that he wold done that he maye not done: and holdest thou than him a mighty man, that hath enuironed his sydes with men of armes or sergeauntes, and dredeth more hem that he maketh agast, than they dreden hym, and that is putte in the handes of his seruauntsfor he shulde seme mightye? but of famylyeres or seruauntes of kinges, why shulde I tell the any thing, sithe that I my selfe haue shewed the that realmes hem selfe ben ful of great feblesse: the whiche famylyers, certes the royall power of kinges in hoole estate, and in estate abated, full ofte throwethe a downe.

Nero contrained Senecke hys famylyer and his mayster, to chesen on what dethe he wolde dye. Antonius commaunded that knightes flowen wyth hir swerdes Papinian his famylyer, whiche Papinian hadde ben longe tyme, ful mighty amonges hem of the courte. And yet certes, they wolden both haue renounced hir power. Of whiche two Senecke enforced him to yeuen to Nero his richesse, and also to haue gone in to solytary exile. But whan the great weight, that is to sain, of lordes power, or of Fortune, draweth hem that shullen fall, neither of hem ne might do that he wolde. What thinge is than thylke power, that thoughe men haue it, yet they ben agast, and whan thou woldest haue it, thou narte not syker: and yf thou woldest forleten it, thou maist nat eschewen it. But wheder soch men ben frendes at nede as been counsayled by fortune, and nat by vertue: Certes soch folke as welful fortune maketh frendes, contrarious fortune maketh hem enemyes. And what pestilence is more mightye for to anoye a wight, than a familier enemye.

Qui se volet esse potentem, Animos domet ille ferbces, Nec victa libidine colla, &c.

Whoso wol be mighty, he mote daunten his cruell corages, ne put nat his necke ouercomen; vnder the foule raynes of lechery. For all be it so, that the lordshippe stretche so ferre that the countrey of Inde quarketh at thy commaundementes, or at thy lawes. And that the last yle in the see, that hyght Tyle, be thrale to the: yet yf thou maiste nat putten away thy foule derke desyres, and driuen out fro the wretched complayntes: certetes, it nys no power that thou haste,

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Gloria vero quam fallax sæpe, quam turpis est? Unde non injuria Tragicus exclamat. O gloria, gloria millibus mortalium nihil aliud facta, nisi aurium inflatio magna, &c.

But glorie, how deceiuable and howe full is it oft? For whiche thing, not skilfully a tragedien, that is to sayne maker of dites that highten tragedyes, cried and sayde. O glory glory (quod he) thou nart nothinge els to thousandes of folks but a sweller of eares. For many haue full great renome by the false opinion of the people.

And what thinge may ben thought fouler then soche praysynge: for thinke folke that ben praised falsly, they mooten nedes haue shame of hir praisinge. And yf that folke haue getten hem thanke or praisinge by her desertes: what thing hath thilke prise eched or encreased to the conscience of wyse folke, that mesuren her good, nat by the rumoure of the people, but by the sothefastenesse of conscience? And if it seme a faire thinge, a man to haue encreased and sprad his name, than foloweth it, that it is demed to ben a foule thing, if it ne be yspradde and encreased. But as I said a litel here before, to whiche folke the renome of a man ne maye nat comen, it befalleth, that he that thou wenest be gloryous and renomed, semeth in the next part of the yerthes to ben without glorye and without renome. And cerces amonges these thinges I ne trow nat that the prise and the grace of the people, nys neither worthy to ben remembred, ne cometh of wise iugement, ne is ferme perdurably. But now of this name of gentilesse: what man is it that ne may wel sene howe vaine and how flityng it is: for if the name of gentilesse be referred to renome and clerenesse of lynage, than is gentil name but a forain thing, that is to say, to hem that glorifien hem of hir linage. For it semeth that gentiles be a maner praysing that cometh of the desertes of auncesters. And if prasing naketh gentilnesse, than moten they nedes ben gentil, that been praysed. For whiche thinge it folowethe, that if thou ne haue no gentylnesse of thy selfe, that is to saine, prise, that cometh of thy desert. Foraine gentilnesse ne maketh the nat gentil. But certes if there be any good in gentilnesse, I trowe it be al onely this: that it semeth as that a maner necessite be imposed to gentilmen, for that they ne shulde nat outragen or forleauen fro the vertues of hir noble kynred.

Omne hominum genus in terris Simili surgit ab hortu. Unus enim rerum pater est. Unus cuncta ministrat, &c.

Al the lynage of men, that ben in erth ben semblable of birth. One alone is father of thynges: one alone ministreth all thinges: he yaf to the sun his beaumes: he yaf to the moone her hornes: he yafe to men the erth: he yafe the sterres to the

heuen: he closed with membres the soules that camen from his hye seate. Than comen all mortall folke of noble seed. Why noisen ye, or bosten of your elders? For yf ye loke your beginning and god youre father authour and your maker. Than nys there no forelyued wight or vngentill but yf he nourishe his corage vnto vices, and forlete his proper byrthe.

Quid autem de corporis voluptatibus loquar, quarum appetentia quidem plena est anxietatis, &c.

But what shal I sain of delyces of body, of whiche delices the desiringes ben ful of anguishes, and the fulfillinges of hem ben ful of penaunce: how great siknesses and how great sorowes vnsuffrable, right as a maner fruite of wickednes, ben thilke delices wonte to bringen to the bodies of folke that vsen hem? of which delices I not what ioye may ben had of hir mouinge. But this wote I wel, that who so euer wol remembren him of his luxures he shal well vnderstande, that the issues of delices ben sorowful and sory. And yf thilke delices mow make folke blisful, than by that same cause moten these beests ben cleped blisful. Of whiche bestes al the entencion hasteth to fulfil her bodely iolyte. And the gladnesse of wife and children were an honest thynge, but it hath ben said that it is ouer mokel ayenst kinde, that children haue ben founden tourmentours to hir fathers, I not howe many. Of which children how biting is euery condicion, it nedeth not to tellen it the, that hast er this tyme assayed it, and art yet nowe anguishous. In this tyme aproue I the sentence of my disciple Euripidis, that said, that he that hathe no children is weleful by infortune.

Habet hoc voluptas omnis, Stimulis agit fruenteis: Apiumque par volantum Ubi gratia mella fudit, Fugit et nimis tenaci Ferit icta corda morsu, &c.

Euery delyte hathe this, that it anguisheth hem wyth prickes that vsen it. It ressembleth to these flieng flies that we clepen bees, that after that he hath shedde his agreable honnyes, he flieth away, and stingeth the hertes of hem that ben smitten with bitinge ouerlonge holden.

Nihil igitur dubium est, quin hæ ad beatitudinem viæ deviæ quædam sint, nec perducere eo quemquam valeant.

Nowe it is no dout than, that these wayes ne ben a maner mistidinges to blisfulnes: ne that they ne mowen not leden folke thider, as they beheten to leden hem. But with how great harmes these forsaide ways ben enlaced, I shal shew you shortly. For why, if thou enforcest the to assemble money, thou must byreuen him his money that hath it. And if thou wolt shinen with dignities, thou muste besechen and supplien hem, that yeuen tho dignities. And yf thou coueitest by honour to gone beforne other folkes, thou shalt defoule thy self thorow humblesse of asking. If thou desirest power thou shalt by awaits of thy subiectes anoiousli be cast vnder by many parils. Askest thou glorie? thou shalt ben so distracte by aspre thinges, that thou shalt fogone sikernesse. And if thou woldest leden thy lyfe in delites, euery wight shal dispisen the and forleten the, as thou that arte thral to thing, that is right foule and britel, that is to saine, seruaunt to thy bodye. Nowe is it wel ysene, howe lytel and how britel possession they coueiten, that putten the goodes of the bodi aboue hir own reason. For maist thou surmounten these olifauntes in greatnesse or in weight of body? or mayste thou ben strenger than the bul: mayst thou bee swifter than the tygre? beholde the spaces and the stablenesse, and the swyft course of heauen, and stinte somtyme to wondren on foule thinges. The whiche heuen certes nys nat rather for these thinges to be wondred vpon, than for the reason by whiche it is gouerned. But the shininge of thy forme, that is to sayne, the beaute of thy body, how swiftly passing is it, and howe transitorie, certes, it is more fliting than the mutabilite of floures of the sommer season. For so as Aristotell telleth, that yf the men had eyen of a beeste that hight Lynx, so that the lokynge of folke might percen throughe tho thynges that withstonde it. Whoso loked than in thantrailes of the body of Alcibiades, that was full faire in the superfycie without, it shulde seme right foule. And for thy, yf thou semest faire, thy nature ne maketh nat that, but the desceiuaunce of feblenesse of the eien that loken. But praise the goodes of the body as moche as euer the lyste, so that you know algates that what so it be, that is to saine, of the goodes of the body, which that thou wondrest vpon, maye ben distroyed or els dissolued by the heet of a feuer of thre daies. Of which forsayd thinges I maie reducen this shortly in a somme, that these wordly goods, which thau ne mowen yeuen that they behyghten, ne ben not parfite by the congregacion of al goodes, that they ne ben not wayes ne pathes, that bringen men to blisfulnesse, ne maken men to be blisful.

Heu heu quæ miseros tramite devios Abducit ignorantia, Non aurum in viridi quæritis arbore, &c.

Alas, whiche folye, and whiche ignoraunce misledethe wandringe wretches, fro the pathe of very good. Certes ye seken no golde in grene trees, ne ye gadren not precious stones in vines: ne ye ne hyden not youre ginnes in hie mountains to catchen fysshe: of the which ye may maken riche feestes.

And if you lyke to hunte to Roes, ye ne gonat to the fords of the water that hight Thyrene. And ouer this men knowe wel the crekes and the cauernes of the see yhyd in the floodes, and knowen eke, whiche water is moost plenteous of white perles, and knowen whiche water haboundeth most of reed purpure, that is to saine, of a maner shelfyshe, with whiche men dyen purpure: and knowen whiche strondes habouden moste of tendre fyssbes, or of sharpe fyshes, that hight Echines. But folke suffren hem self to ben so blind that hem ne retchen not to know wher thilke goodes ben yhidde, which that they coueiten but plungen hem in yerthe, and seken there thilke good, that surmounteth the heuen, that beareth the sterres. What prayer may I maken that be digne to tho

nyce thoughtes of men? But I pray that they coueiten rychesse and honours, so that whan they haue gotten tho false goodes with great trauayl, that therby they mowen knowe the very goodes.

Hactenus mendacis formam felicitatis ostendisse sufficerit, quod si perspicaciter intueris, ordo est deinceps, &c.

It suffiseth that I haue saide hyderto, the forme of false welfulnesse: so that yf thou loke now clerely: the order of mine entencion requireth from hensforthe, to shewen the very welfulnes. B. Forsoth (quod I) I se wel now, the suffisaunce may nat comen by richesse, ne power by realmes, ne reuerence by dignities, ne gentillesse by glory, ne ioye by delices. P. And hast thou wel knowen the causes (quod she) why it is: B. Certs me semeth (quod I) that I se hem, right as though it were through a litel clyfte: but me were leauer knowen hem more openly of the. Phi. Certes (quod she) the reason is al redy. For thilke thinge that simply is one thinge without any deuision, the errour and folye of mankinde, deuideth and departeth it and misledeth it, and transporteth from very and parfit good, to goodes that be false and vnparfit. But say me this: wenest you that he that hathe nede of power that him ne lacketh nothinge? Boecious. Nay (quod I). Philosophie. Certes (quod she) thou sayest arighte: for yf so be that there is a thing that in any partie be febler of power, certes as in that it mote nedes be nedy of forain help. Boecius. Right so it is (quod I). Philosophie. Sufisaunce and power ben of one kinde. Boecius. So semeth (quod I). Philosophie. And demest thou (quod she) that a thinge that is of this maner, that is to saye, suffisaunt and mighty, oughte ben dispised, or els that it be righte digne of reuerence aboue all thinges? Boecius. Certes (quod I) it is no doute that it is right worthy to be reuerenced. Philosop. Let vs adden (quod she) reuerence to sufficiaunce and to power, so that we demen that these thre thinges be al one thinge. Boecius. Certes let (quod I) vs adden it if we wil graunt the sothe. P. What demest thou (quod she) than is that a derke thing and not noble, that is sustisaunt, reuerent, and mighty? or elles that it is right noble and right clere by celebrate of renomme? Consider than (quod she) as we haue graunted here byforne, that he that ne hath no nede of nothing, and is most mighty and moste digne of honoure, yf hym nedethe any clerenesse of renomme, whiche clerenesse he mighte not graunten of him selfe, so for lacke of thilke clerenesse he might semen the febler on any syde, or the more out cast. Glose. That is to say, naye: for who so that is suffisaunt, mighty, and reuerent, clerenesse of renomme foloweth of the forsaide thinges: he hath it all redy of his suffisaunce. Boecius. I maye not (quod I) denye it, but I mote graunten as it is, that this thinge is right celebrable by clerenesse of renomme and noblesse. P. Than folowethe (quod she) that we adden clerenesse of renomme to the foresaide thinges, so that there be amonges hem no difference. B. This is a consequence (quod I). Philosop. This thinge than (quod she) that ne hathe nede of no foraine thynge, and that maye do all thynge by hys strengthes, and that is noble and honourable, is it not a mery thinge and ioyful? Boecius. But whence (quod I) that any sorowe might come to this thynge that is soche, certes I maye not thinke. Philosophie. Than mote we graunten (quod she) that this thinge be full of gladnesse, yf the foresayde thynges be sothe. And certes, also mote we graunten, that suffisaunce, power, noblesse, reuerence, and gladnesse be onelye diuers by names, but hir substaunce hath no diuersite. Boecius. It mote nedelye be so (quod I). Philosophie. Thilke thinge than (quod she) that is one and simple in his nature, the wickednesse of men departeth and deuydeth it: and whan they enforcen hem to getten partye of a thynge, that ne hath no parte, they ne getten hem neyther thilke partye that nys none, ne the thynge al hole that they desyre. Boecius. In whiche manere (quod I). Philosophie. Thilke man (quod she) that secheth richesse to flyen powertye: he ne trauaileth hym not for to get power, for he hathe leauer be derke and vyle, and eke withdraweth from hym selfe many naturell delytes, for he nolde lese the money that he hath assembled. But certes in thys maner he ne gettethe him no suffisaunce, that power forleteth and that molestie priketh, and that fylthe makethe out caste, and that derknesse hydeth. And certes he that desireth only power, wasteth and scattereth rychesse, and dispiseth delyces and eke honour that is without power, ne he ne prayseth glory nothing. Certes this seest thou well that many thynges faylen to him: for he hath sometyme defaute of many necessitees, and many anguyisshes byten hym. And when he maye not don tho defautes away, he forletteth to be myghty, and that is the thynge that he most desyreth. And right thus may I make semblable reasons of honour, of glory, and of delices. For so euery of these forsaid thinges is the same that these other thinges ben, that is to saine, al one thing. Who so euer seketh to getten that one of these and not that other, he ne getteth not that he desyreth. Boecius. What sayest thou than, if that a man coueite to getten al these thinges togider. Philosophie. Certes (quod she) I wold say that he woulde get him souerain blisfulnes, but that shall he not finde in tho thynges that I haue shewed, that mowe not yeue that they beheten. Boecius. Certes no (quod I). Phi. Than (quod she) ne shullen men not by no way seken blisfulnesse in soch thinges, as men wemen that they ne mowe gyuen, but one thyng synglerly of al that men seken. Boecius. I graunt well (quod I) ne non sother thing maye be sayde. Philosophy. Now hast thou than (quod she) the forme and the cause of false welefulnesse: now turne and flytte agayn to thy thought, for there shal thou sene anon thylke very blisfulnesse, that I haue behight the. Boecius. Certes (quod I), it is clere and open, though it were to a blynde man: and that shewdest thou me a lytel here beforne, whan thou enforcedeste the to shewe me the causes of the false welfulnesse. For (but if I be begiled) than is that thilke very blifulnesse and parfite, that parfitelye maketh a man suffisaunt, mightye, honourable, noble, and ful of gladnes. And for thou shalte wel knowe, that I haue well vnderstanden these thynges within my herte: I knowe well that thylke blisfulnesse that men verely yeuen one of the forsayd thinges, sens they ben all one: I knowe doutlesse

that thilke thynge is ful of blisfulnesse. Philosophy. O my norice (quod she) by this opinion I say that thou arte blisful, yf thou put this therto that I shall sayne. Boecius. What is that (quod I). Phi. Trowest thou that ther be any thing in this erthlie mortal tomblinge thinges, that may bringen this estate? Bo. Certes (quod I) I trow it not: and thou hast shewed me wel, that ouer thilk good ther nis nothyng more to ben desired. P. These thinges than (quod she) that is to saine, erthly suffisaunce and power, and soch thinges erthely, they semen likenesse of very good, or els it semeth that they yeuen to mortall folke a maner of goodnesse, that ne be not parfite, but thilke good that is very and parfite, that may they not yeuen. Boe. I accorde me well (quod I). Ph. Than (quod she) for as moche as thou haste knowen, which is thilke very blisfulnes, and eke which thilke thinges ben, that lien falsely blisfulnesse, that is to say, that they by disceite semen very goodes: nowe behoueth thee to knowe whence and wher thou mow seke thilke very blisfulnesse. B. Certes (quod I) the desyre I greatly and haue abyden longe time to herken it. P. But for as moch (quod she) as it liketh to my disciple Plato in his boke of Tymeo, that in ryght lytel thynges men shulden beseche the help of god: what iudgest thou that be nowe to done, so that we may deserue to finde that seate of thilke souerain god? B. Certes (quod I) I deme that we shullen cleape to the father of all goddes, for withouten him nys there nothing founded a right. P. Thou saiest a right (quod she) and began anon to singen right thus.

O qui perpetua mundum ratione gubernas, Terrarum cœlique sator, qui tempus ab ævo, Ire jubes, stabilisque manens das cuncta moveri. Quem non externæ pepulerunt fingere causæ, &c.

O thou father, soueraine and creatour of heuen and of erthes, that gouernest this world by pardurable reason, that commandest the tymes to gone, sythe that age had beginning. Thou that dwellest thyselfe aye stedfaste and stable, and yeuest al other thinges to be meued, ne foriene causes ne eesseden the neuer to compoun werk of flatering mater, but onely the forme of souerain good yset, within the without enuy, that meued the frely. Thou that art alderfarest, bearinge the fayre world in thy thought formedest this wolde to thy likenesse semblable, of that fayre world in thy thought. Thou draweste all thinge on thy soueraine ensampler, and commaundest that this worlde perfetliche ymaked, haue frely and absolute his perfite parties. Thou byndest the elementes by nombres proporcionables, that the colde thynges, mowen accorden with the hotte thinges, and the drie things with the moiste: that the fyre, that is purest, ne flye nat ouer hie, ne that the heuinesse ne draw nat adoun ouerlowe the yerthes, that be plonged in the waters. Thou knyttest togider, the meane soule of treble kinde mouing al thinges, and deuidest it by membres acordyng. And whan it is thus deuided, it hath assembled amouyng into roundes, it gothe to turne agayn to himself, and enuironneth a full deepe thoughte, and turneth the heuen by a semblable ymage. Thou by euen lyke causes enhanceste the soules and the lesse lyues, and abling hem to height by lyght waines or cartes. Thou soweste hem into heauen and into yerthe, and whan they be conuerted to thee by thy benigne lawe, thou makest hem retourne ayen to thee by ayen ledyng fire. O father yeue thou to the thoughte to styen vp into thy straite sete, and graunt him to enuironne the well of good. And the light yfounde graunte him to fixen the clere syghtes of his corage in the and scatter thou and to brake that weightes and the cloudes of erthely heuinesse, and shyne thou by thy brightnesse. For thou arte clerenesse, thou arte pesyble reste to debonayre folke, thou thyselfe arte beginninge, bearer, leder, pathe, and terme to loke on the that is our ende.

Quoniam igitur, quæ sit imperfecti, quæ etiam perfecti boni forma vidisti: nunc demonstrandum reor, &c.

For asmoche than, as thou hast sene which is the forme of good that nys not parfite, and the forme of good, whiche that is parfite. Nowe trowe I that it were good to shewe, in what this perfection of blisfulnes is set. And in this thing I trow that we shal firste enquire for to weten, if that any soch maner good, as thilke good as thou haste diffynished a litell here beforne, that is to saine, souerain good, maye befound in the nature of thynges. For that vayne imaginacion of thought ne desceue vs not, and put vs out of the sothefastnesse of thylke thynge that is submytted to vs. But it maye not be denied the thylke ne is, and that is right as a wel of al goodes. For al thynge that is cleped imparfite is proued imparfyte, by the amenusyng of perfection of thynge that is parfite. And hereof cometh it that in euery thynge generall, if that men sene any thinge that is imparfyte, certes in thilke thynge generall, there mote be some thyng that is parfyte. For if so be that perfection is don away, men may not thinke ne saye from whence thilke thynge is, that is cleped imperfyte. For the nature nas toke not her beginninge, of thinges amenused and imparfyte, but it procedeth of thynges that ben al hole absolute, and discendeth so down into the vttrest thynges, and into thynges empty and without frute. But as I haue shewed a litell here beforne, that if that there be a blisfulnesse that be freel and vaine, and imparfayte, there maye no man doubte that ther nys some blisfulnesse, that there issadde stedfaste and parfyte. Boecious. This is concluded (quod I) fermely and sothfastelye. P. But consider also (quod she) in whome this blisfulnes inhabyteth. The comune accorde and conceyte of the corage of men, proueth and graunteth, that god prince of all thynges is good. For so as nothynge may be thought better than good, it may not be douted than that he that nothynge nis better than he nis good. Certes, reason sheweth that God is so good, that it proueth by very force, that perfite good is in him. For if God nis soche, he ne maie not ben prince of al thing. For certes, some thing possessyng in itself parfite good, should be more worthie than God: and it should semen that thilk thing wer first and older then God. For wee haue shewed appertlie, that all thynges that been parfite, been firste, or thinges that been imperfite. And for thy, for as moche as that my reason, or my processe, ne go not awaie without an ende, we owen to graunten,

that the soueraine good is right full of soueraine parfit good. And we haue established, that the soveraine good is very blisfulnesse: than mote it nedes be, that verie blisfulnesse is set in souerain good. Boecius. This take I wel (quod I) ne this ne maie not be withsaid in no maner. Philosophie. But I praie thee (quod she) se now how thou maiest prouen holily, and withouten corrupcion, this that we haue said, that the soueraine God, is full of right soueraine good. Bo. In whiche maner (quod I). Phil. Wenest thou aught (quod she) that the father of all thinges, hath taken thilke souerain good, any where out of hymself? Of whiche soueraine good, menne proueth that he is ful. Right as thou mightest thinken, that God, that hath blisfulnesse in hymself, and thilke blisfulnes that is in him, wer diuers in substaunce. For if thou wene, that God hath receiued thilke good out of hymself, thou maiest wene, that he that yaue thilke good, to God be more worthie than God. But I am beknowe and confesse, and that right dignely, that God is right worthie aboue all thynges: and if so be that this good be in him by nature, but that is diuerse from hym by wenyng reason, sens wee speaken of God, prince of all thynges. Faine who so faine maie, who was he that conioyned these thynges togither. And eke at the last se well, that a thyng that is diuers fro any thing, that thilk thing nis not that same thing, for whiche it is vnderstanden to ben diuers. Than foloweth it well, that the ilke thyng that by his nature, is diuerse from souerain good, that thing is not souerain good. But certes, it were a felonous cursednesse, to thinken that of hym, that nothyng nis more worthe. For alwaie of all thinges, the name of hem ne maie not been better, than hir beginner. For whiche I maie concluden by right verie reason, that thilke that is beginnyng of all thynges, thilke same thyng is souerain God in his substance. Boecius. Thou hast saied rightfully (quod I). Philosophie. But we haue graunted (quod she) that the soueraine good is blisfulnesse. Boecius. That is sothe (quod I). Philosophie. Than (quod she) wee moten needes graunten and confessen, that the ilke same soueraine good bee God. Boecius. Certes (quod I) I ne maie not denie ne withstande the reasons purposed, and I see well that it foloweth by strength of the premisses. Philosophie. Loke now (quod she) if this be proued yet more firmelie thus, that there ne mowen not been to soueraine gooddes that been diuers emong hem self. For certes, the gooddes that been diuers emong hem self, that one is not that the other is. Than ne mowen neither of hem be parfite, so as either of hem lacketh to other, but that that nis not parfite, menne mai seen apertlie, that it nis not soueraine. The thynges than that bee soueraine good, ne mowen by no waie be diuers. But I haue well concluded, that blisfulnesse and God, been the soueraine good, for whiche it mote needes been that soueraine blisfulnesse, is soueraine dignitie. Boecius. Nothyng (quod I) is more sothefaste than this, ne more ferme by reason, ne a more worthie thyng than God, maie not be concluded.

Philosophie. Upon these thynges than (quod she) right as these geometriciens, whan thei haue shewed their proposicions, been wonte to bryngen in thynges, that they cleapen porrismes, or declaracions of foresaied thynges, righte so woll I yeue thee here, as a corallary or a mede of croune. For why, for asmoch as by the gettyng of blisfulnesse, menne ben maked blisfull, and blisfulnesse is dignitee. Than is it manifeste and open, that by the, gettyng of dignitie, menne been maked blisful, right as by the getting of justice. And by the getting of sapience, thei be maked wise, right so needes by the semblable reason, whan thei haue gotten diuinitie, thei be made goddes. Than is euery blisfull man a God. But certes, by nature there nis but one God, but by the participacion of the diuinitie, there ne letteth ne destourbeth nothyng, that there ne bee many goddes. Boecius. This is (quod I) a faire thyng and a precious, clepe it as thou wilte, bee it corallarie, or porrisme, or mede of croune, or declaryng. Philosophie. Certes (quod she) nothynge nis fairer, than is the thing, that by reason should be added to these foresaied thynges. Boecius. What thyng (quod I). Philosophie. So (quod she) as it seemeth that blisfulnesse containeth many thynges, it were for to weten, whether that all these thinges maken or conioynen, as a maner bodie of blisfulnesse, by the diuersitie of parties of members, or els if any of all these thinges, bee soche that it accomplishe by hymself, the substaunce of blisfulnesse. So all these other things been referred, and brought to blisfulnes, that is to saie, as to the chief of hem. Boecius. I would (quod I) that thou madest me clerely to vnderstande what thou saiest, and what thou recordest me the foresaied thinges. Philosophie. Haue I not judged (quod she) that blisfulnesse is good? Boecius. Yes forsothe (quod I) and that soueraine good. Philosophie. Adde than (quod she) thilke good that is made blisfulnesse, to all the foresaied thynges. For thilke same blisfulnesse, that is demed to bee souerain suffisaunc, thilk self is souerain power, soueraine reuerence, soueraine clerenesse or noblesse, and soueraine delite.

What saiest thou than of al these thinges, that is to saie, suffisaunce, power, and these other thynges? Been thei than as members of blisfulnesse, or been thei referred and brought to soueraine good, right as all thinges that been brought to the chief of hem? Boecius. I vnderstonde well (quod I) what thou purposest to seke: but I desire for to herken, that thou shewe it to me. Philosophie. Take now thus the discrecion of this question (quod she) if all these thynges (quod she) weren members to felicitie, than weren thei diuers that one from that other: and soche is the nature of parties or of members, that diuers members compounen a bodie. Boecius. Certes (quod I) it hath well been shewed here beforne, that all these thinges been al one thing. Philosophie. Than been thei no members (quod she). For els it shuld seme that blisfulnesse were conioyned all of o member alone, but that is a thyng that maie not be doen. Boecius. This thyng (quod I) than, nis not doubtous, but I abide to herken the remnaunt of thy question. Philosophi. This is open and clere (quod she) that al other thyges been referred and brought to good. For therfore is suffisaunce required, for it is demed to be good: and for thy is power required, for men trowen also that it bee good. And this same thyng mowen wee thinken, and conieeten of reuerence, of noblesse, and of delite. Than is souerain good the somme and the cause, of al that ought to been desired. For why, thilke thyng that with holdeth no good in it self, ne semblaunce

of good, it ne maie not well in no maner be desired ne required. And the contrary: for though that thynges by hir nature, ne been not good, algates if men wenen that thei been good, yet been thei desired, as though thei were verely good. And therefore it is said that men ought to wene by right, that bountie bee the soueraine fine, and the cause of all the things that been to requiren. But certes, thilke that is cause for whiche men requiren any thyng, it semeth that thilke same thynge bee moste desired, as thus: if that a wight would riden for cause of heale, he ne desireth not so moche the mouyng to riden, as the effecte of his heale. Now than sens that al thinges ben required, for the grace of good, thei ne been not desired of all folke, more than the same good. But we haue graunted that blisfulnes is that same thyng, for whiche that all these other thynges been desired. Than is it thus, that certes onely blisfulnesse, is required and desired. By which thing it sheweth clerelie, that of good and blisfulnes, is all one and the same substaunce. Boeci. I se not (quod I) wherefore that men might discorden in this. Philosophie. And wee haue shewed, that God and verie blesfulnesse is all one thyng. Boecius. That is sothe (quod I). Philosophie. Than mow wee conclude sikerly, that the substaunce of God, is set in thilke same good, and in none other place.

Huc omnes pariter venite capti, quos fallax ligat improbis catenis Terrenas habitans libido mentis. Hic erit vobis requies laborum. &c.

Cometh all together nowe ye that been icaught and bounde with wicked chaines, by the deceiuable delite of yearthly thynges, inhabityng in your thoughte. Here shall bee the reste of your labour: here is the hauen stable, in quiete pesible. This alone is the open refute to wretches, that is to skin, that ye that be combred and deceiued, with worldly affeccions, cometh now to this souerain good, that is God, that is refute to hem that willen comen to hym. All the thinges that the riuer Tagus yeueth you, with his golden grauels: or els al the thinges that the riuer Hermus, yeueth with his red brinke: or that Indus yeueth, that is next the hote partie of the world, that medleth the greene stones with the white: ne should not cleren the lokyng of your thought, but hiden rather your blind corage within her derknes. Al that liketh you here, and exciteth and moueth your thoughtes, the yerth hath nourished it within his lowe caues. But the shining, by which the Heauen is gouerned, and whence that his strengthe, that escheweth the darke ouerthrowyng of the soule, and who so euer maie knowen thilke lighte of blisfulnesse, he will saine, that the white beames of the Sonne ne be not cleare.

Assentior [inquam] cuncta enim firmissimis nexa rationibus constant. Tum ilia, quanti, inquit, tu æstimabis, si bonum ipsum, quid sit, agnoveris? &c.

Boecius, I assent me (quod I) for al thynges been stronglie bounden with right ferme reasons. Philosophie. How moch wilt thou praisen it (quod she) if that thou knowe what the ilke good is? Boecius. I woll praise it (quod I) by price without ende, if it shal betide me to knowe also togither God that is good. Philosophie. Certes (quod she) that shall I doe thee by very reason, if that tho thinges, that I haue concluded alittle here beforne, dwellen onely in her graunting. Boecius. Thei dwellen graunted to the (quod I) that is to sain, as who saith, I graunte to thy foresaied conclusions. Philosophie. I haue shewed thee (quod she) that the things, that been required of many folke, ne been not very goodes ne perfite. For thei been diuers, that one from that other. And so as eche of hem is lackyng to other, thei ne haue no power to bring a good, that is full and absolute. But than at erst been thei very good, whan thei been gathered togider all into one forme, and into one werking: so that thilke thing that is suffisaunt, thilke same is power, and reuerence, noblesse, and mirth. And forsothe, but if all these thinges bee all one same thinge, thei ne haue not whereby that thei, mowe be put in the nomber of thynges, that ought to be required and desired. Boecius. It is shewen (quod I) ne hereof maie there no manne doubten. Philosophie. The thinges than (quod she) that ne been no goodes, whan thei been diuers, and whan thei beginnen to bee all one thynge, than been thei goodes, ne cometh it not than, by the getting of vnitie, that thei be maked goodes? Boecius. So seemeth it (quod I). Philosophie. But all thyng that is good (quod she) grauntest thou that it be good, by the participacion of good or no? Boecius. I graunte it (quod I). Philosophie. Than must thou graunten (quod she) by semblable reason, that one and good bee one same thyng. For of thinges, of whiche the effeete nis not naturelly diuers, nedes, hir substance must bee one same thyng. Boecius. I ne maie not denie it (quod I) Philosophie. Hast thou not knowen well (quod she) that all thynge that is, hath so long his dwelling and his substance, as long as it is one, but whan it forletteth to been one, it must needes dien, and corrumpen togither. Boecius. In whiche maner (quod I). Philosophie. Right as in beastes (quod she) whan the soule and the bodie been conioined in one and dwellyng togither, it is cleaped a beaste: and whan hir vnitie is destroyed, by thy discouerraunce of that one from that other, than sheweth it well, that it is a dedde thyng, and it is no lenger no beast.

And the bodie of a wight, while it dwelleth in one forme, by coniunccion of members, it is well seen, that it is a figure of mankinde: and if the parties of the bodie, bee deuided and discouered, that one from that other, that thei distroy the vnitie, the bodie for letteth to bee, that it was beforne. And who so would renne in the same maner by al thinges, he should seen that without doubte, euery thynge is in his substaunce, as longe as it is one. And whan it forleteth to bee one, it dieth and perisheth.

Bo. Whan I consider (quod I) many thinges, I see none other. Philosophie. Is there any thing (quod she) that in as moche as it liueth naturellie, that forletteth the talente, or appetite of his beeyng, and desireth to come to death and to corrupcion: Boeci. If I consider (quod I) the beastes that haue any maner nature of willyng, and of nillyng, I ne finde no beaste, but if it bee constrained, fro without forthe, that forletteth or dispeth the intencion

to liuen and to duren, or that will his thankes hasten hym to dien.

For euery beaste trauaileth hym to defende and keepe the saluacion of his life, and escheweth death and destruccion. But certes I doubt me of herbes and trees, that ne haue no feelyng soules, ne no naturell woorkynges, seruynge to appetites, as beastes haue: whether thei haue appetite to dwellen, and to duren.

Philosophie. Certes (quod she) thereof dare thee not doubte. Now looke vpon the herbes and trees, for thei wexen firste in soche places, as been conuenable to hem: in whiche places thei mowe not dien ne drien, as longe as hir nature maie defende hem. For some of hem wexen in fieldes, and some wexen in mountaignes, and other wexe in mareis, and other cleauen on rockes, and some wexen plenteous in sondes. And if any wighte enforce hym to beare hem into other places, thei wexen drie. For nature yeueth to euery thynge, that is conuenient to hym, and trauaileth that thei ne die, as long as thei haue power, to dwellen and to liuen. What wilt thou sain of this, that thei drawen all hir nourishynges by hir rootes, righte as thei hadden hir mouthes iplounged within the yerthes, and sheaden by hir mareis, hir woode hir barke: and what wilte thou saine of this, that the ilke thyng that is right soft, as the marie is, that is alwaie hidde in the scate all within, and that is defended from without, by the stedfastnesse of woode, and that the vttereste barkes, is put ayenst the distemperaunce of the heauen, as a defendour and mightie to sufferen harme? And thus certes maiest thou wel seen how greatte is the diligence of nature: for all thinges renouelen and publishen hem with seede imultiplied.

Ne there nis no manne, that ne wote well, that thei ne been right as a foundement, and edifice, for to duren not onelie for a tyme, but right as for to dure perdurablie by generacion. And the thynges eke, that men wenen ne haue no soules, ne desire thei not by semblable reason, & kepe that is his, that is to saine that is according to hir nature, in conseruacion of hir being and enduryng? For wherefore els beareth lightnes the flambes vp, and the weight presseth the yearth adoun, but for as moche as thilke places, and thilke mouinges, be couenable to euericne of hem. And for sothe euery thing kepeth thilke, that is accordynge and proper to hym, righte as thynges that been contrarious, and enemies corrumpen hem. And yet the hard thyngs (as stones) cleauen and holden hir parties togither, right fast and hard, and defenden hem in withstanding, that thei ne departen lightly, and yeuen place to hem, that breaken or deuiden hem: but nathelesse, thei retourne ayen sone into the same thinges, from whens thei be araced. But fire fleeth and refuseth all diuision. Ne I ne treate not now here, of wilfull mouynges of the soule that is knowing, but of naturel entencion of thinges, as thus: right as we swalowen the meate that we receiuen, and ne thinke not on it, and as we drawe our breath in slepyng, that we wete not while we slepen. For certes in the beastes, the loue of hir liuinges, ne of hir beynges, ne cometh not of the wilnynges of the soule, but of the beginnynges of nature. For certes, through constraining causes, will desireth and embraceth ful oft times the death, that nature dredeth, that is to saine, as thus: that a man maie be constrained, so by some cause, that his wille desireth, and taketh the death, whiche that nature hateth and dreadeth full sore. And sometyme we seen the contrary, as thus: that the wil of a wight disturbeth and constraineth that, that nature alwaie desireth and requireth, that is to saie, the werkes of generacion, by the whiche generacion onely dwelleth, and is sustained the long durabilitie of mortall thynges, as thus. This charitie and this loue, that euery thyng hath to hymself, ne commeth not of the mouing of the soule, but of the entencion of nature. For the purueiaunce of God hath yeuen to thinges, that been create of him this, that is a full greate cause to liuen and to duren, for which thei desiren naturelly hir life, as long as euer thei mowen: for which thou maiest not dreden by no maner, that all thinges that been any where, that thei ne requiren naturelly, the ferme stablenesse of perdurable dwellyng, and eke the eschewyng of destruccion.

Boecius. I confesse (quod I) that I se wel now, and certainly withouten doubt, the thynges that a while ago, semeden vncertaine to me. Philos. But (quod she) thilke thing that desireth to bee and dwell pardurablie, he desireth to been one: for if that one were destroyed, certes, being should there none dwellen to no wight. Boecious. That is sothe (quod I). Philosophie. Than (quod she) desiren all thyngs one. Boecius. I assente (quod I). Philosophie. And I haue shewed (quod she) that ilke same one is, thilke that is good. Boecius. Ye forsothe (quod I). Philosophie. All thynges than (quod she) requiren good, and thilke maist thou discriuen thus: good is thilke thyng, that euery wight desirest. Boecius. There ne maie be thought no more verie thyng (quod I) for either all thynges be referred and brought to nought, and flotten without gouernour dispoiled of one, as of hir proper hed, or els if there be any thyng, to which that all thinges tenden and hien to, that thyng must be the souerain good of all goodes. Philosophie. Than saied she thus: O my nourice (quod she) I haue great gladnes of thee, for thou haste fixed in thy herte, the middle sothfastenesse, that is to sain the pricke, but this thing hath be discouered to thee, in that thou saidest, that thou wistest not a litle here beforne. Boec. What is that (quod I). Philosophie. That thou wistest not (quod she) whiche was the ende of thynges, and certes, that is the thyng that euery wighte desireth. And for as moche as wee haue gathered and comprehended, that good is thilke thynge, that is desired of all, than mote we nedes confesse, that good is the fine of all thynges.

Quisquis profunda mente vestigat verum, Cupitque nullis ille deuiis falli, In se revolvat intimi lucem visus. &c.

Who so seketh sothe by deepe thought, and coueiteth to been disceiueth by no miswaies, let hym rollen and treaten within hymself, the lighte of his inward sight: and let hym gatheren ayen, enclinyng into a compace, the long mouinges of his thoughtes. And let him teachen his courage, that he hath enclosed, and hidde in his treasours, all that he hath compassed or sought fro without: and than thilke thing, that the blacke cloudes of errour, whilome had couered, shall light more clerely than Phebus

hymself ne shineth. Glosa. Who so woll seeke the deepe groundes of sothe in his thought, and woll not bee deceiued, by false proposicions, that gone amisse from the troth, let hym well examine, and rolle within hymself, the nature and properties of the thyng. And let hym efte sones examine an rollen his thoughtes, by good deliberacion, or that he deme. And let hym treachen his soule, that it hath by naturell principles, kindliche ihidde within it self, all the trouthe, the which he imagineth to been in thynges without: and than all the darkenesse of his misknowyng, shall seme more euidentlie to the sight of his vnderstandyng, than the sonne ne semeth to the sight without forthe. For certes, the body bryngyng the weight of foryetyng, ne hath not chased out of your thought, all the clerenesse of your knowyng, for certainly, the sede of sothe, hokleth and cleaueth within your corage, and it is awaked and excited by the windes, and by the blastes of doctrine.

For wherefore els demen ye of your owne will the rightes, whan ye bee asked, but if so were that the nourishyng of reason, ne liued iplunged in the depe of your herte, that is to saine, how should men demen, the sothe of any thyng that were asked, and if there nere a rote of sothfastnesse, that were iplunged and hid in naturell principles, the which sothfastnesse liued within the depenesse of the thought, and if so bee, that the muse and the doctrine of Plato singeth sothe, all that euery wight learneth, he ne dooeth nothyng els than, but recordeth, as menne recorden thynges, that been foryeten.

Tum ego, Platoni (inquam) vehementer assentior; nam me horum jam secundo commemoras. Primum quod memoriam corporea contagione, &c.

THAN saied I thus. I accord me greatlie to Plato, for thou recordest and remembrest me these thynges, yet the seconde tyme, that is to saie, first whan I left my memorie, by the contrarious coniunccion of the bodie with the soule: and eftsones afterward, whan I loste it confounded, by thy charge, and by the burden of my sorowe, and than saied she thus. If thou looke (quod she) first the thynges that thou haste graunted, it ne shall not been right ferre, that thou ne shalt remembren the ilke thing, that thou saidest that thou nistest not. Boecius. What thyng (quod I). Philosophie. By whiche the gouernement (quod she) that this worlde is gouerned. Boecius. I remember it well (quod I) and I confesse well, that I ne wist it naught. But all be it so, that I see now from a farre, what thou purposeste, algates I desire yet to harken it of the more plainly. Philoso. Thou ne wendest not (quod she) a little here beforne, that menne should doubte, that this worlde is gouerned by God. Boccius. Certes (quod I) ne yet, ne doubte I it not, ne I nill neuer wene that it were to dout, as who saieth, but I wot wel that God gouerneth this worlde. And I shall answeren the by what reasons, I am brought to this. This worlde (quod I) of so many diuers and contrarious parties, ne might neuer haue been assembled in o forme, but if there were one, that conioyned so many diuers thinges. And the same diuersitie of hir natures, that so discorden, that one fro that other must departen, and vnioynen the thynges, that been conioyned, if there ne were one that conteined, that he hath conioyned and ibound. Ne the certain order of nature, ne should not bring forthe so ordeine mouynges, by places, by tymes, by dooynges, by spaces, by qualities, if there ne were one, that wer aie stestfast dwellyng, that ordained and disposed, these diuersities of mouynges. And thilke thyng, what so euer it bee, by whiche that all thynges bee imaked and ladde, I clepe hym God that is a worde that is vsed to al folkes. Philosophie. Than saied she: sithe thou felest thus these thynges, I trowe that I haue little more to doen, that thou mightie of welfulnesse, hole and sounde, ne se eftsones thy countrie. But lette vs looken these thynges, that we haue purposed here beforne. Haue I not nombred and saied (quod she) that suffisaunce is in blisfulnesse. And we haue accorded that God is the ilke same blisfulnesse. Boecius. Yes forsothe (quod I). Philosophie. And that to gouern this worlde (quod she) ne shall he neuer haue neede, of no helpe fro without. For els if he had neede of any help, he ne should not haue no full suffisaunce. Boecius. Yes thus it mote nedes be (quod I). Philosophie. Than ordeined he by himself alone all thynges (quod she). Boecius. That maie not be denied (quod I). Philosophie. And I haue shewed that God is the same good. Boecius. It remembreth me well (quod I). Philosophie. Than ordeineth he al thinges by thilke good (quod she) sith he which we han accorded to bee good, gouerneth all thynges by himself. And he is a key and a steire, by whiche the edifice of this worlde is kept stable, and without corrumpyng. Boeci. I accord me greatly (quod I). And I haue apperceiued alitle here beforne, that thou wouldest saie thus. All were it so, that it wer by a thinne suspeccion. Philosophie. I trowe well (quod she). For as I trow thou leadest now more ententifly thine iye, to loken the very goodes. But natheles, the thing that I shall tell thee, yet ne sheweth not laste to token. Boecius. What is that (quod I). Philosophie. So as menne trowe (quod she) and that rightfully, that God gouerneth all thynges, by the key of his goodnes. And all these same thynges that I haue taught thee, hasten hem by naturel contencion, to come to good, there maie no man douted, that thei ne been gouerned voluntarelie. And that thei ne conuerten of hir owne good wille, to hir ordeinour. As that thei been accordyng, and enclinyng to hir gouernor, and to hir kyng. Boecius. It mote nedes be so (quod I) for the realme ne should not seme blisfull, if there were a yoke of misdrawynges in diuers partes, ne the sauyng of obedient thynges, ne should not be than. Philosophie. Is there nothing (quod she) that kepeth his nature, that enforceth hym to gon ayenst God? Boecius. No (quod I). Philosophie. And if that any thynge enforced hym to withstande God, might it auailen at last ayen hym, that wee haue graunted to be almightie, by the right of blisfulnesse? Boecius. Certes (quod I) all vtterlie it ne might not auaile hym. Philosophie. Than is there nothyng (quod she) that either maie, or will withstande to his soueraine God. Boecius. I trow not (quod I). Philosophie. Than (quod she) is thilke the soueraine God, that all thynges gouerneth strongly, and ordeineth hem softelye. Boecius. Than said I thus, I delite me (quod I) not onelie in thendes, or in

the somme of the reasons, that thou haste concluded and proued, but thilke wordes that thou vsest, deliten me moche more so that at laste fooles, that sometyme renden great thinges, oughten been ashamed of hem self, that is to sain, that we fooles that reprehenden wickedly the thinges, that touchen Goddes gouernaunce, we oughten been ashamed of our self. As I, that saied that God refuseth onely the werkes of men, and ne entermeteth not of it. Philosophie. Thou haste well heard (quod she) the fables of the poetes, how the gyauntes assaileden Heauen, with the goddes: but forsoth the debonaire force of God, disposed hem as it was worthie, that is to sain, distroied the gyauntes as it was worthie. But wilte thou that wee reieynen togither thilke same reasons? For peraduenture of soche coniunccions, maie sterten vp some faire sparke of sothe. Boecius. Doe (quod I) as thee list. Philosophie. Wenest thou (quod she) that God ne bee almightie: Boecius. No man is in doubt of it certes (quod I). Philosophie. No wight ne doubteth it, if he be in his minde (quod she). But he that is almightie, there nis nothyng that he ne maie. Boecius. That is sothe (quod I). Philosophie. Maie God doe euill (quod she)? Boe. Naie forsothe (quod I). Phi. Than is euill nothyng (quod she) sith that ye maie dooen none euill, that maie doen al thinges. Bo. Scornest thou me (quod I) or els plaiest thou, or disceiuest thou me that haste so wonnen with thy reasons, the hous of Dedalus so enterlasing, that it is vnable to bee vnlaced, that thou otherwhile entrest there thou issuest, and otherwhile issuest there thou entrest. Ne foldest thou not togither, by replicacion of wordes, a maner wonderfull circle, or enuironing of the simplicite diuine: for certes, a little here beforn, whan thou began at blisfulnesse, thou saidest that it is a souerain good, and that God is the blisfulnesse, for whiche thou yaue me as a couenable yefte, that is to sain, that no wight nis blisfull, but if he be God also therewith. And saidest eke, that the forme of good is, the substaunce of God and of blisfulnesse. And saidest that the ilke one is thilke same good, that is required and desired of al the kinde of thinges. And thou prouedest in disputing, that God gouerneth al the thinges of the world, by the gouernaunce of bountie, and saidest that all thinges wold obein to hym, and saydest that the nature of yuell is nothinge. And these thinges shewdest thou not with no reasons taken fro without, but by proues in cercles and homlich knowing. The whiche proues drawen to hem selfe hir faith and hir accorde eueriche of hem of other. Phi. Than said she thus: I ne scorne not, ne plaie, ne disceiue the but I haue shewed the thing that is greatest ouer all thinges, by the yeft of God, that we whilom praiden. For this is the forme of diuine substaunce, that is soche, that it ne flydeth not in to vtterest foraine thinges, ne receiueth not no straunge thinges, in him. But right as Permenides saied in Greke, of thilke diuine substaunce: he saied thus, that thilk deuine substaunce, tourneth the world and the mouable cercle of thynges, while the ilke diuine substaunce kepeth it self without mowynges, that is to sayne, that he moueth neuer mo, and yet it moueth al other thinges. But nathelesse, if I haue styred reason that be not taken fro without the compasse of the thing, of the whiche we treaten, but reasons that been bestowed within compasse: there nis not why thou shouldest meruailen, sith thou haste lerned by the sentence of Plato, that nedes the wordes mote been cosins to the thinges of whiche they speken.

Felix, qui potuit boni Fontem visere lucidum. Felix, qui potuit gravis, &c.

Blissed is that man that may sene the clere wel of good: blisfull is he that may vnbinden him from the boundes of heuy yearthe. The poete of Thrace Orpheus, that whilome had right great sorowe, for the death of his wife. After that he had maked and constrained by his wepely songes, the woodes mouable to renne, and had maked the ryuers to stonden still, and had maked the hartes and hyndes to ioynen dredlesse hir sydes to cruell lions, to herken his songe, and had maked that the hare was not agast of the hounde, which was pleased by song: so whan the moste ardaund lone of hys wife, brende the entrales of his breaste, ne the songes that hadde ouercomen all thynges, ne myghten not aswagen her lorde Orpheus. He plained him of the Heuen goddes, whiche that were cruell to hym, he wente him to the houses of the Hell: and he tempered his blandishinge songes, by resouning of stringes, and speakest and songe in wepinge, all that euer he had receiued and laued out the noble welles of his mother Caliope the goddesse. And he sang with as moch as he might of wepinge and with as moche as loue, that doubled his sorow might yeuen him and teache him, and commoued the Hell, and required and besoughte by swete prayer the lordes of soules in Hell of relesinge, that is to saye, to yelden him his wife. Cerberus the porter of Hell, with his thre heedes was caught and al abashed of the newe songe. And the thre goddesses, furyes and wengeresses of felonies, that tourmenten and agasten the soules, by anoy woxen sorowful and sory and teares wepten for pitee. Tho was not the heede of Ixion tourmented, by the ouerthrowinge wheele. And Tantalus, that was distroyed by the woodnesse of long thrust, dispised the floodes to drincke. The foule that hight vultour, that eateth the stomake or the giserne of Tytius is so fulfylled of his songe, that it nill eaten ne tyren no more. At the last the lorde and iudge of soules was moued to misericordies, and cried: "We been ouercomen" (quod he) "yeue we to Orpheus his wife to beare hym companie, he hath well ybought her by his songes and his ditees: but we will putten a lawe in thys, and couenant in the yefte, that is to saine, that till he bee out of Hel if he loke behinde him, that his wife shal lcome agayne vnto vs." But what is he that maye yeue a lawe to louers: loue is a greater lawe and stronger to him self than any lawe that men may yeuen. Alas, whan Orpheus and his wife were almeste at the termes of the night, that is to saine, at the laste boundes of Hel, Orpheus loked backwarde on Euridice his wife, and loste her, and was dedde. This fable apertaineth to you all, who so euer desireth or seketh to lede his thought in to the souerain daie, that is to saye, to clerenesse of souerain good. For who so euer be so ouercomen, that he fixe his eyen in to the pitte of Hell, that is to saine: who so euer set his thougtes in yearthlie thynges, all that euer

he hath drawen of the noble good celestiall, he leseth it, whan he loketh to the Helles, this is to saine, in to low thinges of the erthe.

THUS ENDETH THE THIRDE BOKE OF BOECE, AND HERE AFTER FOLLOWETH THE FOURTHE.

BOOK IV.

Hæc cum Philosophia, dignitate vultus, et oris gravitate servatâ, leniter suaviterque cecinisset, tum ego, nondum penitus insiti mœroris oblitus, &c.

WHAN Philosophie had songen softly and delectably the forsaid thynges, keping the dignitye of her chere, and the weight of her wordes, I than that ne had al vtterlye forieten the wepinge and the mourninge that was sette in min herte, forbrake the entencion of her that entended yet to sain some other thynges.

O (quod I) thou that arte gyderesse of very light, the thinges that thou hast saide me hitherto, ben to me so clere and shewing by the diuine loking of hem, and by thy reasons, that they ne mowen ben ouercomen. And thilke thinges, that thou toldest me, all be it so that I had whilom forieten hem, for the sorowe of the wronge that hath be done to me: yet neuerthelesse they ne weren not vtterly vnknowen to me. But this same is namely a right great cause of my sorowe, so that as the gouernour of thinges is good, if that yuels mowen ben by any waies, or elles if that yueles passen without punishinge, the which thing only, how worthye is it to ben wondred vpon. Thou considrest it wel thy self certainly. But yet to this thing there is yet another thynge ioyned more to be wondred vpon. For felonye is emperesse, and floureth full of richesses, and vertue nis not al onely without meedes, but it is caste downe, and eke fortroden vnder the fete of felonous folke: and it abieth the turmentes in stede of wicked felons. Of all whiche thinges there is no wight may marualen ynough ne complainen, that soch thinges be doone in the reigne of God, that all thynges wote, and all thinges maye, and ne will not only but good thinges. Than said she thus: certes (quod she) that were a great maruayle, and an abashinge without ende, and well more horrible than all the monsters, if it were as thou wenest, that is to sain, that in the right ordaine house of so moch a father, and an ordainour of meine, that the vesselles that ben foule and vile, shuld ben honoured and heried and the precious vesseles that shuld ben defouled and vile. But it is not so, for if the thinges that I haue concluded a lytell here beforne, ben kept hole and vnaraced, thou shalt wel know by the auctoryte of God, (of the whose reigne I speake) that certes the good folke be alway mightie, and shrewes ben alway outeaste and feble. Ne the vices be neuermore without pain, ne the vertues ne be not with out mede. And that blisfulnes cometh alway to good folk, and infortune cometh alway to wicked folke. And thou shalt well knowen many thinges of this kinde, that shulde ceasen thy playntes, and strengthen the with stedfaste sadnesse. And for thou haste sene the forme of verie blisfulnesse by me, that haue whilom shewed it the, and thou hast knowen in whom blisfulnesse is sette: all thing treated, that I trowe be necessary, to put forthe, I shal shewen the the way, that shal bringen the ayen vnto thin house, and I shall fyxe fethers in thy thought, by which it may arisen in height, so that al tribulacion ydone away thou by my giding and by my pathe, and by my sledes, shalte mowen retourne hole and sounde in to thy countrie.

Sunt etenim pennæ volucres mihi, Quæ celsa conscendunt poli, Quas sibi cum velox mens induit, &c.

THAN for thy swifte fethers that sourmounten the height of the Heuen, whan the swift thought hath clothed it in tho feathers it dispiseth the hatefull erthes, and surmounteth the roundenesse of the great ayre, and it seeth the clouds behinde his baeke, and passeth the heyght of the region of the fire, that enchaufeth by the swift mouinge of the firmament, tyl that he aryseth in to the houses, that bearen the sterres, and ioyneth the way with the sonne Phebus, and felawshipeth the waye of the olde colde Saturnus, and he ymaked a knight of the elere steire, that is to saine, whan the thought is made Goddes knight, by the sekynge of clere trouthe to comen to the very knowledge of God. And thilke soule renneth by the cercle of sterres, in all the places there as the shinynge nyght is ypainted, that is to saine, the nyght that is cloudlesse. For on nyghtes that bee cloudlesse it semeth that the Heuen were paynted with dyuers ymages of sterres. And whan he hath done there ynoughe, he shall forleten the laste Heuen, and he shal presen an wenden on the backe of the swifte firmamente, and he shall be maked parfite of the wurshipful light of God. There holdeth the lorde of thinges the septre of his might, and attempreth the gouernementes of the worlde, and the shining iudge of thinges stable in hym selfe, gouernethe the swifte carte or waine, that is to saine, the circuler mouinge of the sonne. And if thy way ledeth the ayen, so that thou be brought thider, than wylt thou saye, that is the countrye that thou requirest, of whiche thou ne haddest no mynde: but nowe it remembereth me well, here was I borne, here woll I fasten my degre, here woll I dwell. But if the lyketh than to loken on the derkenesses of the yearthe, that thou hast forleten, than shalt thou sene, that these felonous tyrauntes, that the wretched people dredeth nowe, shullen be exiled from thilke faire countrie.

Tum ego, papæ, inquam, ut magna promittis. Nec dubito, quin possis efficere, tu modo quem excitaveris, ne moreris, &c.

THAN saide I thus. O wonder me that thou beheteste me so great thinges. Ne I ne doute not that thou ne mayste well perfourme that thou behetest: but I pray the this that thou ne tarie not, to tell me thylke thynges, that thou haste moued. Philoso. First (quod she) thou muste nedes knowe, that good folke been alwaye stronge and myghtye, and the shrewes ben feble and deserte, and naked of all strengthes. And of these thynges certes euerichē of hem is declared and shewed by other. For as good and yuell been two contraries, if so be that good be stedfaste, than sheweth the feblesse al openly. And if thou know,

clerely the freelnesse of yuell, the stedfastenesse of good is knowen. But for as moche as the faithe of my sentence shall be the more ferme and haboundant, I wol gone by that one waye and by that other, and I woll confirme the thynges that ben purposed now on this syde, and nowe on that side. Two thinges ther ben, in whiche the effecte of al the dedes of mankind standeth, that is to sayne, wyll and power: and if that one of these two faileth, there nis nothong that maye bee done. For if that wil lacketh, there nis no wight that vndertaketh to do that he wol not done: and yf power failethe, the wyll nis but ydle, and stante for naught. And thereof cometh it, that if thou se a wight that wolde getten that he may not getten, thou mayst not doute that power ne faleth him to hauen that he wolde. B. This is open and clere (quod I) ne it ne may not been deyned in no maner. Philoso. And yf thou se a wight (quod she) that hath done that he would done, thou nylt not dout, that he ne hath had power to done it. Boe. No (quod I). Phi. And in that that euery wight may, in that men holden hem mighty to done a thing. In so moch as a man is myghty to doone a thyng, in so moch men holde him myghty: and in that that he ne may, in that men demen him to be feble. Bo. I confesse it wel (quod I). P. Remembre the (quod she) that I haue gathred and shewed by the forsaid reasons, that all the entencion of the wyl of mankinde, whiche that is ladde by dyuers studies, hasteth to comen to blisfulnesse. Boecius. I remembreth me well (quod I) that it hath bene shewed. Philosophie. And recordeth the naughte than (quod she) that blisfulnesse is thilke same good that men requiren, so that whan blisfulnesse is required of al? Boecius. It recordeth me nat (quod I). For I haue it alwaye in my memorie fyxed. Philosophie. All folke than (quod she) goode and eke badde enforcen hem without difference of entencion to comen to good. Boecius. This is very consequence (quod I) Philosop. And certaine is (quod she) that by getting of good be men maked good. Boe. That is certaine (quod I). Philosoph. Than getten good men that they disiren. Boe. So it semet (quod I). Philosophie. But wicked folke (quod she) if they getten the good that they desiren, they ne mowen not be wicked. So it is (quod I). Philoso. Than so as that one and that other (quod she) desiren the good, and the good folke getten the good, and not the wicked folke: than it is no doute that the good folke ne be mightye, and wicked folke be feble. Boecius. Who so that euer douteth of this, he ne may not consider the nature of thinges ne the consequence of reasons. Philosop. And ouer this (quod she) if that there been twoo thynges that haue one same purpose by kynde. And that one of hem pursueth and perfourmeth that same thing by naturel office, and that other ne may not done thilke office naturel, but foloweth by other maner, than is conenable to nature, him that accomplisheth his purpose kindely, and yet he ne accomplisheth not hys owne purpose: whether of these two demest thou for more mighty? Boeci. If that I coniecte (quod I) that thou woldest say, algates I desire yet to herken it more plainly of thee. Philosop. Thou nylte not than denye (quod she) that the mouement of goynge nis in men by kynde. Boecius. No forsothe (quod I). Philosoph. Ne thou doutest not (quod she) that thilke naturell office of goynge, ne bee the office of feete. Boecius I ne doute it no (quod I.) Philosophie. Than (quod she) yf that a wyght be mighty to moue and gothe vpon his fete, and another to whom thilke naturell office of fete lacketh, enforceth hym to go crepynge on his hande, whiche of these two oughte to be holden the more mighty by ryght. Boece. Knytte forthe (quod I) the remenaunte. Philosophie. For no wyght ne douteth, that he that maye gon by naturell office of feete, ne be more myghtye thanne he that ne maye not. But the souerayne good (quod she) that is euen lyke purposed to the good and to the badde. The good folke seken it by naturel office of vertues, and shrewes enforcen hem to getten it by dyuerse couetises of erthly thinges, whiche that nis no naturel office to getten thilke souerain good. Trowest thou that it be any other wise? Bo. Nay (quod I). For the consequence is open, and shewinge of thinges that I haue graunted, that nedes good folke mote ben mightye, and shrewes moten bene feble and vnmighty. P. Thou renneste a ryght beforne me (quod she) and this is the iudgemente, that is to saine, I iudge of right, as these leches ben wont to hopen of sicke folke, whan they apperceyuen, that nature is redressed and withstandeth to the maladye. But for I se the nowe, al redy to the withstanding, I shal shew the more thilk and continnel reasons. For loke how greatly sheweth the feblenesse and infirmyte of wicked folke, that ne mowen not comen, to that hir naturall entencion leadeth hem: and yet almost thylke naturel entencion constraineth hem. And what were to demen than of shrewes, yf thike naturel helpe had forleten hem the whiche naturel helpe of entencion gothe alway beforne hem, and is so great, that unneth it may be ouercomen? Consider than how great defaute of power, and howe great feblesse there is in wicked felonous folke, as who saith, the greater thing that is coueited and the desire not accomplished, of the lasse might is he that coueiteth it, and may not acomplishe. And for thy philosophie saith thus by souerain good. Ne shrewes ne requiren not light medes ne vaine games, whiche they ne maye not folowen ne holden, but they failen of thilke somme of the height of thinges, that is to saine, souerain good. Ne these wretches ne comen not to theffecte of soueraine good, the which they enforcen hem onely to getten by nightes and by dayes, in gettynge of which good, the strength of good folke is ful wel ysene. For right as thou mightest demen him mighty of going, that goeth on his fete till he myght comen to thylke place, fro the which place there ne lay no way further to begone: right so must thou nedes demen him for right myghty, whiche that getteth and atteineth to the ende of all thynges, whyche that bene to desiren, beyonde the which ende there nis nothinge to desire. Of the whiche power of good folke, men may conclude, that we wicked men semen to be baraine and naked of al strenght. For why forleten they vertues and folowen vices, nis it not for that they ne knowen not the goodes? But what thinge is more feble and more caytife, than is the blindesse of ignoraunce? or ells they knowen wel, whiche thinges they oughten folowen, but lechery and couetise ouerthroweth hem misturned. And certes so doth distemperaunce to feble men, that mowe not wrastlen ayen these vices. Ne know

they not wel that they forleten the good wilfully, and tournen hem wilfully to vices. And in this wise they ne forleten not only to be myghty, but they forleten all vtterly in any wyse for to been. For they that forleten the comune fine of al thinges that ben, they forleten also therwithall for to bene. And peraventure it shulde semen to some folke, that this were a meruayle to saine, that shrewes, which that conteinen the more partes of men, ne been not, ne haue no being. But nathelesse it is so, and thus stant this thinge. For they that be shrewes, I deny not but that thei be shrewes, but I deny simplye and plainly that they ne be not, ne haue no beinge. For righte as thou mightest sayne of the caraine of a man, that it were a deed man: so graunt I wel forsothe, that vycious folke ben wicked, but I ne may not absolutely and simply graunt that they been. For thilke thing that with holdeth ordre and kepeth nature, thilke thinge is and hath beinge. But what thynge faileth that, that is to saye, he that forleteth naturel ordre, he forleteth thilk beinge that is set in his nature? But thou wolt saine, the shrewes mowen. Certes that ne denie I not: but certes hir power ne discendeth not of strength, but of feblesse, for they mowen doone wickednesse, the whiche they ne might not, if they mighten dwellen in the forme, and in the doynge of good people. And thilke power sheweth euidently, that they mowen righte naught. For so as I haue gadred and proued a litel here beforne, that yuel is not, and so as shrewes may onely but shrewednes. This conclusion is al clere, that shrewes ne mowen right naught, ne haue no power. And for as moche as thou vnderstondest whiche is the strength of this power, I haue definished a lytel here beforne, that no thing nis so mighty as soueraine good. B. That is sothe (quod I). Phil. And thilke same soveraine good maye done none yuel. Boecius. Certes no (quod I). Philosop. Is there any wight than (quod she) that weneth that men mowen done al thinges. Boecius. No man (quod I) but if he be out of his wit. P. But certes shrewes mowen don yuels (quod she). Boecius. Ye wolde God (quod I) that they ne mighten done none. Phil. Than (quod she) so as he that is mightie to done onelye good thinges, he maie done all thynges, and they that ben mighty to done yuell thinges, ne mowen not all thynges. Than is it open thinge and manifeste, that they that mowen don yuel ben of lasse power. And yet the proue this conclusion there helpeth me this, that I haue shewed here beforne, that al power is to be nombred among thinges that men oughten require. And I haue shewed that all thinges that oughten ben desired be referred to God, right as to a maner height of hir nature: but for to mowen done yuell and felonie, ne may not ben referred to God. Than is not yuell of the nombre of thynges, that oughten to ben desired and required. Than is it open and clere that the power ne the mouynge of shrewes nis no power. And of all these thinges it sheweth wel that the good folk ben certainly mighty, and the shrewes doutlesse vnmighty. And it is clere and open that thilke sentence of Plato is very and sothe, that saithe, that onely wisemen may don that they desiren, and shrewes mowen haunten that hem liketh, but that they desiren, that is to saine, to come to soueraine good, they ne haue no power to accomplisshe that. For shrewes done what hem lyst, whan by tho thinges in which they deliten they wenen to attaine to thilke good that they desyren, but they ne getten ne attaine not therto for vices ne comen not to blisfulnesse.

Quos vides sedere celsos, Soliiculmine reges, Purpura claros nitente, &c.

Who so that the couerture, of hir vaine aparayles, myght stripen of these proude kynges that thou seest sitten an high in hir chaires, glittering in shininge purpure, enuironned with sorowefull armures, manassynge with cruell mouth, blowinge by woodnesse of herte, he shulde sene that thilke lordes, bearen within hir corages full straite chaines: for lechery tourmenteth hem on that one side, with gredy venimes and troublable ire, that araiseth in hem the flode of troublinges, tourmenteth on that other side, hir thought or sorow halt hem wery and yeaught, or sliding and disceiuing hope tourmenteth hem. And therefore sithe thou seest one heed, that is to saine, one tiraunte bearen so manye tirannyes, than he doth thilke tyraunt, not that he desyreth syhe he is caste downe wyth so manye wycked lordes, that is to saine, so many vices that haue so wickedly lordships ouer him.

Vides ne igitur quando in eeno probra volvantur, qua probitas luce resplendeat? in quo perspicuum est, nunquam bonis præmia, &c.

Seest thou not than, in howe great filthe these shrewes ben ywrapped, and with whiche clerenesse these good folke shinen. In this sheweth it well that to good folke ne lacketh neuer mo hir medes, ne shrewes lacken neuer more tourmentes. For of al thinges that be done, thilke thinge for whiche any thinge is done, it semeth as by right, that thilke thing be the mede of that, as thus: if a man renneth in the stady or in the forlonge for the crown, than lieth the mede in the crowne for which he renneth. And I haue shewed that blisfulnesse is thilke same good, for whiche that all thynges ben done. Than is thilke same good purposed to the werkes of mankinde, right as a commune mede, whiche mede ne maye not be disceuered from good folke: for no wight has by right, from thensforth that him lacketh goodnesse, ne shall be cleped good for which thing folke of good maners, hir medes ne forsaken hem neuer mo. For albeit so that shrewes waxen as wode as hem liste against good folke, yet neuerthelesse the crowne of wise men, ne shall not fallen ne faden fro foraine shewdnesse, ne benimmen not fro the courage of good people hir propre honour. But yf anie wight reioysed him of goodnesse, that he had taken fro without, as who saith, if a man had his goodnesse of any other man than of him selfe: certes he that yaue him thylke goodnesse, or elles some other wyght might bynome it him. But for as moche as to enery wight his propre bounte yeneth him his mede, than at erste shal he failen of mede, whan he forleteth to be good. And at the laste, so as all medes ben required, for men wenen that they be good, who is he that nold deme, that he that is ryghte mightye of good, were part lesse of mede? And of what mede shall he be reguerdoned.

Certes of ryght fayre mede and right great, abouen all medes. Remembre the of thilke noble corallarie that I yaue the a lytel here beforne, and gather it togither in this maner. So as God him selfe is blisfulnesse, than is it clere and certain, that al good people ben maked blisful, for they ben good and thilke people that ben blisful, it accordeth and is conuenable to be goddes. Than is the mede of people soch, that no day ne shal empairen it, ne no wickednesse shall drinken it, ne power of no wight ne shal not amenuse it, that is to saine, that ben maked goddes. And sithe it is thus, that good men ne failen neuer more of hir mede, certes no man ne may doute of the vndepartable paine of shrewes, that is to saine, that the paine of shrewes departeth not from hem selfe neuer mo. For so as good and yuel, and paine and medes be contrarie, it mote nedes be, that ryght as we se betiden in guerdone of good, that also mote the paine of the yuel answer by the contrary porthes to shrewes. Nowe than so as bountie and prowesse ben mede to good folke, also is shrewdnesse it selfe tourmente to shrewes. Than who so euer is entetched and defouled with paine, he ne doubteth not, that he is entethed and defouled with yuel. Yf shrewes than wollen praisen hem selfe, may it semen to hem that they ben wyth outen partie of tourment, sithe they ben soch that the vttrest wickednesse, that is to saye, wicked thewes, whiche is the vttrest and worst kinde of shreudnesse, nede fouleth ne entecheth not hem onely, but enfecteth and enuenimeth greatly. And also loke on shrewes, that ben the contrarie partie of good men, howe great paine felowshipeth and fouleth hem: for thou hast lerned a litel here deforne, that all thing that is and hath beeinge, is one, and thilke same one is good: than is this the consequence, that it semeth well, that al thing that is and hath beynge, is good, that is to saine, as who saithe that beinge, vnite and goodnesse is al one. And in this maner it foloweth than, that all thinge that faileth to be good, it stinteth for to be and for to haue any maner being: wherfore it is that shrewes stinten for to be that they weren. But thilke other forme of mankind, that is to saine, the fourme of the bodye without, sheweth that these shrewes weren whilom men, wherfore whan they bene peruerted and tourned in to malice, certes than they haue forlorne the nature of mankinde: but so as onelie bountie and prowesse maye enhaunsen euerie man, ouer men: than mote it nedes be that shrewes which that shrewdnesse hath caste out of the condicion of mankinde, bene put vnder the merite and deserte of men. Than betideth it, that if thou seeste a wight whiche that is transfourmed in to vices, thou maiest not wene that he bee a man. For if he be ardaunte in auarice, and that he be a rauenour by violence of forain richesse, thou shalte saine that he is lyke a wolfe. And if he be felonous and withouten reste, and exercice his tonge to chidinges, thou shalte lyken him to the hound. And if he be a priuie awaytour hydde, and reioyseth him to rauishe by wiles, thou shalte saine hym lyke to the foxe whelpes. And if he bee distempred and quaked for ire, men shall wenen that he bearethe the corage of a lion. And if he be dredeful and flienge and dredeth thinges, whiche that ne oughten not to be dredde, men shal holde him lyke to the hart. And if he be slowe and astonyed and lache, men shall holde him lyke to a an asse. And yf he be lyghte and vnstedfaste of corage, and chaungeth aye his studies, men shal holde him like to the birdes. And yf he bee plounged in foule and vnclene luxuries, he is withholden in the foule delyces of the foule sowe, than foloweth it, that he that forlettethe bounte and prowesse, he forletteth to be a man, sith he ne maye not passen in the condicion of God, he is turned in to a beest.

Vela Neritii ducis, Et vagas pelago rates, Eurus appulit insulæ, pulchra qua residens dea, Solis edita semine, &c.

Eurus the wind, ariued the sailes of Ulixes duke of the countre of Narice, and his wandringe shyppes by the see, in to the yle there as Circes the faire goddesse doughter of the Sunne dwelleth, that medleth to her newe gestes, drinkes that been touched and maked with enchauntementes. And after that her hande mighty ouer the herbes, had chaunged hir gestes in to diuers maners, that one of hem is couered his face with forme of a boor, that other is chaunged in to a lion, of the countre of Marmorike, and his nailes and his tethe wexen. That other of hem is newlyche chaunged in to a wolfe, and howlyth whan he wolde wepe, that other goth debonairly in the house as a tygre of Inde. But al be it so that the godheed of Mercury, that is cleped that birde of Archadie, hath had mercy of the duke Ulyxes, byseged wyth dyuerse yuelles, and hath vnbounden hym fro the pestilence of hys hostesse, algathes the rowers and the mariners, hadden by this ydrawen in to hyr mouthes, and dronken the wicked drinkes. They that weren woxen swine, hadden by this ychaunged hyr meate of bread, for to eaten akorne of okes. None hir limmes ne dwelleth with hem hoole, but they haue lost the voyce and the body, onely hir thought dwellethe with hem stable, that wepeth and bywaileth the monstruous chaunginge that they suffren. O ouer light hande, as who saith, feble and light is the hand of Circes the enchaunteresse, that chaungeth the bodies of folke in to beestes, to regarde and to comparyson of mutacion, that is maked by vices, ne the herbes of Circes ne be not myghty, for all be it so that they may not chaungen the limmes of the body, algate yet they may not chaunge the hertes, for wythyn is yhyd the strength and the vigoure of men in the secretour of hir hertes, that is to saine, the strength of reason, but thilke venims of vices, to drawen a man to hem more mightely than the venime of Cyrces, for vices been so cruell that they persen and thorowe passen the courage within, and thoughe they ne anoye not the body, yet vices wooden to destroyen men by wounde of thought.

Tum ego, fateor, inquam, nec injuria dici video vitiosos, tametsi humani corporis speciem servent, &c.

Than saide I thus: I confesse and am aknowe it (quod I) ne I ne se not that men may say, as by right, that shrewes ben chaunged in to beestes, by the qualite of hir soules, all be it so that they kepen yet the forme of the bodye of mankynde: but I wolde not of shrewes, of whiche the thought

cruel and woode, woodeth alwaye to the distruction of good men, that it wer leful to hem to done that.

Certes (quod she) ne it is not lefull to hem, as I shall well shewe the in couenable place: but nathelesse if so were that thilke, that men wene bene leful to shrewes, were bynommed hem, so that they ne might not anoyen or don hanme to good men, certes a great partie of the paine to shrewes shulde bene alleged and releued. For all be it so that it ne seme credidible thyng, perauenture to some folke, that it mote nedes be that the shrewes ben more wretches and sely, whan they maye full done and parfourme that they coueyten, than yf they might not accompisshe that they coueyten. For if so be that it be wretchednesse to wilnen to done yuel, than is it more wretchedneke to mowen done yuell, without whiche mowyng, the wretched wyl shulde languishe without effecte. Than sithe euery of these thinges hath his wretchydnesse, that is to saine, wil to done yuel, and mowinge to done yuel, it mote nedes be that they shrewes be constrayned by hir vnselynesses, that wolen and nowen, and parformen felonies and shreudnesses. Boecius. I accorde me (quod I) but I desyre grealy, that shrewes losten soone thylke vnselyneesse, that is to sayne, that shrewes weren dispoiled of mowynge to done yuell.

Philosophi. So shullen they (quod she) soner parauenture than thou woldest, or soner than they hem selfe wene: for there nys nothinge so late in so shorte bondes of this life, that is long to abide, namely to a courage immortell. Of whiche shrewes the great hope and the hye compassinges of shreudnesse, is oft destroied by a sodein ende or they be war. And that thing establissheth to shrewes, the ende of hir shrewdnes, for yf that shrewdnes maketh wretches, than must he nedes be most wretch, that longest is a shrewe, the whiche wicked shrewes wold I demin aldermost caitifes and vnsely, yf hir shrewdnes ne wer finisshed at leest waye by ytterest death, for yf I haue concluded soth of the vnselinesse of shrewdnes, than sheweth it plainly, that thilke wretchednes, is withouten ende, the which is certaine to be pardurable. Bo. Certes (quod I) this conclusion is harde and wonderful to graunte. But I knowe well that it accordeth moche to thynges that I haue graunted here beforne. P. Thou hast (quod she) right estimacion of this. But who so euer wene that it be a harde thing, to accorde him to a conclusion, it is right that he shewe that some of the premisses ben false, or els he mote shewe that the collacion of proposicions nis not spedeful to a necessary conclusion. And yf it ne be not so, but that the premisses ben igraunted, there nis not why he shulde blame the argument. For this thing that I shal tel the now ne shall not seme lasse wonderfull, but of the thinges that bene taken. Also it is necessary, as who saith, it foloweth of that which that is purposed beforn. Boecius. What is that (quod I). Philosophie. Certes (quod she) that is, that these wicked shrewes bee more blisfull, or els lasse wretches that abien the tourmentes, that they haue deserued, than if no payne of iustice ne chastised hem. Ne this ne say I not nowe, for that any man myght thynke that the maners of shrewes bene coriged and chastised by vengeaunce, and that they be brought to the right way by the drede of tourmente, ne for that they yeuen to other folkes ensample to flyen fro vices.

But I vnderstand yet in another maner, that shrewes ben more vnsely whan they ne be not punished, all be it so that there ne be had no reason or lawe of correccion, ne none ensample of lookynge. Boecius. And what maner shall that ben (quod I) other than hath be tolde here beforne? P. Haue we not graunted than (quod she) that good folke ben blysfull, and shrewes been wretches? Boeci. Yes (quod I). Philosophie. Than (quod she) if that anye good wer added to the wretchednesse of any wight nys he not more weleful, than he that ne hath no medling of good in his solitary wretchednes: Boecius. So semith it (quod I.) Philosop. And what sayest thou than (quod she) of thilke wretche that lacketh all goodes, so that no good nis medled in his wretchednesse, and yet ouer all hys wickednesse, for whiche he is a wretche that there be yet another yuell anexed and knit to him, shal not men demen him more vnsely, than thilke wretche, of whiche the vnselines is releued by the participacion of some good? Boecius. Why should he not (quod I). Philosophie. Than certes (quod she) han shrewes whan thei ben punisshed somewhat of good annexed to hir shrewdeness, that is to saine, the same pain that they suffren, which that is good, by the reason of iustice. And whan thilke same shrewes escapen without tourment, than haue they somwhat more of yuell, yet ouer the wickednesse that they han doen, that is to sain, defaut of paines, which defaute of paine thou haste graunted is yuel, for the deserte of felony. Boecius. I ne may not denie it (quod I). Philosophie. Moche more than (quod she) been shrewes vnsely whan they bene wronfullye deliuered fro paine, than whan they been punished by rightefull vengeaunce. But this is open thynge and clere, that it is right that shrewes ben punyshed, and it is wickednesse, and wronge that they eschapen vmpunished. Boecius. Who might denye it (quod I). Philosophie. But (quod she) may any man deny that all that is right ne is good and also the contrarie, that all that is wrong is wicked. Boeci. Certes (quod I) these thynges ben clere ynoughe, and that we haue concluded a litell here beforne. But I pray the that thou tell me yf thou accordest to letten no tourmente to the soules, after that the body is ended by the death, that is to saine: vnderstandeste thou aught, that soules haue anye tourment after the death of the body. Philosoph. Certes (quod she) yea, and that right great, of whyche soules (quod she) I trowe that some ben tourmented by asprenesse of paine, and some soules I trowe ben exercysed by a purgynge mekenesse, but my counsaile nys nat to determine of this paines. But I haue trauailled and tolde yet hyderto, for thou shulddest know that the mowyng of shrewes, whiche mowing the semeth to be vnworthy, nis no mowynge, and eke of shrewes, of whyche thou playnedest that they ne were not punished, that thou woldest se that they ne weren neuer mo without the tourmentes of hir wyckednesse. And of the lycence of the mowinge to dooen yuell, that thou praidest that it mighte sone be ended, and that thou wouldest faine lernen that it ne shoulde not longe endure. And that shrewes ben more vnsely yf they were of lenger duringe, and moste vnsely yf they weren perdurable. And after this I haue shewed the that more vnsely ben shrewes, whan they escapen without hir ryghtful paine, than whan they ben punished by rightfull ven-

geaunce. And of this sentence foloweth it, that than ben shrewes constrained at the last with moost greuous tourment whan men wene that they ne be not punished. Boecius. Whan I consider thy reasons (quod I) I ne trowe nat that men saine any thyng more verely. And yf I tourne ayen to the studies of men, who is he to whom it shulde seme, that he ne should nat onely leuen these thynges, but eke gladly herken hem. Philosoph. Certes (quod she) so it is, but men maye nat, for they haue their eyen so wont the derkenesse of erthely thynges, that they ne may nat lyfte hem vp to the lyght of cleare sothfastenesse. But they been lyke to birdes, of whiche the night lyghtneth hir lokynges, and the daye blindeth hem. For whan men loken not the ordre of thinges, but hir lustes and talentes, they wene that either the leue or the mowyng to dooen wickednesse, or els the scapyng without payne be welefull. But cosyder the iudgement of the perdurable law, for if thou confirme thy courage to the beste thynges, thou ne hast no nede of no iudge, to yeuen the price or mede, for thou haste ioyned thy self to the moste excellent thinges. And if thou haue enclined thy studies, to the wicked thynges, ne seke no foraine wrekerie out of thy self, for thou thy self, hast thriste thy self into wicked thinges, right as thou mightest looken by diuers tymes, the foule yearth and the Heauen, and that all other thynges, stinten fro without, so that thou were in neither, ne see nothynge more. Than should it semen to thee, as by onely reason of lokyng, that thou were now in the sterres, and now in the yearth, but the people looketh not on these thynges. What than, shall we than approche vs to hem that I haue shewed, that ben like to beastes? and what wouldest thou sain of this, if that a manne had all forlorne his sighte, and had foryeten that he euer sawe, and wened that nothynge failed hym, of perfeccion of mankynd? Now we which mighten seen the same thynges, woold wee not saine, that he were blinde, ne also ne accordeth not the people, to that I shall saine, the whiche thyng is susteined, by as stronge foundementes of reason, that is to saine, that more vnselie been thei, that dooen wronges to other folke, than thei that the wronge suffren. Boecius. I would hearen thilke same reasons (quod I). Philosoph. Deniest thou (quod she) that all shrewes ne been worthie to haue tourment? Boecius. Naie (quod I). Philosophie. But (quod she) I am certain by many reasons, that shrewes been vnselie. Boecius. It accordeth (quod I). Philoso. Than ne doubtest thou not (quod she) that thilke folke, that been worthie of tourmente, that thei ne be wretches. Boecius. It accordeth well (quod I). Philosophie. If thou were than set a iudge, or a knower of thinges, whither trowest thou that men should tourmenten hem, that hath dooen wronge, or els hem that suffered the wronge? Boecius. I doubte not (quod I) that I nolde doe sufficient satisfaccion, to hem that haue suffred wrong, by the sorowe of hem that hath doen wrong. Philosophy. Than semeth it (quod she) that the dooer of wronge is more wretch, than he that suffred wrong. Boecius. That foloweth wel (quod I). Philosophie. Than (quod she) by these causes, and by other causes, that been enforced by the same reote, that filth or synne, by the proper nature of it maketh men wretches, and it sheweth well, that the wronges that men doen, nis not the wretchednesse, of him that receiueth the wrong; but the wretchednesse of him that dooeth the wrong. But certes (quod she) these orators or aduocates, doen al the contrary, for thei enforcen hem to commoue the iudges, to haue pitie of hem, that doen the greuaunces and the wronges, the whiche shrewes, it wer a more couenable thyng, that the accusours or aduocates, not wroth, but piteous and debonaire, ledden tho shrewes that haue doen wronges, to the iudgement, right as men leden sicke folke to the leche, for that thei shoulden seeken out, the maladies of synne by tourment. And by this couenaunte, either the entent of aduocates, should cessen in all, or els if thoffice of the aduocates, would better profiten to menne, it should bee tourned into the habite of accusacion, that is to sain, thei shoulden accuse shrewes, and not excusen hem. And eke the shrewes hem self, if it were lefull to hem, to seen at any clifte, the vertue that thei haue forletten, and sawen that thei should putten adoune the filthes of hir vices, by the tourmentes of paines, thei ne oughten not, right for that recompensacion, for to getten hem bountie and prowesse, whiche that thei haue loste, demen and hold that the ilke paines weren tourmentes to hem, and eke thei woulden refuse, the attendaunce of hir aduocates, and taken hem self to hir iudges, and to hir accusours, for the whiche it betideth, that as to the wise folkes, there nis no place iletten to hate, that is to saine, that hate ne hath no place emonge wisemen. For no wight nill haten good men, but if he were ouermoche a foole, and for to haten shrewes, it nis no reason, for right as languishyng is maladie of bodie, right so ben vices and sinne malady of courage. And so as wee ne deme not that thei, whiche that been sicke of hir bodie, been worthie to been hated but rather worthie of pitie. Well more worthie not to been hated, but for to been had in pitie been thei, of whiche the thoughtes ben constrained by felonous wickednesse, that is more cruell, than any languishyng of bodie.

Quid tantos iuuat excitare motus, Et propria fatum sollicitare manu? Si, mortem petitis, prope pinquat ipsa Sponte sua, volucres nec remoratur equos, &c.

What deliteth you to exciten so great mouing of hatredes, and to hasten and busien the fatall disposicion of your death, with your proper handes, that is to saine, by battailes or conteke? For if ye asken the deathe, it hasteth hym of his owne wille, ne deathe ne tarieth not his swifte horse. And the menne that the serpentes, and the lion, and the tigre, and the bere, and the bore, seken to slean with their teeth, yet thilke same menne, seken to slean enerich of hem other with swearde. Loe, for hir maners been diuers and discordaunt, thei mouen vnrightfull hostes, and cruell battailes, and wilnen to perishe by enterehaungyng of dartes, but the reason of crueltie, nis not inough rightfull. Wilt thou than yelden a couenable guerdon, to the desertes of men? Loue rightfully good folkes, and haue pitie on shrewes.

Heic, ego, video inquam, quæ sit vel felicitas vel miseria in ipsis proborum atque improborum meritis constituta. Sed in hac ipsa fortuna populari, &c.

THIS I see (quod I) either what blisfulnesse, or els what vnselines is established in the desertes of good menne, and of shrewes.

But in this ilke fortune of the people, I see somewhat of good, and somwhat of euill. For no wiseman had not leuer bee exiled poore and nedie, and namelesse, than for to dwellen in his citee, and flouren of richesse, and bee redoutable of honoure, and strong of power. For in this wise more clearly and witnesfully, is the office of wise menne treated, than the blisfulnesse of power, and gouernours, is as it were shad emonges the people, that bee neighbors and subiectes, sith that namely prison, lawe, and these other tourmentes of lawfull paines, bee rather owed to felonous citezeins: for the whiche felonous citezeins, the paines bee established, more than for good people.

Boecius. Than I maruaile greatly (quod I) why that the thinges be so misse enterchaunged, that tourmentes of felonies, pressen and confounden good people, and shrewes rauisshen medes of vertue, and been in honours, and greate estates. And I desire eke for to weten of thee, what semeth thee to be the reason of this so wrongfull a conclusion. For I would wonder wel the lasse, if that I trowed that all thinges wer medled with fortunous hap. But now crepeth and encreaseth myne astoniynges, God gouernour of thyngs, that so as God yeueth oft times to good menne, goodes and mirthes, and to shrewes, euil and aspre thynges: and yeueth ayen to good folk hardnesse, and to shrewes he graunteth hem hir wille, and that thei desiren. What difference maie there bee, betwene that that God doeth, and happe of fortune, if menne knowe not the cause why it is.

Philosophie. Ne it is no marueile (quod she) though that men wenen, that there be somewhat foolishe and confuse, whan the reason of the order is vnknewen: but although that thou, ne knowe not the cause of so greate a disposicion, nathelesse, for as moche as God the good gouernour, attempreth and gouerneth the worlde, ne doubte thee not, but all thynges been doen a right.

Si quis Arcturi sidera nescit, Propinqua summo cardine labi, Cur regat tardus plaustra Bootes, Mergatque seras æquore flammas, Cum nimis celeres explicet ortus, &c.

WHO so that knowe not the sterres Arcture, tourned to the soueraine centure or poinct, that is to saine, tourned nigh to the soueraine pole of the firmamente, and wote not why the sterre Bootes passeth, or gathereth his waines, and drencheth his late flambes in the sea, and why that Bootes the sterre, vnfoldeth his ouerswifte arisynges, than shall he wondren of the lawe of the high aire. And eke, if that he ne knowe not why, that the hornes of the full Moone waxen pale and infecte, by the boundes of the darke night, and how the Moone darcke and confuse, discouereth the sterres, that she had couered by her clere visage.

The common errour moueth folkes, and maketh wearie hir basins of brasse by thilke strokes, that is to saie, that there is a maner people, that hight Coribantes, that wenen, that whan the Moone is in the eclipse, that it bee enchaunted, and therefore for to rescue the Moone, thei beaten hir basins with the ilke strokes. Ne no man ne wondreth whan the blastes of the winde Chorus beaten the strondes of the sea, by quakyng floodes. Ne no man ne wondreth, whan the weight of the snowe, harded by the cold, is resolued by the brennyng heate of Phebus the Soonne, for here seene menne readily the causes. But the causes ihidde, that is to sain in Heauen, troublen the breastes of men. The mouable people, is astonied of all thynges, that comen selde and sodainlie in our age, but the troublie errour of our ignoraunce, departeth fro vs, so that if thei wisten the cause, why that soche thynges betiden, certes thei shoulden cease to seme wonders.

Ita est, inquam. Sed cum tui muneris sit latentium rerum causas evolvere, velatasque caligine explicare rationes; quæso uti hinc decernas, &c.

THUS it is (quod I) but so as thou haste yeuen or beheight me, to vnwrappe the hidde causes of thinges, and to discouer me the reasons, couered with darknesse I praie thee, that thou deuise and iudge me of this matter, and that thou do me to vnderstand it, for this miracle of this wonder, troubleth me right greatly. And than she a little what smiling said. Thou clèpest me (quod she) to tell that is greatest of all thinges, that mowen been asked, and to that which question, vnneth there aught inough to lauen it, as who saieth, vnneth is there any thyng, to answere perfitlie to thy question, for the matter of it is soche, that whan o doubte is determined and cutte awaie, there waxen other doubtes without nomber, right as the heddes of Idre the serpente waxen, the whiche serpente Hercules slough: ne there ne were no manere, ne none ende, but if a wight constrained the doubtes, by a right liuely and quicke fire of thought, that is to saine, by vigour and strength of witte. For in this matter, men weren wonte to maken questions, of the simplicitie of the purueighaunce of God, and of the order of destinie, and of sodaine happe, and of knowing of predestinacion diuine. And of the libertie of free-will, the whiche thinges, thou thy self apperceiuedest wel, of what weight thei been. But for as moche as the knowynges of these thinges, is a maner porcion or medicine to thee, all bee it so, that I haue little tyme to dooen it, yet neuertheless, I would enforcen me to shewen somewhat of it: but although the nourishinges of ditee of musike deliteth the, thou muste sufferen and forbearen, a little of the ilke delite, while that I weue to the reasons knitte by order.

Boecius. As it liketh to thee (quod I) so doe.

Philosophie. Tho spake she righte as by an other beginnyng, and said right thus. The engenderyng of all thynges (quod she) and all the progressions of mouable nature, and all that mouethe in any maner, taketh his causes, his order, and his formes, of the stablenesse of diuine thought: and the ilke diuine thought, that is sette, and putte in the toure, that is to saine, in the height of the simplicitie of God, stablisheth many maner gises, to the thynges that been to dooen, the

whiche maner, whan that menne looken it, in the pure cleanesse of the diuine intelligence, is cleaped purueighaunce.

But whan the ilke maner is referred by menne, to thynges that it moueth or disponeth, than of olde menne it was cleaped destinie, the whiche thynges, if that any wight looketh well in his thought, the strengthe of that one, and of that other, he shall lighthe mowe seen, that these twoo thynges been diuers, For purueighaunce is the ilke diuine reason, that is established in the soueraine prince of thinges, the which purueighaunce disponeth all thynges. But certes, destinie is the disposicion and the ordinaunce, cleauyng to mouable thynges, by the whiche disposicion, the purueighaunce knitteth al thinges in hir order: for purueighaunce embraseth all thynges to heape, although thei bee diuers, and although thei be infinite, but destine certaine, departeth and ordaineth all thinges singulerly; and deuideth in mouing, in places, in formes, and in tymes, as thus: let the vnfoldyng of temporell ordinaunce, assembled and oned in the lookyng of the diuine thoughte, bee cleaped purueighaunce, and thilke same assemblyng and oning, deuided and vnfolden, let that be called destinie. And all bee it so, that these thynges been diuers, yet neuerthelesse, hanged that one on that other, for why, the order destinably, procedeth of the simplicitie of purueighaunce.

For right as a werkman, perceiueth in his thoughte, the forme of thynge that he wolle make, and nouethe the effecte of the werke, and leadeth that he had looked beforne in his thought, simplie and presentlie by corporall ordinaunce: certes, right so God in his purueighaunce, disponeth singulerlie and stably the thynges that bee to doen, but he administreth in maners, and in diuers tymes by destinie, the ilke same thynges that he hath disponed, than whether destinie bee exercised, either by some diuine spirites, seruauntes to the diuine purueighaunce, or elles by some soule, or els by all nature seruyng God, or els by the celestiall mouynges of sterres, or els by the vertue of angelles, or els by diuers subteltie of diuelles, or els by any of hem, or elles by hem all, the destinable ordinaunce is wouen and accomplished. Certes, it is open thyng, that the purueighaunce, is an vnmouable and simple forme of thynges to dooen, and the mouable bonde, and the temporalle ordinaunce of thynges, whiche that the diuine simplicitie of purueiaunce hath ordained to doen, that is destinie. For whiche it is that al thinges that been put vnder destinie, been certes subiectes vnto purueiaunce, to which purueiaunce destinie it self is subiect and vnder but some thinges been put vnder purueiannce, that surmounten thordinaunce of destinie: and tho been thilke that stablie been fixed nigh to the first godhed, thei surmounten the order of destinable mouabilitie. For right as cercles turnen about a same centre, or about a poinct, thilke cercle that is innerest or moste within, he ioyneth to the simplesse of the middle, and is as it wer a centre or a poinct to that other cercles, that turnen aboute him: and thilke that is vtterest, compassed by larger enuironning, is vnfolde by larger spaces, in so moche as it is ferthereste fro the middeleste simplitie of the poincte. And if there bee any thyng that knitteth and felowshippeth himself, to thilke middle poincte, it is constrained into simplicitie, that is to saie, into vnmouabilitie, and it ceaseth to been shad, and flit diuersly. Right so by semblable reason, thilke thing that departeth ferthereste, fro the firste thought of God, it is vnfolden, and also submitted to greater bondes of destinie, and in so moche is the thing, more free and loce fro dignitie, as it asketh and holdeth nere to thilke centre of thinges, that is to saine, to God. And if the thyng cleaueth to the stedfastnesse of the thought of God, and bee without mouyng, certes it surmounteth the necessitie of destinie. Than soche comparison as is skilling to vnderstandyng, and of thinge that was engendred, to thinge that is of time to eternitie, and of the cercle to the centre, right so is the order of mouable destinie, to the stable simplicitie of purueighaunce. Thilke ordinaunce moueth the Heauen and the sterres, and attempreth the elementes togither emong hem self, and transformethe hem by enterchaungeable mutacion. And thilk same order neweth ayen, all things growing and falling adoune, by semblable progressions of seedes and of sexus, that is to saine, male and female: and this ilke order constraineth the fortunes, and the dedes of men, by a bonde of causes, not able to be vnbounden: the which destinable causes, whan thei passen out fro the beginnynges of vnmouable purueiaunce, it mote nedes be that thei ne be not mutable, as thus: be the things well gouerned, if that the simplicitie dwellyng in the diuine thought, sheweth forth the order of causes, vnable to be bowed. And this order constraineth by the proper stabilitie, the mouable thinges, or els thei shulden flete folilie. For which it is, that thinges semen confuse, and troublie to vs men, for we ne mowen not consider thilk ordinaunce. Neuerthelesse, the proper maner of euery thing dressyng hym to good, disponeth hem all, for there nis nothynge dooen for euill, for thilke thyng that is dooen by wicked folke, nis not doen for euil. The whiche shrewes, as I haue shewed full plenteously seke good, but wicked errour mistourneth hem, ne the order coming fro the poinct of soueraine good, ne encline th not fro his beginnyng. But thou maiest saie, what vnrest maie been a worse confusion, than that good men haue somtyme aduersitie, and somtyme prosperitie: and shrewes haue now also thinges that thei desiren, and now thinges that thei haten. Whether men liue nowe in soche holinesse of thought, as who saith be men now so wise, that soche folke as thei demen to be good folke or shrewes, that it mote nedes be, that folk be soche as thei wenen. But in this maner domes of men discorden, that thilke men that some folke demen worthie of mede, other folke deme hem worthy of turment, but let vs graunt: I suppose that some man maie well deme or knowe the good people, and the bad, maie he than knowe and see thilke innerest attemperaunce of courage, as it hath bee wont to be said of bodies, as who saith: maie a man speaken of complexions, and attemperaunce of bodies, ne it ne is not, as who saith but it is like a meruaile or a miracle, to hem that ne knowe it not, why that swete thinges bee couenable to sum bodies, that been hole, and to sum people bitter things be couenable: and also why sum people ben holpen with light medicines, and some people been holpen with bitter medicines: but nathelesse tho that knowen the maner, and the temperaunce of heale and of malady, ne marueileth it nothing. But what other thing semeth helth

of corages but bountie, and what other thing semeth maladie of courage but vices? who is els keper of good, and driuer awaie of euill, but God the gouernor and leader of thoughtes: the whiche God, whan he hath beholden from the high toure of his purueiaunce, he knoweth what is couenable to any wight, and leaneth hem that he wot well that is couenable to hem. Lo, herof cometh and hereof is doen this miracle of thorder destinable, whan God that all knoweth doth soche thing, of whiche thyng, vnknowing folke been astonied, but for to constraine, as who saieth, but for to comprehende and tell a fewe thinges of the diuine depenesse, the which that mannes reason maie vnderstand. Thilke manne that thou wenest to been right iuste, and right kepyng of equitie, the contrarie of that, semeth to the diuine purueighaunce that all wote. And Lucan my familier telleth, that the victorious cause liked to the goddes, and the causes ouercome, liketh to Caton. Than what so euer thou maieste seen, that is dooen in this worlde vnhoped, or els vnknowen, certes, it is the righte order of thynges, but as to thy wicked opinion, it is a confusion. But I suppose that some man be so welthewed, that the diuine iudgement, and the iudgement of mankinde, accorden hem togider of hym: but he is so vnstedfast of courage, that if any aduersitie come to hym, he woll forleten parauenture to continue innocence, by the whiche he ne maie not witholden fortune: than the wise dispensacion of God spareth hym, the whiche man aduersitie, might enpairen, for that God will not hym to trauaile, to whom that trauaile nis not couenable. An other manne is parfite in all vertues, and is an holy manne, and nigh to God, so that the purueighunce of God would deme, that it were a felonie, that he wer touched with any aduersities, so so that he would not suffre, that soche a man be with any bodily maladie moued. But so (as saied the philosopher) the more excellent is by me said in greate, that vertues haue edified the bodie of the holie manne. And oft tyme it betideth, that the somme of thinges, that been to doen is taken to gouerne to good folke, for that the malice habundant of shrewes, should been abated. And God yeueth and departeth to other folke, prosperitees and aduersities, medled to heape, after the qualitie of hir courages, and remordeth some folke by aduersities, for thei ne should not waxen proude, by long welfulnesse. And other folke he suffereth, to bee trauailed with hard thyngs, for that thei should confermen the vertues of courage, by the exercitation of vsage of pacience. And other folk dreden more than thei oughten, the whiche thei mighten well bearen, and some dispise, that thei mowe not beare, and thilke folke God leadeth into experience of hemself, by aspre and sorowfull thynges. And many there folk haue boughte, honourable renome of this worlde, by the price of glorious death.

And some men that ne mowe not been ouercomen by tourment, haue yeuen ensample to other folke, that vertue maie not been ouercomen by aduersities. And of al these thinges there nis no doubt, that thei ne ben doen rightfullie and ordeinly, to the perfit good of hem, to whom we seen these thinges betiden. For certes, that aduersities cometh somtyme to shrewes, and somtyme that thei desiren, it cometh of these foresaid causes. And of sorowfull thinges that betiden to shrewes, certes, no man ne wondreth, for all menne wene that thei haue deserued it, and that thei been of wicked merite. Of whiche shrewes, the tourmente agasteth sometyme other to doen felonies: and sometyme it amendeth hem, that suffereth the tourmentes. And the prosperitie that is yeuen to shrewes, sheweth a greate argument to good people, what thing thei should demen of thilk welefulnesse, whiche prosperitie menne seen ofte, serue to shrewes: in which thing, I trowe that God dispenseth, for parauenture, the nature of some man is so ouerthrowyng to euell, and so vncouenable, that the nedy pouertie of his housholde, might rather agreue hym to doen felonies, and to the maladie of hym, God putteth remeadie, to yeuen hym richesse. And some other manne beholdeth his conscience, defouled with synnes, and maketh comparison of this fortune, and of himself: and dredeth parauenture that the blisfulnesse, of whiche the vsage ioyfull to hym, that the lesyng of thilk blisfulnesse, ne bee not sorowfull to hym, and therefore he would chaunge his maners: and for he dredeth to lese his fortune, he forleteth his wickednesse. To other folkes welefulnes is yeuen vnworthilie, the whiche ouerthroweth hem into destruccion, that thei han deserued, and to some other folke, is yeuen power to punishen, for that it shall bee cause of continuacion, and exercisyng to good folkes, and cause of tourmente to shrewes.

For so as there nis none aliaunce betwene good folkes, and shrewes, ne shrewes ne mowen not accorden emong hem self: and why not? For that shrewes discorden of hemself, by hir vices, the whiche vices, all to renden hir consciences, and dooen oft tyme thynges, the whiche thinges, whan thei haue doen hem, thei deme that tho things, ne shuld not haue be doen, for which thing the souerain purueiaunce, hath maked oft time miracle: so that shrewes haue maked shrewes, to been good men. For whan that some shrewes seen, that thei suffre wrongfully, felonies of other shrewes, thei waxen eschaufed into hate of hem, that anoied hem, and reteurnen to the fruict of vertue. Than thei studien to be vnlike to hem that thei haue hated. Certes onely is this the diuine might, to the which might iuels been than good, whan it vseth the iuelles couenablie, and draweth out the effecte of any good, as who saieth, that iuell is good onely to the might of God, for the might of God ordeineth thilke iuell to good: for one order embraceth all things, so that what wight departeth from the reason of thilke order, that is assigned to him, algates yet he slideth *into* an other order so that *nothing* is lefull to folie, in the realm of diuine purueighaunce, as who saieth, nothyng is without ordinaunce, in the realme of diuine purneighaunce, sith that the right strong God, gouerneth all thynges in this worlde, for it is not leful for men comprehende by wit, ne vnfolden by woorde, all the subtell ordinaunce, and the disposicion of the diuine entent, for onely it ought to suffice, to haue loked that God himself, maker of al natures, ordaineth al thinges to good, while that he hasteth to withholde the thynges, that he hath maked into his semblaunce, that is to say, for to with holden the thinges into good, for he hymself is good. He chaseth out all iuells fro the bonde of his cominalties, by thorder of the necessitie destinable: for whiche it followeth, that if thou loke the purueiaunce, ordeinyng the thinges, that men wenen be outragious, or *haboundant in yerthes*, thou shalt

not seen in no place, nothyng of iuell. But I see now that thou art charged, with the weighte of the question, and wearie with lengthe of my reason, and that thou abidest some swetenesse of song, take than this draught, and whan thou art wel refreshed and refect, thou shalt be more stedfaste to stie, into higher questions or thinges.

Si vis celsi jura tonantis Pura sollers cernere mente,
Adspice summi culmina cœli.

If thou wise wolt demen, in thy pure thought, the rightes or the lawes of the hie thonder, that is to sain of God, looke thou and beholde the heightes of the soueraine Heauen: there kepen the sterres, by rightfull aliaunce of thyngs hir old peace: the Sonne imoued by his roddie fire, ne distourbeth not the colde cercle of the Mone, ne the sterre icleped the Bere, that enclineth his rauishing courses, abouten the soueraine height of this worlde. Ne the same sterre Ursa, nis neuer mo washen in the depe westren sea, ne coueteth not to dien his flambes, in the sea of the occian, although it see other sterres, iplonged in the sea: and Hesperus the sterre boodeth, and telleth alwaie the late nightes: and Lucifer the sterre bringeth ayen the cleare daie.

And thus maketh loue enterchaungeable, the perdurable courses, and thus is discordable battaile, iputte out of the countrey of the sterres. This accordaunce attempreth by euenlike maners the elementes, that the moiste thynges, striuyng with the drie thynges, yeuen place by stoundes: and that the colde thynges ioynen hem by faithe, to the hote thynges, and that the light fire, ariseth into height, and the heauie yearthes, auailen by hir weightes: by the same causes, the flourie yere yeldeth swete smelles, in the first sommer season warmynge, and the hotte sommer drieth the cornes, and autumpne cometh ayen of heauie apples, and the fleetyng raine bedeweth the winter, this attempraunce nourisheth, and bryngeth forthe all thynges, that beareth life in this worlde, and the ilke same attempraunce rauishyng, hideth, benimeth, and drencheth vnder the laste death, all thynges iborne.

Emong these thinges, sitteth the high maker, kyng and lorde, weale and beginnyng, lawe and wise judge, to dooen equitee, and gouerneth and enclineth the bridels of thynges: and tho thinges that he sterreth, to gone by mouynge, he withdraweth and aresteth, and affirmeth the mouable or wanderynge thinges. For if that he ne called not ayen the right goyng of thynges. And if that he ne constrained hem not efte sones, into roundenesse enclined, the thynges that been nowe continued by stable ordinaunce, thei should departen from hir weale, that is to saine, from hir beginnyng and fallen, that is to saine, tournen into nought. This is the common loue to all thynges: and all thynges asken to been holden by the fine of good, for elles ne mighten thei not fasten, if thei ne come not eftsones ayen by loue, retourned to the eause, that hath yeuen hem beyng, that is to saine God.

Jam ne igitur vides, quid hæc omnia quæ diximus consequantur. Quid nam? inquam. Omnem, inquit, &c.

Seest thou not than, what thyng followeth all the thynges that I haue saied. Boecius. What thyng (quod I). Philosophie. Certes (quod she) all vtterlie, that all fortune is good. Boecius. And how maie that bee (quod I). Philosophie. Now vnderstande (quod she). So as all fortune, wheder so it be ioyfull fortune, or aspre fortune, is yeuen either bicause of guerdonyng, or elles of exercising of good folkes, or els bicause to punishen, or els chastisen shrewes: than is al fortune good, the which fortune is certain, that it be either rightfull, or els profitable.

Boecius. Forsothe this is a full verie reason (quod I) and if I consider the pureighaunce and the destinie that thou oughtest me a litle here beforn, this sentence is susteined by stedfaste reasons. But if it like vnto thee, let vs nombren hem emonges the ilke thynges, of whiche thou saidest a little here beforne, that thei ne wer not able to been wened to the people. Philosophi. Why so (quod she). Boecius. For that the common word of men (quod I) misuseth this maner speache of fortune, and same ofte tymes, that the fortune of some wight is wicked. Philosophie. Wilte thou than (quod she) that I approche a litle to the wordes of the people so that it seme not to ben, that I be ouermoche departed, as fro the vsage of mankinde. Boecius. As thou wolt (quod I). Philosophie. Menest thou not (quod she) that all thyng that profiteth is good. Boecius. Yes (quod I). Philosop. Certes all thyng that exerceth or corrigeth, it profiteth. Boecius. I confesse well (quod I). Philoso. Than is it good (quod she). Boecius. Why not (quod I). Philosophie. But this is the fortune (quod she) of hem that either be putte in vertue, and battailen against aspre thynges, or elles of hem that enclinen, and declinen fro vices, and taken the waie of vertue. Boecius. This ne maie I not denie (quod I). Philosophie. But what saiest thou of the merie fortune, that is yeuen to good people in guerdon, demeth ofte the people that it be wicked?

Boecius. Naie for soth (quod I) but thei demen as it is sothe, that it is right good.

Philosophie. What saiest thou of the other fortune (quod she) that although that it bee aspre, and restraineth the shrewes by rightfull turment, weneth aught the people that it bee good?

Boecius. Naie (quod I) but the people demeth that it is moste wretched of all thynges, that maie be thought.

Philosophie. Ware now, and looke well (quod she) leste wee in followyng the opinion of the people, haue confessed and concluded thing, whiche that is vnable to been wened to the people. Boecius. What is that (quod I)? Phil. Certes (quod she) it followeth or cometh of thynges that been graunted, that all fortune what so euer it bee, of hem that been either in possession of vertue, or in thencrease of vertue, or els in the purchasyng of vertue, that thilke fortune is good, and that all fortune is right wicked, to hem that dwellen in shrewdnesse, as who saith, and thus weneth not the people. Boec. That is sothe (quod I). Albeit so that no man dare confesse it, ne knowe it. Philosophie. Why so (quod she). For right as the

strong man, ne semeth not to abasshen or disdainen, as oft tyme as he heareth the noise of the battailine also it semeth not to the wiseman, to bearen it greuously, as oft as he is ledde into strief of fortune. For bothe to that one man, and eke to that other, the ilke difficultie is the matter, to that one man of encrease of his glorious renome, and to that other man, to conserue his sapience, that is to saie, to the asprenesse of his estate, for therefore is it called vertue, for that it susteineth and enforceth by his strengthes, so that it nis not ouercomen by aduersities. Ne certes, thou that art putte in encrease, or in the height of vertue, ne haste not comen to fleten with delices, and for to walken in bodily lust. Thou sowest or plantest a full eigre battaile in thy courage, ayenst euery fortune: for that the sorowfull fortune confounde thee not, ne that the merie fortune ne corrumpe thee not, occupie the meane by stedfast strengthes. For all that euer is vnder the meane, or all that ouerpasseth the meane, dispiseth welefulnes as who saieth, it is vicious, and ne hath no mede of his trauaile, for it is set in your hand, as who saieth, it lieth in your power, what fortune you is leueste, that is to saie, good or iuell, for all fortune that semeth sharpe of aspre, if it ne exercise not the good folke, ne chastise the wicked folke it punisheth.

Bella bis quinis operatus annis, Vltor Atrides, Phrygiæ ruinis, &c.

The werker Atrides, that is to sain Agamemnon, that wrought and continued the battailes by x. yere recouered and purged in wreking by the distruceion of Troie, the loste chambers of mariage in his brother, that is to saie, that Agamemnon wan ayen Heleine, that was Menelaus wife, his brother. In the meane while that thilke Agamemnon, desired to yeuen sailes to the Grekes nauie, and brought ayen the windes by bloode: he vnclothed hym of pitee of father, and the sorie priest yeueth in sacrifiyng, the wretched euttyng of the throte of the doughter, that is to saie, that Agamemnon let cut the throte of his doughter by the priest, to maken aliaunce with his goddes, and for to haue wind, with whiche he might wenden to Troie. Itacus, that is to saie Ulixes, bewept his fellowes ylorne, the whiche felowes, the feirs Poliphemus, liggyng in his great caue, had fretten and dreinte in his emptie wombe: but nathelesse Poliphemus woode for his blind visage yeld to Ulixes ioy, by his sorowfull teares, that is to saie, that Ulixes smote out the iye of Poliphemus, that stode in the forehed, for whiche Ulixes had ioye, whan he sawe Poliphemus weping and blind. Hercules is celebrable for his hard trauaile, he daunted the proude Centaurus, halfe horse, halfe man, and birafte the dispoiling fro the cruell lion, that is to saie, he slough the lion, and birafte him his skin. He smote the birdes that hight Arpies, with certaine arowes. He rauished apples, fro the waking dragon: and his hande was the more heauie, for the golden metall. He drough Cerberus the hound of Hel, by the triple chaines. He ouercomer, as it is saied, hath put an vnmeke lord, fodder to his cruell horse, that is to saie, Hercules slough Diomedes, and made his horse to fretten him: and he Hercules slough Idra the serpente, and brente the venim. And Achileus the flood defouled in his forehedde, dreint his shamefast visage in his stroundes, that is to saie, that Achileus could transfigure himself, into diuers likenes, and as he faught with Hercules, at last he tourned hym into a bull, and Hercules brake one of his hornes: and he for shame hid hym in his riuer. And ouer that, he Hercules caste adoune Antheus the giaunt, in the stroudes of Libie. And Caeus appeised the wrathes of Euander, that is to saie, that Hercules slough the monster Cacus and apeised with that death, the wrath of Euander. And the bristled bore, marked with vomes, the shoulder of Hercules, the whiche shulders, the hie cercle of Heauen should thirst. And the last of his labors was, that he susteined the Heauen, vpon his neck vnbowed, and he deserued eftsones, the Heauen to be the last ende of trauaile. Goeth nowe then ye strong men, there as the greate ensample leadeth you. O nice menne, why make ye your backes, as who saieth: O ye slowe and delicate men, why se ye aduersities, and ne fight not ayenst hem by vertue, to winnen the mede of Heauen: for the mede ouercomen, yeueth the sterres, that is to sain, that whan that yearthly lust is ouer comen, a man is maked worthy to the Heauen.

HERE ENDETH THE FOWERTH BOOKE OF BOECE.

BOOKE V.

Dixerat, orationisque cursum ad alia quædam tractanda atque expedienda vertebat. B. Tum ego, recta quidem, inquam, &c.

She had saied, and turned the course of her reason, to some other thynges, to be treated and to be sped. Boecius. Than saied I, certes rightful is thine amonesting and full digne by aucthoritee. But that thou saidest whilom, that the question of the diuine pureighaunce, is enlaced with many other questions, I vnderstande well and proue it, by the same thing. But I aske, if that thou wenest, that hap bee any thyng, in any waies, and if thou wenest, that happe be any thyng, what is it? Philosophie. Than (quod she) I haste me to yelden and assoilen, to the debte of my behest, and to shewen and open the waie, by which waie, thou maiest come ayen to thy countree: but albeit so that the thinges, whiche that thou askest, been right profitable to knowe, yet been thei diuers, som what fro the pathe of my purpose, and it is to doubte, that thou ne bee maked wearie by misse waies, so that thou ne maieste not suffice, to measure the right waie.

Boecius. Ne doubt thee thereof nothyng (quod I). For to knowen thilke thinges togider, in the whiche thynges I delite me greatlie, that shall been to me in stede of rest, sith it nis not to doubten of the thynges folowing, whan euery thynge of thy disputacion, shall hauen been stedfast to me, by vndoubtous faithe.

Philosophie. Than (saied she) that maner woll I dooen to thee, and beganne to speaken right thus. Certes (quod she) if any wight definishe hap in this maner, that is to saine, that hap is betidyng ibrought foorthe, by foolishe mouing, and by no knitting of causes, I confirme that hap nis

right naught in no wise, and I deme all vterlie, that happe nis, ne dwelleth but a voyce, as who saieth, but an idell woorde, without any significacion of thynge, committed to that voyce. For what place might been lefte, or dwellynge in folie, and to disordenaunce, sithe that God leadeth and constraineth all thynges by order, for this sentence is verie sothe, that nothyng hath his beeyng of naughte, to the whiche sentence, none of these old folke ne withsaied neuer, al be it so, that thei ne vnderstanden it not, by God, prince and beginner of woorkyng, but thei casten, as a maner foundement of subiecte materiall, that is to saine, of the nature of al reason. And if that any thyng is waxen or comen of no causes, than shall it seme, that thilke thyng is comen or woxen of naught. But if this ne maie not bee dooen, than is it not possible that hap bee any soche thynge, as I haue definished a little here beforne. Boecius. Howe shall it than bee (quod I) nis there than nothyng, that by right maie been cleaped, either hap, or els aduenture, or fortune? Or is there ought, all bee it so, that it is hid fro the people, to whiche thyng these woordes been couenable.

Philosophie. Myne Aristotle (quod she) in the booke of his Phisike, difinisheth this thynge by short reason, and nigh to the sothe.

Boecius. In whiche maner (quod I).

Philosophie. As ofte (quod she) as men dooen any thyng, for grace of any other thyng, and an other thyng than thilke thyng, that men entenden to doen, betideth by some causes, it is icleaped happe, right as a manne dalfe the yearth, bicause of tillyng of the field, and found there a gobet of golde bedoluen, than wenen folke, that it is befall by fortunous betidyng. But forsothe it nis not of naught, for it hath his proper causes, of which causes, the cours vnforeseen and vnware, semeth to haue maked hap. For if the tiller of the fielde, ne dolue not in the yearth, and if the hider of the gold, ne had hid the gold in that place, the golde ne had not been found. These been than the causes, of the abredgyng of fortuit hap, the whiche abredgyng of fortuit hap cometh, of causes of encountryng, and flowyng togither to hem self, and not by thentencion of the doer. For neither the hider of the golde, ne the deluer of the field, ne vnderstanden not, that the gold should haue been founde. But as I saied, it betid and ran togither, that he dalfe there as the other had hid the gold. Now maie I thus definishe hap. Happe is an vnware betiding of causes, assembled in thynges, that been doen for some other thyng. But thilke order procedyng, by an vneschuable betidyng togither, whiche that discendeth from the well of purueighaunce, that ordeineth al thynges in hir places, and in hir times maketh, that the causes rennen and assemblen togither.

Rupis Achæmeniæ scopulis, ubi versa sequentum Pectoribus fugit spicula, &c.

Tigris and Eufrates, resoluen and springen of o welle, in the cragges of the roche of the countrey of Achemenee, ther as the fliyng battailes fixen hir dartes, retournyng in the breastes of hem that folowen hem. And sone after the same riuers, Tigris and Eufrates, vnioynen and departen hir waters, and if thei comen together, and been assembled, and cleaped together into o course, than moten thilke thynges fleten togider, whiche that the water of thenterchaunging flood bringeth. The shippes and the stockes araced with the flood moten assemblen, and the waters imedled, wrappeth or emplieth many fortunell happes or maners, the whiche wandryng happes nathelesse, thilke declining lownesse of the yerth and the flowyng order of the slidyng water gouerneth. Right so fortune that semeth, as it suffreth with slaked or vngouerned bridles it suffreth bridles, that is to saine, to been gouerned, and passeth by thilke lawe, that is to saine, by the deuine ordenaunce.

Animadverto, inquam, idque uti tu dicis ità esse consentio. Sed in hac cohærentium, &c.

This vnderstande I wel (quod I) and I accorde me that is is right as thou saieste. But I aske if there be any libertie of free wil, in this order of causes, that cleauen thus togither in hem self, or els I would weten if that the destinall cheine, constraineth the mouyng of the courages of men.

Philosophie. Yes (quod she) there is libertie of free will, ne there ne was neuer no nature of reason, that it ne had libertie or free will. For euery thing that maie naturally vsen reason it hath dome, by whiche it decerneth and demeth euery thing. Than knoweth it by it self thynges that been to flien, and thynges that been to desiren, and the ilke thyng that any wight demeth to been desired, that asketh or desireth he, and flieth thilke thynge, that he troweth be to flien. Wherefore in all thynges that reason is, in hym also is libertie of willyng and of nillyng, but I ne ordaine not, as who saieth, I ne graunt not, that this libertie, be euen like in al thinges. For why in the Soueraines deuines substaunces, that is to sain, in spirites, iudgement is more clere and will not corrumpe, and mightie redy to speden thynges that been desired. But the soules of men moten needes been more free, whan thei looken hem in the speculacion, or lookyng of the deuine thought, and lasse free whan thei sliden into the bodies, and yet lasse free whan thei been gathered togither, and comprehended in yearthly members, but the last seruage is, whan that thei been yeuen to vices, and haue ifall from the possession of hir proper reason. For after that thei haue caste awaie hir iyen, fro the light of the soueraine sothefastnesse, to lowe thynges and darcke, anone thei darcken by the cloude of ignoraunce, and be troubled by felonous talentes, to the whiche talentes, whan thei aprochen and assenten, thei heapen and encreasen the seruage, whiche thei haue ioyned to hem self. And in this maner thei been caitiues, fro hir proper libertie, the whiche thyng nathelesse, the lookyng of the deuine purueiaunce seeth, that al thynges beholdeth and seeth fro eterne, and ordeineth hem euericho in hir merites, as thei been predestinate, and it is said in Greke, that all thinges he seeth, and al thinges he heareth.

Puro clarum lumine Phœbum Melliflui canit oris Homerus, &c.

Homer with the honie mouth, that is to saine, Homer with the sweete ditees singeth, that the

Sonne is cleare by pure light. Nathelesse, yet ne maie it not by the infirme light of his beames, breaken or percen the inwarde entrailes of the yearth, or els of the sea. So ne seeth not God, maker of the greate worlde, to hym that looketh all thynges from an high, ne vnderstandeth nothynges by heauinesse of the yearth, ne the night ne withstandeth not to hym by the black cloudes, thilke God seeth in o stroke of thought, all thynges that been, weren, or shull come: and thilke God, for he looketh and seeth all thynges alone, thou maist saine that he is the verie soonne.

Tum ego: en, inquam, difficiliori rursus ambiguitate confundor, &c

Than said I thus, now am I confounded, by a more hard doubt than I was. Philosoph. What doubte is that (quod she) for certes, I coniecte now by soch things, thou art troubled. Boecius. It seemeth (quod I) to repugnen and to contrarie greatlie, that God knoweth beforne all thinges, and that there is any fredome or libertie, for if so bee that God looketh all thynges beforne, ne God ne maie not been deceiued in no maner. Than mote it needes bee, that all thynges the whiche that the purueighaunce of God, hath seen beforne to come, for which if that God knoweth toforne, not onely the werkes of men, but also hir counsailes and hir willes, than ne shall there bee no libertie of arbitree, ne certes, there ne maie bee none other doede, ne no wille, but the ilke whiche that the deuine purueighaunce (that ne may not been deceiued) hath feeled beforne, for if that thei mighten writhen awaie, in other maner, than thei been pureigned, than ne should there be no stedfast prescience of thyng to comen, but rather an vncertaine opinion, the whiche thyng to trowen of God, I deme it felonie and vnlefull. Ne I ne proue not the ilke same reason, as who saieth, I ne alowe not, or I ne praise not thilke same reason, by whiche that some men wenen, that thei mowen assoilen, and vnknitten the knot of this question. For certes thei saine, that thyng nis not to comen, for that the purueighaunce of God, hath seen beforne that it is to comen, but rather the contrarie, and that is this, that for that the thynges is to comen, that therefore ne maie it not been bid fro the purueighaunce of God. And in this maner, this necessitie slideth ayen into the contrarie partie, ne it ne behoueth not needes, that thynges betiden that been ipurueighed, but it behoueth nedes, that thynges that been to comen been ipurueighed, but as it wer itrauailed, as who saith, that thilke answere procedeth right as though menne trauaileden or weren busie to enquiren, the whiche thynge is cause of the which thynges. As whether the prescience is cause, of the necessitie of thynges to comen, or els that the necessitie of thinges to comen, is cause of the purueighaunce. But I ne enforce me not now to shewen it, that the betidyng of thynges iwiste beforne is necessarie, how so or in what maner, that the order of causes hath it self, although that it ne seme not, that the prescience bryng in necessitie of betidyng, to thynges to comen. For certes, if that any wighte sitteth, it behoueth by necessitie, that the opinion be soth, of hym that coniecteth that he sitteth, and ayen warde also is it of the contrarie, for if the opinion bee sothe of any wight, for that he sitteth, it behoueth by necessitie that he sitte. Than is here necessitie in that one, and in that other: for in that one is necessitie of sittyng, and certes in that other is necessitie of soth. But therfore ne sitteth not a wighte, for that the opinion of the sitting his sothe, but the opinion is rather sothe, for that a wight sitteth beforne. And thus although that the cause of the sothe, cometh of that other side, as who saieth, that al though the cause of sothe cometh of the sitting, and not of the true opinion, algates yet is there a common necessitie, in that one, and in that other. Thus seweth it, that I maie make semblable skilles, of the purueighance of God, and of thynges to comen. For although that for that thynges been to comen, therefore been thei pureighed, and not certes, for thei been pureighed, therfore ne betide thei not, nathelesse it behoueth by necessitie, that either the thynges it to comen, been ipurueyed of God, or els that the thynges, that been pureighed of God betiden. And this thyngs onelie sufficeth inough, to destroien the freedom of our arbittre, that is to sain, of our frewill. But certes, nowe sheweth it well howe farre fro the sothe. And how vpso doune is this thing, that we seen that the betidyng of temporall thynges, is cause of the eterne prescience. But for to wenen that God purueyeth the thynges to comen, for thei ben to comen. What other thynge is it but for to wene, that thilke thinges that betide whilom, been causes of thilke souerain purueighaunce, that is in God. And hereto adde I this thinges, that right as whan that I, wote that a thyng is, it behoueth by necessitie, that thilk self thing bee, and eke whan I haue knowen that any thyng shall betiden, so behoueth it by necessitie, that thilke same thynges betide. So followeth it than, that the betidyng of the thinges iwist beforne, ne maie not bee eschewed, and at the laste, if that any wighte wene a thyng, to been otherwise than it is, it nis not onely vnscience, but it is deceiuable opinion, full diuers and farre fro the sothe of science. Wherefore, if any thyng bee so to comen, that the betidyng of it, ne bee not certaine, ne necessarie, who maie weten beforne, that thilke thing is to comen. For right as science, ne maie not be medled with falsenesse, as who saieth, that if I wote a thing, it ne maie not be false that I ne wote it, right of thilke thyng, that is conceiued by seience, ne maie not be none, otherwise than as it is conceiued, for that is the cause why, that science wanteth lesing, as who saith, why that weting ne receiueth not lesyng of that it wote, for it behoueth by necessitie, that euery thyng bee right, as science comprehendeth it to be. What shal I than sain, in whiche maner knoweth God, beforne all the thynges to comen, if thei ne be not certain, for if that he deme, that thei been to comen vneschuably, and so maie bee that it is possible, that thei ne shullen not comen, God is deceiued, but not onely to trowen, that God is deceiued, but for to speake it with mouthe, it is a felonous syme. But if that God wote, that righte so as thynges been to comen, so shoullen thei comen, so that he wote egally, as who saith indifferently, that thyngs maie bee doen, or els not ideen. What is thilke prescience, that ne comprehendeth no certaine thyng ne stable, or els what difference is there bitwene the prescience of thilke iape, worthy De-

uinyng of Tiresie Deuinour, that saied. All that I saie (quod he) either it shall be, or els it shall not bee, or els how moche is worthe the deuine prescience, more than the opinion of mankinde, if so bee that it demeth the thynges vncertaine, as men doen. Of the whiche domes of men, the betidyng nis not certaine. But if so be, that none vncertain thynges, ne maie been in him, that is right certaine well of all thynges, than is the betidyng certaine of thilke thynges, whiche that he hath wiste beforne, fermely to comen, for whiche it followeth, that the fredome of the counsailes, and of the werkes of mankind nis none, sith that the thought of God, that seeth all thynges, without errour of falsnesse, bindeth and constraineth hem to a betidyng by necessitie. And if this thyng bee ones igraunted and receiued, this is to saine, that there nis no freewill, than sheweth it well, how great destruccion, and how greate domages there folowen of thinges of mankind, for in idell been there than purposed, and behighte medes to good folke, and paines to badde folke, sith that no mouyng of free courage voluntarie, ne hath not deserued hem, that is to saine, neither mede ne paine. And it should seme than, that thilke thing is alderworst, which that is now demed for aldermoste iust, and moste rightful. That is to sain, that shrewes been punished, or elles that good folke bee iguerdoned, the whiche folkes sene that hir proper wille ne sente hem to that one, ne to that other. That is to sain, neither to good ne harme, but constraineth hem certain necessitie of thynges to comen, than ne shullen there neuer been, ne neuer weren vice ne vertue, but it shullen rather be confusion of all desertes, medled without discrecion. And yet ther foloweth an other inconuenience, of the whiche there ne maie be thought no more felonous, ne more wicked, and that is thus, that so as the order of thynges is idel, and cometh of the purueiance of God, ne that nothyng nis lefull, to the counsailes of mankinde, as who saieth, that men haue no power to doen nothyng, ne will nothyng, than followeth it that our vices been referred to the maker of al good, as who saith than foloweth it, that God ought to haue the blame of our vices, sith he constraineth vs by necessitie to doen vices, than nis there no reason to hopen in God, ne to praien to God, for what should any wight hopen to God, or why should he praien to God, sith that the ordenaunce of destinie, whiche that ne maie not been enclined, knitteth and streineth al thinges, that men maie desiren. Than should ther be doen awaie thilke onely aliaunce, betwen God and man, that is to sain, to hopen and to praien. But by the price of right wisnesse, and of very mekenesse, wee deseruen the guerdon of diuine grace, whiche that is inestimable, that is to say, that is so great, that it ne maie not been full praised, and this is onely the maner, that is to saie, hope and praiers. For whiche it semeth that men woll speak with God, and by reason of supplicacion, ben conioined to thilke clerenes, that nis not approched no rather, or that men seken it and impetren it. And if men ne wene not the hope ne praiers, ne haue no strengthes, by the necessitie of things to comen receiued, what thing is there than, by whiche we mowen been conioyned, and cleuen to thilke souerain prince of thynges. For whiche it behoueth by necessitie, that the linage of mankinde, as thou song a little here beforne, bee departed and vnioined from his wele, and failen of his beginnyng, that is to saine God.

Quænam discors fœdera rerum Causa resolvit? quis tanta Deus, &c.

What discordable cause hath to rent, and vnioyned the bindyng or the aliance of thynges, that is to sain, the coniunccions of God, and of man? whiche God hath established so greate battaile, betwene these twoo sothfaste, or verie thynges, that is to sain, betwene the purueiaunce of God, and free will, that been singuler, and deuided, ne that thei ne wollen not been medled, ne coupled togeder? But there nis no discorde to the very thinges, but thei cleauen alwaie certain to hemself. But the thought of man confounded and ouerthrowen, by the darke members of the body, ne maie not by fire of his darked lookyng, that is to saine, by the vigour of his insight, while the soul is in the bodie, knowen the thyn subtell knittynges of thynges. But wherefore eschaufeth it so by so great loue, to finden thilke notes of soth icouered, that is to saine, wherefore eschaufeth the thought of man, by so greate desire, to knowe thilke notificacions, that been ihid vnder the couertures of sothe? wote it ought thilke thynge, that it anguisshous desireth to knowe? as who saieth naie. For no man ne trauaileth, for to weten thynges that he wote. And therefore the texte saieth thus.

But who trauaileth to weten thynges yknowe? and if that he ne knoweth hem not, what seketh thilke blinde thought? what is he that desireth any thynges, of whiche he wote right naught? as who saith, whoso desireth any thynges, needes somwhat he knoweth of it, or els he ne coud not desiren it. Or who maie followe thynges, that ne been not iwiste, and though that he seke the thynges, where shall he finde hem? What wight that is all vnconnyng and ignoraunt, maie know that for me, that is ifounde.

But whan the soule beholdeth, and seeth the high thought, that is to saine God, than knoweth it togither the somme and singularities, that is to sain, the principles, and euerichc of hem by hymself. But now while the soule is hid in the cloude, and in the darknesse of the membres of the bodie, it ne hath not al foryeten itself, but it witholdeth the somme of thynges, and leseth the singularities. Than whoso that seeketh sothenesse, he nis in neither nother habite, for he wote not all, ne he ne hath not all foryetten, but yet hym remembreth the somme of thinges, that he withholdeth, and asketh counsaile, and retreateth depliche thinges iseen beforne, that is to saine, the great somme in his mind, so that he mow adden the partes, that he hath foryetten to thilke parties, that he hath witholden.

Tum illa, vetus, inquit, hæc est de providentia querela: Marcoque Tullio, &c.

Than saied she, this is (quod she) the olde question of the purueighaunce of God. And Marcus Tullius, whan he deuided the deuinacions, that is to saine, in his bookes that he wrote of deuinacions, he moued greatlie this question, and thou thyself

haste isought it moche, and vtterlie and long, but yet ne hath it not been determined, ne isped fermelie and diligentlie of any of you, and the cause of this darknesse, and of this difficultie is, for that the moving of the reason of mankinde, ne maie not mouen to, that is to saine, applien or ioyen to the simplicitie of the diuine prescience, the which simplicite of the diuine prescience, if that men mighten thinken it in any maner. That is to saine, that if men mighten thinke, and comprehenden the thinges, that God seeth himself than there dwelled vtterly no doubt, the whiche reason and cause of difficulties, I shall assaie at last to shewe and to speden, whan I haue firste ispended, and answured to thy reasons, by whiche thou art moued, for I aske why thou wenest, that thilke reasons of hem that assoilen this question, ne bee not spedfull inough ne sufficient, the whiche solucion or the which reason, for that it demeth, that the prescience is not of necessitie of thinges to come, as who saith, any other waie than thus, but that the ilke thinges, that the prescience wote beforn ne maie not vnbetiden, that is to saine, that thei moten betide. But than, if that prescience ne putteth none necessitie to thynges to comen, as thou thyself hast confessed it, and beknowe a little here beforne, what cause, or what is it, as who saith, there maie no cause bee, by whiche that the endes voluntarie of thynges, mighten be constrained to certaine betidynge. For by grace of posicion, so that thou maie the better vnderstand this that followeth, I suppose that there ne bee no prescience: than aske I (quod she) in as moche as apertaineth to that, shoulden than thynges that comen of free will, be constrained to betiding by necessitie? Boecius. Naie (quod I). Philosop. Than ayenwarde (quod she) I suppose that there be prescience, but that it ne putteth no necessitie to thinges, that trowe I that thilke same fredome of will, shall dwellen al hole and absolute, and vnbounden. But thou wilt saine, that albeit so that prescience, nis not cause of the necessitie of betiding to thinges to comen algates yet it is a signe, that the thinges ben to betiden by necessitie. By this maner than, although that prescience had neuer be, yet al gates or at lest waie, it is certain thyng, that endes of betidinges of thinges, to comen shoulden bee necessarie. For euery thing sheweth and signifieth onely, what the thing is, but it ne maketh not the thing that it signifieth. For which it behoueth, first to shew that nothing ne betideth, that it ne betideth by necessitie: so that it maie appeare, that the prescience is signe of necessitie: or els if there nere no necessitie, certes thilke prescience ne might not be signe of thyng that nis not. But certes, it is now certain, that the proue of this isusteined by stedfast reason, ne shall not been ladde, ne proued by signes ne by argumentes, taken fro without, but by causes couenable and necessarie. But thou maiest saine, how maie it bee that the things ne betiden not, that ben purueied to comen? But certes, right as we trowen that the thynges, whiche that the purueiaunce wote beforne, to comen ne be not to betiden. But that ne shold we not demen, but rather although thei shall betiden, yet ne haue thei no necessitie of hir kinde to betiden: and this maiest thou lightly apperceiuen, by this that I shall sain. For we seen many thinges, whan thei been beforne our iyne, right as men seen the carter woorchyng in the tournyng, and in the attempring or a dressing of his cartes or chariottes, and by this maner, as who saieth, maieste thou vnderstande of all other werkemenne. Is there than any necessitie, as who saieth, in our lokyng, that constraineth or compelleth, any of thilke thinges to been doen so? Boecius. Naie (quod I) for in idle and in vaine were all the effeete of crafte, if that all thynges weren moued, by constrainyng of our iyen, or of our sight. Philosophie. The thynges than (quod she) that whan that men doen hem, ne haue no necessitie that men doen hem, eke tho same thynges first or thei bee dooen, thei been to comen without necessitie: for why ther been some thynges to betiden, of whiche the endes and the betidynges of hem, been absolute and quite of all necessitie. For certes, I ne trowe not that any manne would saine this, that the thynges that meune doen now, that theine were to betiden first, er thei wer doen. And thilke same thinges, although men hadden wiste hem beforne, yet thei haue free betidynges. For right as science of thynges present, ne bryngeth in no necessitie, to thynges that meune doen, right so to the prescience of thynges to comen, ne bringeth in none necessitie, to thinges to betiden. But thou maieste sain, that of thilke same it is doubted, as whether that of thilke thynges, that ne haue non issues and betidynges necessaries, if thereof maie been any prescience. For certes, thei semen to discorden, for thou wenest, that if that thynges been seen before, that necessitie followeth hem, and if necessitie faileth hem, thei ne might not been wiste before, and that nothyng maie be comprehended by science, but certain. And if tho thynges ne haue no certain betidynges, be purueighed as certain, it should be darkenesse of opinion, not sothfastnesse of science. And thou wenest that it be diuers, fro the holinesse of science, that any man should deme a thyng, to bee otherwise than it is itself, and the cause of this errour is, that of al the thinges, that euery wight hath knowe thei wene that tho thinges been knowe, onely by the strengthe, and by the nature of the thynges, that been wiste or knowe, and it is all the contrarie: for all that euer is knowe, it is rather comprehended and knowe, not after his strength and his nature, but after the facultie, that is to saine, the power and the nature of hem that knowen. And for that this thyng, should now shewe by a short ensample the roundnesse of a bodie, otherwise than the sight of the iye knoweth it, and otherwise than the touchyng. The lookyng, by castyng of his beames, waiteth and seeth from a farre, all the bodie togither, without mouyng of itself, but the touchyng cleaueth to the rounde bodie, and moueth about the enuironnyng, and comprehendeth the parties by roundenesse, and the man hymself, otherwise beholdeth hym, and otherwaies imaginacion, and otherwise reason, and otherwise intelligence: for the witte comprehendeth without forth, the figure of the bodie of man, that is vnstablished in the matter subiect. But the imaginacion comprehendeth onelie, the figure without the matter. Reason surmounteth imaginacion, and comprehendeth by vniuersall lokyng, the common speache, but the iye of intelligence is higher, for it surmounteth the enuironnyng of the vniuersitie, and looketh ouer that, by pure subtilitie of thought. The ilke same simple forme of man, that is perdurable, in the diuine thought, in whiche this ought greatlie to be

considered, that the hiest strengthe for to comprehenden thynges, embraseth and containeth the lower strengthe, but the lower strength, ne ariseth not in no maner to the higher strength. For witte ne maie comprehend nothyng out of matter, ne the imaginacion, ne looketh not the vniuersalle speces, ne reason ne taketh not the simple forme, so as intelligence taketh it. But intelligence that looketh al abouen, whan it hath comprehended the forme, it knoweth and demeth all the thynges, that been vnder the forme, but she knoweth hem in thilke maner in whiche it comprehendeth thilke same simple forme, that ne maie neuer bee knowen of none of that other, that is to saie, to none of tho three foresaied strengthes of the soule, for it knoweth the vniuersitie of reason, and the figure of imaginacion, and the sensible materiall conceiued by wit, ne it ne vseth not ne of reason, ne of imaginacion, ne of witte without forthe, but it beholdeth all thynges, so as I shall saie, by a stroke of thought fermely, without discours of collacion. Certes, reason whan it looketh any thyng vniuersall, it ne vseth not of imaginacion ne witte, and algates yet it comprehendeth the thynges imaginable, and sensible, for reason is she that definisheth, the vniuersalle of her conceipte, right thus. Man is a reasonable twoo footed beast, and how so that this knowyng is vniuersall, yet nis there no wight, that ne wote well, that a man is a thynge imaginable and sensible, and this same considereth well reason, but that nis not by imaginacion, nor by witte, but it loketh it by reasonable conceipcion. Also imaginacion, albeit so, that it taketh of witte the beginnyng, to seen and formen the figures, algates although that witte ne were not presente, yet it enuironneth and comprehendeth all thynges sensible, not by reason sensible of demyng, but by reason imaginatife. Seest thou not than, that all the thinges in knowyng, vsen more of hir facultie, or of hir power, than thei dooen of the facultie, or of power of thynges that been to knowen, ne that is no wronge, for so as euery iudgemente is: that deede or doyng of hym, that demeth, it behoueth that euery wight performe his werke, and his entencion, not of foraine power, but of his proper power.

Quondam porticus attulit Obscuros nimium senes, &c.

THAN the porche, that is to saie, a gate of the toune of Athenes there as philosophers hadden congregacion to dispute, thilk porche brought sometyme olde men, full darke in hir sentences, that is saie philosophers, that highten Stoiciens, that wende that images and sensibilities, that is to saie, sensible imaginacions, or els imaginacions of sensible thinges, were emprinted into soules, fro bodies without foorthe, as who saieth, thilke Stoiciens wenden that the soule had bee naked of hymself, as a mirrour, or a cleane perchemine, so that all figures musten first comen fro thynges, fro without in to soules, and been emprinted into soules, right as we been wonte, somtyme by a swifte pointen, to fixen letters emprinted in the smothnesse, or in the plainesse of the table of waxe, or in the parchemine, that hath no figure ne note in it. Glose. But now argueth Boece against that opinion, and saith thus. But if the thriuyng soule ne vnpliteth nothyng, that is to saine, ne dooeth thyng by his proper mouing, but suffreth and lieth subiect to the figures, and to the notes of bodies without forthe, and yeldeth images idell, yeuell and vaine, in the maner of a mirroure. Whence thriueth than, or whence cometh the ilke knowyng in our soulle, that discerneth and beholdeth all thynges, and whence is the ilke strengthe, that beholdeth the singuler thynges, or els whence is the strengthe, that deuideth thynges iknowe, and thilke strength that gathered togither thynges deuided, and strength that choseth the enterchaunged waie: for somtyme it heaueth the hedde, that is to saie, that it heaueth vp the entencion, to right high thynges, and sometyme it discendeth into right lowe thynges, and whan it retourneth into hym self, it reprooueth and destroyeth the false thynges, by the true thynges.

Certes, this strength is cause more efficient, and moche more mightie, to seen and to knowen thynges, than thilke cause that suffreth and receiueth the notes and figures, impressed in maner of matter. Algates the passion, that is to saie, the sufferaunce or the witte in the quicke bodie, goeth before exitynge, and mouyng the strengthes of the thought, right so as whan that clearenesse smiteth the iyen, and moueth hem to seen, or right so as voyce or soun hurleth to the eares, and commoueth hem to hearken, than is the strengthe of the thought moued and excited, cleapeth forth to semblable mouynges, the speces that it halte within it self, and addeth the speces of the notes, and to thynges withoutforthe, and medleth the images of thynges withoutforthe, to thynges hid within hymself.

Quod si in corporibus sentiendis, quamvis afficiant instrumenta sensuum, &c.

BUT what is that in bodies to bee feled, that is to saie, in the taking: and in the knowyng of bodily thynges. And albeeit so that the qualities of bodies, that be obiecte fro withoutfoorthe, mouen and entalenten the instrumentes of the wittes, and all bee it so, that the passion of the bodie, that is to saine, the witte, or the suffraunce, goeth before the strength, or the woorchynge courage, the whiche passion or sufferaunce, cleapeth forthe the deede of the thought in it self, and moueth and exciteth in this meane while, the formes that resten within foorthe, and insensible bodies, as I haue said, our courages nis not taught or emprinted, by passion to knowe these thinges, but demeth and knoweth of his owne strength, the passion or sufferaunce, subiecte to the bodie: moche more than tho thynges been absolute, and quicke fro all talentes, or affections of bodies, as God or his angels, ne folowen not in discernyng thynges obiect fro withoutforth, but thei accomplishen and speden, the deedes of hir thought. By this reason than there comen many maner of knowynges, to diuerse and to diffryng substaunces.

For the witte of the bodie, the whiche wit is naked, and dispoiled of all other knowing, thilke witte cometh to beastes, the whiche ne mowen not mouen hem self here and there, as oysters and muskelles, and other soche shelfishe of the sea, that cleauen and been nourished to rockes, but the imaginacion cometh of remuable beastes, that semen to haue talente to flien, or to desiren any thyng: but reason is alonelie the linage of man-

kinde, right as intelligence is alonelie the diuine nature, of whiche it followeth, that the ilke knowyng is more worthe than is either sens it knoweth by his proper nature, not onelie his subiecte, as who saieth, it ne knoweth not alonelie, that appertaineth properlie to his knowyng, but it knoweth the subiectes of all other knowynges. But how shall it than bee, if that witte and imaginacion, striuen ayen reasonyng, and sain that of the ilke vniuersall thynge, that reason weneth to seen, that it nis right naaght, for witte and imaginacion saine, that that is sensible or imaginable, it ne maie not been vniuersall.

Than is there either the iudgement of reason sothe, ne that there nis nothyng sensible, or els for that reason wote well, that many thinges been subiect to wit, and to imaginacion: than is the concepcion of reason vain and false, whiche that loketh and comprehendeth that that is sensible and singuler, as vniuersall. And if that the reason would answere ayenste these twoo, that is to saie, to witte and imaginacion, and saie that sothly she her self that is to sain reason, loketh and comprehendeth by reason of vniuersalitie, both that that is sensible, and that that is imaginable, and thilke twoo, that is to sain, witte and imaginacion, ne mowen not stretchen hem self, to the knowynge of vniuersalitee, for that the knowing of hem ne maie not exceden, ne surmounten the bodily figures. Certes, of the knowyng of thynges, men oughten rather yeuen more credence, to the more stedfast, and to the more perfite iudgemente, in this maner striuyng, than we that haue strengthe of reasonyng, and of imaginacion, and of witte, that is to saie, by reason and by imaginacion, wee would rather praise the cause of reason, as who saieth, than the cause of witte, and of ymaginacion. Semblable thing is it, that the reason of mankinde ne weneth not, that the diuine intelligence, beholdeth or knoweth thynges to come, but right as the reason of mankinde knoweth hem: for thou arguiste thus, that if that it ne seme not to men, that some thynges haue certaine betidynges, thei ne maie not be wiste, before certainlie to betiden, and than is there no prescience of thilke thynges, and if we trowe, that prescience bee in these thynges, than is there nothyng, that betideth by necessitie. But if we might haue the iudgemente, of the diuine thought, as we been parteners of reason, right so as we haue demed, that it behoueth by imaginacion and witte, and beneth reason, right so would we demen, that it were rightfull thyng, that mannes reason ought to submitte it self, to be beneath the diuine thought, for whiche if wee maie, as who saieth, that if wee maie, I counsaile, that we enhaunce vs in the height of thilke souerain intelligence, for there shall reason well seen that, that it ne maie not beholde in it self, and certes, that is thus, in what maner the prescience of God, seeth all thyngs and diffinisheth, all though thei haue no certain betidynges: ne this is none opinion, but rather the simplicitie of the souerain science that is not shet, within no maner of boundes.

Quam variis terras animalia permeant figuris. Namque alia extento sunt corpore, &c.

The beastes passen by the yearthes, by full diuers figures, for some of hem haue hir bodies straught, and crepen in the dust, and drawen after hem a trace, or a forough continued, that is to saie, as neders and snailes, and other beastes, by the wanderyng lightnesse of hir winges, beaten the windes, and ouer swimmen the spaces of the long aire, by moste fliyng.

And other beastes gladden hemself, to diggen hir traces, or hir steppes in the yearthe, with hir goyng, or with hir feete, and to gon either by the greene fieldes, or els to walken vnder the woodes. And all it be so that thou seest, that thei discorden by diuers formes, algates hir faces enclined, heaueth hir dulle wittes, onely the dinage of manne heaueth highest his hie hedde, and standeth light with his vpright body, and beholdeth the yearthes vnder hym. And but if thou yearthlie manne waxeste euill out of thy wit, this figure amonesteth, thee that askest the Heauen, with thy right visage, and haste areised thy forehedde, to beaten vp on high thy courage, so that thy thought ne bee not heauied, ne put lowe vnder foote, sith that thy body is so high areised.

Quoniam igitur, uti paulo ante monstratum est, omne quod scitur, &c.

Therefore than, as I haue shewed a little here beforn that al thing that it wist, nis not knowen by his nature proper, but by the nature of hem that comprehenden it. Let vs loken now, in as moche as it is lefull to vs, as who saieth, let vs looken now as wee maie, whiche that is the estate of the diuine substaunce, so that wee maie well knowe, eke what his science is. To common iudgement of al creatures reasonables, than is, that God is eterne. Let vs consider than, what is eternitee, for certes, that shall shewen vs togider, the diuine nature, and the diuine science. Eternitee than is perfite possession, and all together of life interminable, and that sheweth the more cleralie, by the comparison or collasion of temporall thynges.

For all thyng that liueth in tyme, it is present, and procedeth fro preteritees, into futures, that is to saine, from time passed, into time comming: ne there nis nothing established in tyme, that maie embracen togither, all the space of this life, for certes, yet ne hath it not taken, the tyme of to morowe, and it hath lost that of yester daie. And certes, in the life of this daie, ye ne liuen no more, but right as in this mouable, and transitorie moment. Than thilke thyng that suffereth temporall condicion, all though that it neuer began to be, ne thought it neuer cease to be (as Aristoteles demed of the world) and although the life of it be stretched with infinite of tyme, yet algates nis it no soche thynge, as men might trowen by right that it is eterne. For all though that it comprehende, and embrace the space of the life infinite, yet algates ne embrasethe it not the space of the life all togither, for it ne hathe not the futures that be not yet: ne it ne hath no lenger the preterities that ben done or passed. But thilke thing than, that hath and comprehendeth togider all the plente of the life interminable, to whom there ne faileth nought of the future, and to whom there nis nought of the preterite escaped or passed, thilke same is ywitnessed and proued by right to ben eterne. And it behouethe by necessite that thilke thing be alway presente to him selfe, and competent,

As who saith, alway present to him selfe, and so mighty, that all be right at his plesaunce, and that he haue al present the infinite of the mouable tyme. Wherfore some men trowen wrongfullye, that whan they heren that it semed to Plato, that this world had neuer beginninge of time, that it neuer shall haue faylynge: they wene in thilke maner, that this worlde be maked eterne, wyth his maker, as who saythe, they wene that this worlde and God be maked togither eterne. And that is a wrongful wening for other thing it is to be ladde by the life interminable, as Plato graunted to the worlde, and other thinge it is to enbrace togither al the presence of the life that is interminable, which thinge is clere and manifest to the dyuine thought. Ne it ne shulde not seme to vs that God is elder than thinges that ben maked by quantite of time, but rather by the prosperite of his simple nature. For this ilke infynyte mouynges of temperal thynges, foloweth thys presentary estate of thys lyfe immouable, and so as it ne maie not countrefeten ne faine it, ne be euenlike to it for the immobilite, that is to say, that is in the eternite of God, it faileth, and faileth in to mowing fro the simplicite of the presence of God, and disencreaseth in the infinite quantite of future and preterite. And so as it may not haue togyder all the plentie of the lyfe, algates yet for as moch as it ceaseth neuer, for to ben in some maner, yet it semeth somdele to vs, that it foloweth and ressembleth thilke thinge, that it ne may not attaine to ne fulfillen, and bindeth it selfe to some maner presence of thys lytel moment: the whiche presence of this lytel and swifte moment for that it beareth a maner ymage of likenesse of the aye dwelling of God: it graunteth to soche maner thinges, as it betideth to, that it semeth hem as these thynges haue ben, and ben. And for that the presence of soche lytel moment ne may not dwell, therfore it rauished and toke thinfinite waie of time, that is to saye, by succession, and by this manere it is done, for that it shulde continue the life in goyng, of the whiche lyfe it ne might not enbrace the plentie of dwelling. And for thy, if we wollen put worthy names to thinges that folowen Plato, let us saye than sothelye, that God is eterne, and that the worlde is perpetuell. Than sithe euery iudgement knoweth and comprehendeth by his owne nature, thinges that ben subiect vnto hym, there is to God alwayes an eterne and a presentarie estate. And the scyence of hym that ouerpasseth al temporal moment, dwelleth in simplicite of his presence, and enbraseth and consydereth all the infynite spaces of tymes preteritces, and of tymes futures. And loketh in his simple knowing, al thynges of preterite, right as they weren ydon presently right nowe. If thou wolte than thynken and aduise the prescience, by whiche it knoweth al thinges, thou ne shalt not demen it as prescience of thinges to comen, but thou shalt demen more rightfully that is science of presence or of instance that neuer ne faileth, for whiche it nis not ycleped prouidence, but it shuld rather ben cleped purueiaunce, which is established full ferre fro right low thinges, and beholdeth from a ferre al thinges, right as it were fro the hye hyght of thynges. Why asketh thou than, or why disputest thou than the thilke thynges ben doen by necessite, whiche that ben ysene and yknowen by the *diuine sight*, sythe that forsothe men ne maken nat thilke thynges necessary, whiche that they sene ben ydon in hir sight, for addeth thy beholding any neeessite, to thilke thinges whiche thou beholdest present? B. Naye (quod I). P. Certes (quod she) than, yf men mighten maken any digne comparison or collacion of the presence diuine, and of the presence of mankind, right so as ye sene some thinges in this temporal presence, right so seeth God all thing by his eterne presence. Wherfore this diuine prescience ne chaungeth not the nature of the propertie of thinges, but beholdeth soch thinges present to him warde, as they shulden betyden to you warde in tyme to comen. Ne it ne confoundeth not the iudgement of thinges, but by one sight of his thought, he knoweth the thinges to comen, as wel necessary as not necessarie. Right so whan ye sene togither a man walke on the erthe, and the sonne arisen in the Heauen, al be it so that ye sene al togither that one and that other: yet neuertheles ye demen and discernen, that that one is voluntary, and that other is necessary: right so than the diuine lokinge, beholdinge all thinges vnder him, ne troubleth nat the qualite of thinges that ben certainly present to himwarde, but as to the condicion of tyme, forsothe they ben future, for whiche it foloweth that this nys none opinion, but rather a stedfaste knowing ystrengthed by sothenesse, that whan that God knoweth any thinge to be, he ne vnwote nat that thilke thynge wantethe necessite to be, this is to sain, that whan that God knoweth any thinge to betide, he wote wel that it ne hath no necessite to betide. And yf thou seist here that thilke thing that God seeth to betide, it ne may nat vnbetide, as who saythe it mote betyde, and thilke thinge that ne may nat vnbetide, it mote betiden by necessite, and that thou streyn me to this name of the neeessite. Certes I wilf well confessen and beknowen a thynge of full sad trouthe, but vnneth shall there anie wight mow sene it or come thereto, but if that he be beholder of the diuine thought; for I wilt answere the thus, that thilke thinge that is future whan it is referred to the diuine knowinge than it is necessarie. But certes whan it is vnderstanden in his owne kind, men sene it vtterly fre and absolute fro all necessyte. For certes there ben two maners of necessitees, that one necessite is simple, as thus, that it behoueth by necessite that all men be mortall or deedlye. Another necessite is condycionell, as thus, yf thou wost that a man walketh, it behoueth by necessite that he walke, thilke thing than that any wight hath yknowe to be, it ne may nat be none other wyse than he knoweth it to be. But this condicion ne draweth not with her thilke necessite simple, for certes this necessite condicionell, the propre nature of it ne maketh it nat, but the adiection of the condicion maketh it. For no neeessite ne constraineth a man to gon, that goeth by his proper wil al be it so that whan he goth, that is necessary that he goth. Right on this same maner than, yf that the purueiaunce of God seeth any thinge present, than mote thilke thinge ben by necessyte, all thoughe that it ne haue no necessyte of his owne nature. But certes the futures that betyden by fredon of arbytrie, God seeth hem al togider present. These thynges than if they ben referred to the diuine sight, than ben they maked necessarie by the condicion of the diuine knowinge. But certes, if thilke thinges ben considered by hem selfe, they been absolute of necessitie, and ne for-

letten not, ne cessen not of the libertie of hir owne nature. Than certes, without dout all the thinges shullen ben don whiche that God wote beforn that they ben to comen and betiden of fre arbitrie, or of free wyll, that al be it so that they betiden, yet algates ne lese they not hir proper nature in beynge, by the whiche firste or they weren doen, they hadden power not to haue betidde. Boecius. What is this to saine than (quod I) that thinges ne be not necessary by hir proper nature, so that they comen in al hir maners in the likenesse of necessie, by condicion of the diuine science? Philosophie. This is the difference (quod she) that tho thinges which that I purposed thee a lytel here beforne, that is to saine, sonne a risyng, and the man walking, that ther whiles that thilk thinges ben done, they ne might not ben vndoone. Nathelesse that one of hem or it was done, it behoueth by necessite that it was doone, but not that other. Right so it is here that the thynges whiche that God hath present, withouten doute they shullen ben, but some of hem discendeth of the nature of thynges, as the sonne arisinge, and some discendeth of the power of the doers, as the manne walkinge. Boecius. Than said I, no wronge, that if these thynges bee referred to the diuine knowing, than ben they necessarie, and if they been cosydred by hem selfe, than been they absolute fro the bonde of necessite. Righth so as al thinges that apereth or sheweth to the wittes, if thou referre hem to reason it is vniuersall, and if thou loke it or refer it to it self, than is it singuler. But nowe if thou saiest thus, that if that it be in my power to chaungen my purpose, than shall I voiden the puruciaunce of God, whan peraunture, I shall haue chaunged the thinges whiche that he knoweth beforne.

Philosophie. Than shall I answeren the thus: certes thou maiste wel chaunge thy purpose, but for as moche as the present sothnesse of the diuine puruciaunce beholdeth that thou maiste chaunge thy purpose, and whether thou chaunge it or no, and whitherward that thou tourne it, thou ne maist not eschue the diuine prescience, right so thou ne maiste not slid the sight of the presenti ye, although that thou tourne thy self by thy fre wil in to diuers actions. But thou maiste saine ayen to this thus: how shall it than be, shall not the diuine science ben chaunge by my disposicion, whan that I will one thing nowe, and now another thinge? And thilke prescience ne semeth it not to entrechaunge stoundes of knowinge, as who saithe, ne shal it not semen to vs, that the diuine prescience entrechaungeth his diuers stoundes of knowinge, so that it knowe sometime one thing, and sometime it knoweth the contrarie of that thing? Philo.

No forsothe (quod she) for the diuine sight renneth beforne and seeth al the futures, and clepeth hem ayen, and retourneth hem to the propre prescience of his propre knowinge, ne he entrechaungeth not so as thou wenest the stoundes of his foreknowing, as nowe this, nowe that: but he dwelling aye cometh beforne, and embraseth at o stroke al the mutacions. And this prescience to comprehenden and to sene al thinges, God ne hath not taken it of the betidinges of thinges to comen but of his propre symplicite. And hereby is assoiled thilke thinges that thou puttest a litel here beforne, that is to saine, that it is vnworthy thing to sain, that our futures yeuen cause of the prescience of God. For certes strength of the deuine science, whiche that embraseth al thinges by his presentary knowing, establisheth maner to all thynges, and it ne oweth not to latter thinges. And sithe that these thinges ben thus, that is to saine, that necessite is not in thinges by the diuine prescience, than is ther fredom of arbitrie that dwelleth hole and vnwemmed to mortal men, ne the lawes ne purposen not wycked medes, and paines to the willinges of men, that ben vnbounden and quite of all necessite: and God beholder and foreweter of al thinges dwelleth aboue, and the presente eternite of sight, remeth alwaye wyth the diuers qualite of our dedes, dispensyng or ordeining medes to good men, and tourmentes to wicked men. Ne in ydel ne in vaine ne ben ther not put in God hope and praiers, that ne mowen not ben vnspedeful ne without effecte, whan they ben rightful.

Withstande than and eschewe thou vyces, worshippe and loue thou vertues, areyse thy corage to rightful hopes, yelde thou humble praiers and highe. Greate necessyte of prowesse and of vertue, is encharged and commaunded to you if ye nil not dissimulen, sith that ye worehen and doone, that is to saine, your dedes and youre werkes beforne the eyen of the iudge, that seeth and also that demeth al thinges. Deo gratias.

THUS ENDETH THE BOKE OF BOECIUS OF THE CONSOLACION OF PHILOSOPHIE.

THE

CONCLUCIONS OF THE ASTROLABIE.

Lytel Lowys my sonne, I perceiue well by certaine euidences thyne abylyte to lerne scyences, touching nombres and proporcions and also well consydre I thy besye prayer in especyal to lerne the tretyse of the astrolabye. Than for as moche as a philosopher saithe, he wrapeth hym in his frende, that condiscendeth to the rygbtfull prayers of his frende: therefore I haue giuen thee a sufficient astrolabye for oure orizont, compowned after the latitude of Oxenforde: upon the whiche by mediacion of this lytell treatise, I purpose to teache thee a certaine nombre of conclusions, pertainyng to this same instrument. I say a certaine of conclusions for thre causes, the first cause is this. Truste wel that al the conclusions that haue be founden, or ells possiblye might be founde in so noble an instrument as in the astrolabye, ben vnknowen perfitely to anye mortal man in this region, as I suppose. Another cause is this, that sothely in any cartes of the astrolabye that I haue ysene, there ben some conclusions, that wol not in al thinges perfourme hir behestes: and some of hem ben to harde to thy tender age of ten yere to conceiue. This treatise deuided in fiue parts wil I shewe the wonder light rules and naked wordes in Englishe, for Latine ne canst thou nat yet but smale, my litel sonne. But neuerthelesse suffiseth to the these trewe conclusyons in Englishe, as wel as suffiseth to this noble clerkes Grekes these same conclusions in Greke, and to the Arabines in Arabike, and to Iewes in Hebrewe, and to the Latin folke in Latyn: which Latyn folke had hem firste

out of other diuers langages, and write hem in hir owne tonge, that is to saine in Latine.

And God wote that in all these languages and in manye mo, haue these conclusyons ben sufficyentlye lerned and taught, and yet by diuers rules, right as diuers pathes leaden diuers folke the right waye to Rome.

Now wol I pray mekely euery person discrete, that redeth or heareth this litel treatise to haue my rude ententing excused, and my superfluite of wordes, for two causes. The first cause is, for that curious endityng and harde sentences is ful heuy at ones, for soch a childe to lerne. And the seconde cause is this, that sothely me semeth better to writen vnto a childe twise a good sentence, than he forlete it ones. And Lowis if it so be that I shewe the in my lith Englishe, as trew conclusions touching this mater, and not onely as trewe but as many and subtil conclusions, as bene yshewed in Latin, in any comon treatise of the astrolabye, conne me the more thanke, and praye God saue the kinge, that is lorde of this langage, and all that him faith beareth, and obeieth euerich in his degre, the more and the lasse. But consydre thwell, that I ne vsurpe not to haue founden this werke of my labour or of mine engin. I nam but a leude compilatour of the laboure of olde astrologiens, and haue it translated in myn Englishe onely for thy doctrine: and with this swerde shal I slene enuy.

The first party.

The firste partye of this treatise shall reherce the figures, and the membres of thyne astrolaby, bycause that thou shalte haue the greator knowinge of thine owne instrument.

The seconde party.

The seconde partye, shall teche the to werken the very practike of the foresaid conclusions, as ferforthe and also narowe as may be shewed in so smale an instrumente portatife, aboute. For wel wote euery astrologien, that smallest fractions ne wol not be showed in so small an instrument, as in subtil tables calculed for a cause.

The thirde partye.

The thirde partye shal containe diuers tables, of longitudes and latitudes of sterres, fixe in the astrolabie. And tables of the declinacions of the Sonne, and tables of the longitude of cities and townes. And tables as wel for the gouernacion of the clocke, as for to finde the altitude meridian, and many an other notable conclucion after the kalenders of the reuerent clerkes frere Ihon Som, and frere N, Lenne.

The fourth partye.

The fourth partye shall be a theorike, to declare the meaninge of the celestiall bodyes, wyth the causes, the whiche the fourthe partie in special shal shew in a table of the very meuinge of the Moone, from one to one, euery daye and euery signe, after thin almanacke. Upon the which table there foloweth a canon, sufficyent to teach as wel in maner of workynge in the same conclusions, as to knowe in our orizionte, with which degre of zodiack the Moone ariseth in any latitude, and the arisinge in any planete after his latitude fro the eclyptyke lyne.

The fyfte partye.

The fythe partye shall ben an introductorye, after the statutes of our doctours on whiche, thou mayste lerne a great parte of the generall rules of theorike in astrologie, in whiche fythe partie thou shalte finde tables of equacions of houses, after the latitude of Oxenforde, and tables of dignitees of planettes, and other noteful thinges, if God vouche safe and his mother the mayden, mo than I behete.

The ryngе.

Thy astrolabye hath a ringe to putten on thy thomb one thy right honde, in takinge of the heyght of thinges. And take kepe, from hence forwarde I wol clepe the heyght of heuy thing, that is take by the rule, the altytude withouten mo wordes.

The turet.

This ringe ronneth in a maner of a turet, fastened to the moder of thin astrolabye, in a roume a space that it distroubeleth not the instrument to hangen after his right centure. The moder of thin astrolabye is thickest by the brinks that is the vtmoste ring with degrees: and al the mydelle within the rynge shall be thynner, to receiue the plates for diuers clymates, and also for the rethe, that is shape in manner of a net, or els after the webbe of a loppe.

The moder.

The moder of thin astrolabye is the thickest plate perced with a large hole, that receiueth in her wombe the thinne plates compowned of diuers clymats, and thy reete shapen in maner of a net or of a web of a lope.

Of the foure lynes.

This moder is deuided on the backhalfe with a line that cometh discendynge fro the ryng down to the netherest bordure, the which line, fro the forsaid ring vnto the centre of the large hole amidde, is cleped southe line, or els the line meridionall: and the remenaunt of this line doune to the bordure is cleped the northe line, or all the line of the midnight.

Of fower lines, East, West, Northe, and Southe,

Ouerthwarte this foresaied long line, there crosseth hym an other line of the same length, fro easte to weste, of the which line, from a little crosse in the bordure vnto the centure of the large hole, is cleaped the east line, or els the line oriental: and the remenaunte of the line, fro the foresaied orientall vnto the bordure, is icleped the weste line, or the line occidentall.

Now hast thou here the fower quarters of thin astrolabie, deuided after the fower principall plages or quarters of the firmament,

Whiche is the right side, and whiche is the left.

The easte saide of the astrolabie, is cleaped the right side, and the weste side is cleaped the lefte side. Foryet not this little Lowis. Put the ring of thyne astrolabie, vppon the thombe of thy right hande, and than woll his right side bee towarde thy left side, and his left side woll be towarde the right side. Take this rule generall, as well on the backe, as on the wombe side. Uppon the ende of

his easte line (as I firste saied) is imarked a lil crosse, where as euermore generally is considered, the entryng of the easte degree, in the whiche the Sonne ariseth.

The degrees fro the east line, to the southe.

Fro the little crosse, vp to the ende of the meridionall line vnder the ryng shalt thou finde the bordure, deuided with xc. degrees, and by that same proporcion is euery quarter of thyn astrolabie deuided, ouer the whiche degrees, there been nombers of augrim, that deuiden thilke same degrees fro fiue to fiue, as sheweth by longe strikes bitwene: of the whiche by long strikes the space bitwene, conteineth a mile waie, and euery degree of thilke bordure, conteineth fower minutes, that is to saie, fower minutes of an houre.

Of the twelue signes, Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, and the other.

Vnder the compasse of thilke degrees, been written the names of the twelue signes, as Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo, Uirgo, Libra, Scorpio, Sagittarius, Capricornus, Aquarius, and Pisces. And the nombers of the degrees of the signes, been written in augrime aboue, and with long diuisions, from fiue to fiue, deuided from the tyme that the signe entreth vnto the laste ende. But vnderstande well, that these degrees of signes, been eueriche[illegible] hem considered of lx. minutes, and euer[illegible]minute of lx. secondes, and so foorthe into smal fractions infinite, as saieth Alcabucius. And therefore knowe well, that a degree of the bordure, containeth fower minutes, and a degre of a signe, containeth lx. minutes, and haue this in minde.

The cercle of the daies.

Nexte this followeth the cercle of the daies, that been figured in maner of the degrees, that conteinen in nomber three hundred, three score and fiue, deuided also with longe strikes from fiue to fiue, and the nombers of augrime, written vnder the cercle.

The cercle of the twelue monethes.

Nexte the cercle of daies, followeth the cercle of the twelue names of the monethes, that is to saie, Ianuarius, Februarius, Marcius, Aprill, Maius, Iunius, Iulius, August, September, October, Nouember, December.

The names of these monethes taken hir names, some for properties, and some by statutes of emperours, and some by other lordes of Roome. Eke of these monethes, as liked to Iulius Cesar, and Cesar Augustus, some wer icompouned of diuers nombers of daies, as Iuly and August. Than hath Ianuarius xxxi. daies, Februarius, xxviii. Marcius, xxxi. April thirtie. Maie, xxxi. Iunius thirtie. August, xxxi. September thirtie. October thirtie and one. Nouember thirtie. December xxxi. Nathelesse although that Iulius Cesar toke two daies out of Feuerire, and put hem in his monethe of Iuly, and Augustus Cesar cleaped the monethe of Auguste after his name, and ordained it of one and thirtie daies yet trust well that the Sonne dwelleth therfore neuer the more, ne the lesse in one signe, than in an other.

The names of the holie daies.

Than followeth the names of the holie daies in the Kalender, and next hem the letters, A. B. C. on whiche thei fallen.

The scale of the astrolabie.

Next the foresaied cercle of the A. B. C. vnder the crosse line is marked the scale, in maner of twoo squaires, or els in maner of ledders, that serueth by his xxii. poinctes, and his diuisions of full many a subtell conclusion of this foresaid scale: for the crosse line vnto the verie angle, is cleaped vmbra recta, or els vmbra extensa, and the neather partie vmbra versa.

The rule.

Than hast thou a broade rule, that hath on euery ende a square plate, parted with certaine holes, some more, and some lesse, to receiuen the stremes of the Sonne by daie, and eke by mediacion of thyne iye, to knowe the altitude of the sterres by night.

The pin, whiche is imagined to be pole artike and the horse.

Than is there a large pin, in maner of an exiltre, that goth through the hole that halte the tables of the climathes in the reeth, in the wombe of the moder, thorowe which pin there goeth a little wedge the whiche is cleped the horse, that straineth all these partes togither. This foresaid great pin, in maner of an exiltre, is imagined to be the pole artike in thyne astrolabie.

For lines on the wombe side.

The wombe side of thyne astrolabie is also diuided, with a longe crosse in fower quarters, from the east to weste, and from the southe to northe, from right side to left side, as is the backeside.

The degrees of the wombe side.

The border of whiche wombe side, is deuided fro the poinct of the east line, vnto the poinct of the south line, vnder the rynge in xc. degrees, and by the same proporcion, is euery quarter deuided, as is the backside, that amounteth three hundred lx. degrees. And vnderstande well, that the degrees of this border, been aunswerynge and consentyng to the degrees of equinoctiall, that is deuided in the same nomber, as euery other cercle is in the hie heauen.

This border is deuided also with xxiii. letters, and a small crosse aboue the south line that sheweth the xxiiii. houres equales of the clocke. And I haue saied flue of these degrees maken a mile waie, and three mile waie maken an houre, and euery degree of this border containeth fower minutes, and euery minutes fowertie secondes. Now haue I told thee twise, and for the more declaracion,

Of the principall cercles.

The plate vnder the reete is discriued with three cercles, of whiche the least is cleaped the cercle of Cancer, bicause that the hedde of Cancer tourneth euer more concentrike, vppon the same cercle. In this halfe of Cancer is the greatest declinacion northward of the Sonne and therefore is he icleped solsticium of sommer, whiche declinacion after the Ptholome is xxiii, degrees and fiftie minutes,

as well in Cancer as in Capricorne. This signe of Cancer is cleped the tropike of sommer, of tropos, that is to saine, ayenward. The middell cercle in widnesse of this three, is cleaped the cercle equinoctial, vpon whiche tourneth euer more, the heddes of Aries and Libra. And vnderstande well, that euermore this cercle equinoctiall tourneth iustlie fro very easte, to very weste, as I haue shewed in the sphere solid. This same cercle is cleped also the wayer of the daie. For whan the Sonne is in the head of Aries and Libra, than been daies and nightes like of lengthe, in all the worlde, and therfore been these twoo signes called equinoctis. And al that moueth within these hedes of Aries and Libra, is icalled northward and all that moueth without these heddes, his meuyng is cleped southward, as for the equinoctiall, take kepe of the latitudes northe and south, and forget it not: but this cercle equinoctiall been considered the xxiiii. hou. of the clocke. For euermore the arisyng of xv. degrees of the equinoctial, maketh an hour equall of the clocke. This equinoctial is cleped the midwaie of the first meuyng, or els of the Sonne. And note that the first meuyng is cleaped meuyng of the first mouable of the eight sphere, whiche meuyng is fro east to west, and again into east. Also it is cleped girdell of the firste meuyng. For it departeth the first meuable, that is to sain, the sphere in twoo like parties, euen distaunte fro the poles of this worlde. The widest of these three cercles principall, is cleaped the cercle of Capricorne, and tourneth euermore concentrike, vpon the same cercle. In the hedde of this foresaied Capricorne, is the greatest declinacion southwarde of the Sonne. And therefore it is cleped solsticium of winter. This signe of Capricorne, is also clepead the tropike of winter. For than beginneth the Sonne to come again to vs warde.

Of the almicanteras, the signet, and what is thine orizont.

Vpon this foresaied plate been compassed certain cercles, that highten almicanteras: of whiche some of hem semen parfite cercles, and some semen imparfite. The center that standeth a middest the narrowest cercle, is cleaped the signet. And the netherest cercle, that deuided the twoo emisperies, that is the partie of the heauen aboue the yearthe, and the partie beneth. These almicanteras been compouned by twoo and twoo, all be it so that on diuers astrolabies, some almicanteras been deuided by one, and some by twoo, and some by three, after the quantite of the astrolabie. This foresaied signet is ymagined to bee the very poinct ouer the croune of thy hedde, and also this signet is the very pole of the orizont in euery region.

What been thyne azimutes.

From this signet (as it semeth) there comen oroked strikes, like to the clawes of a loppe, or els like to the werke of a womans calle, in keruing ouerthwart the almicanteras, and these same strikes or diuisions, been cleaped azimutes and thei deuiden the orizontes on thine astrolabie in xxiiii. diuisions. And these azimutes serue to knowe the costes of the firmamente, and to other conclusions, as for to knowe the signet of the Sonne, and of euery sterre.

Of the xii. houres of the planettes.

Nexte these azimutes, vnder the cercle of Cancer, been the twelue diuisions embolite, moche like to the shappe of the azimutes, that shewen the spaces of houres of Planettes.

Thy reete or els thy zodiake.

Thy reete of thyne astrolabie, whiche is thy zodiake shapen in maner of a nette, or of a lop webbe, after the olde descripcion, whiche thou maiest tourne vp and doune, as thy self liketh conteineth certaine nomber of sterres fixe, with hir longitudes and latitudes determinate, if so bee that the maker haue not erred. The names of the sterres been written in the margin of thy reete, there thei sit, of the whiche sterres the small poincte is cleaped the centure. And vnderstande, that all the sterres sittyng within the zodiake of thyne astrolabie, been cleped sterres of the north, for thei arisen by the north east line, and all the remenaunt fixes out of the zodiake, been icleped sterres of the south, but I saie not that thei arisen all by the southe east line, witnesse of Aldeberan and also Algomisa. Generally vnderstonde this rule, that thilke sterres, that been cleaped sterres of the northe, arisen rather than the degree of hir longitude, and all the sterres of the south, arisen after the degree of hir longitude, that is to saine, sterres in thyne astrolabie.

The measure of longitude of sterres, itaken in the line ecliptike of Heauen, vnder the which line, whan the Sonne and the Mone been line righte, els in the superficie of this line, than is the eclips of the Sonne or of the Moone, as I shall declare and eke the cause why: but sothely the ecliptike line of the zodiake, is the vttereste bordure of the zodiake, there thy degrees been marked. The zodiake of thy astrolabie is shapen as a compasse, whiche that conteineth a large brede, as after the quantitie of thy astrolabie, in ensample that the zodiake of Heauen is imagined to be a superfices, conteinyng the latitude of twelue signes, whereas all the remenaunte of cercles in Heauen, been imagined verie lines, withouten any latitude amiddes the celestial zodiake is imagined a line, which that is cleped the ecliptike line, vnder the whiche line, is euermore the waie of the Sonne. Thus been there sixe degrees of the zodiake, of that one side of the line, and sixe degrees on that other. The zodiake is deuided in twelue principall deuisions, that departen the xii. signes, and for the straitnes of thine astrolabie, than is euery small deuision in a signe iparted by twoo degrees and twoo, I meane degrees conteinyng, lx. *minutes*, and this foresaied heuenishe zodiake, is clepled the circle of the signes, or the circle of beastes. For zodiake in langage of Greke, souneth beastes in Latine tongue, and in the zodiake been the xii. signes, that haue names of beastes, bicause whan the Sonne entreth in any of the signes, he taketh the propertie of soche beastes, or els for that the sterres that been there, been fixed, been disposed in signe of beastes, or shape like beastes, or els whan planettes, been vnder the signes, thei transmue vs by hir influence, operacions, and effectes. And vnderstande also, that whan an hotte planette, commeth into an hote signe, than entereth his heate, and if a planette be cold, than amenuseth his coldnesse, bicause of the hotte signe. And by this conclusion, maiest thou taken ensample in all signes be thei moiste or drie, mouable or fixe, reckenyng the qualitie of the planettes, as I first saied. And euerich of these xii. signes, hath respect to a cer-

taine parcell of the bodie of a man, and hath it in gouernaunce: as Aries hath thyne head and Taurus thy necke and thy throte, Gemini thyne arme holes and thyne armes, and so foorthe, as shall bee shewed more plainlie, in the fifth parte of this treatise. The zodiake, the whiche is partie of the eight sphere, ouerkerueth the equinoctial, and he ouerkerueth hym again in euen partes, and that one halfe declineth southwarde, and that other northwarde, as plainlie declareth the treatise of the sphere.

The labell.

THAN haste thou a labell, that is shapen like a rule, saue that it is strait and hath no plates on either ende, but with the smal poinct of the foresaied labell, shalt thou calcule the equacions in the bordure of thyne astrolabie, as by thin almurie.

The almurie, the denticle of Capricorne, or els the calculere.

THYNE almurie is cleped, the denticle of Capricorne, or els the calculere, this same almurie set fixe in the head of Capricorne, and it serueth of many a necessarie conclusion in equacion of thynges, as shall be shewed.

Here beginneth the conclusions of thine astrolabie, to finde the degree in the which the Soonne is daie by daie, after his course about.

RECKEN and knowe, whiche is the daie of the moneth, and lay thy rule vppon the same daie, and than woll the verie poinct of thy rule, verely sitten on the bordure, vpon the degree of the Sonne. Ensample as thus. The yere of our Lorde a thousande thre hundred, ninetie and one, the xii. daie of Marche at middaie, I would knowe the degree of the Soonne. I sought in the baeke halfe of myne astrolabie and founde the cercle of the daies, the whiche I knewe by the names of the monethes, written vnder the same circle: tho laied I my rule ouer the foresaied daie, and founde the poincte of my rule in the border, vppon the first degree of Aries, a litle within the degree: and thus knewe I this conclusion,

An other daie I would knowe the degree of my Soonne, and this was at middaie in the xiii. daie of December. I founde the daie of the moneth in maner as I saied: tho laied I my rule vpon the foresaied xiii. daie, and founde the poincte of my rule, vpon the first degree of Capricorne, a little within the degree, and than had I of this conclusion the verie experience.

To knowe the altitude of the Sonne either of celestiall bodies.

PUT the ryng of thyne astrolabie, vppon thy right thombe, and tourne thy lifte side again the light of the Sonne, and remeue thy rule vp and doune, till the streame of the Sonne, shine through bothe holes of the rule: looke than how many degrees, this rule is areised fro the little crosse vpon the east line, and take there the altitude of thy Sonne: and in this same wise maiest thou knowe by nighte, the altitude of the Moone, or of the bright sterres. This capiter is so generall euer in one, that there needeth no more declaracion, but forget it not.

To knowe the degree of the Sonne, and of thy zodiake, by the daies in the backside of thine astrolabie.

THAN if thou wilte wete the reckenyng to knowe, whiche is the daie in thy kalender of the moneth, that thou art in, laie thyne astrolabie, that is to saie, the allidatha, vpon the daie in the kalender of thyne astrolabie, and he shall shewe thee thy degree of the Sonne.

To knowe euery tyme of the daie, by light of the Sonne, and euery tyme of the nighte, by the sterres fixe, and eke to knowe by night or by daie, the degree of the signe that ascendeth on theast orizont, which is cleped comenly ascendent.

TAKE the altitude of the Sonne, whan thee liste, as I haue said, and set the degre of the Sonne (in case that it bee before the middle of the daie) emong thin almicanteras, on the east side of thyne astrolabie: and if it be after the middle of the daie, sette the degree of the Sonne, vpon the weste side. Take this manner of settyng, for a generall rule ones for euer.

And whan thou haste isette the degree of the Sonne, vppon as many almicanters of height, as was the Sonne, taken by thy rule, laie ouer thy labell, vppon the degree of the Sonne, and than woll the poincte of the labell, sitten in the bordure, vpon the very tide of the daie. Ensample of this.

The yere of our Lorde a thousande, three hundred, ninetie and one, the twelue daie of Marche, I would knowe the tide of the daie. I tooke the altitude, of my Sonne, and found that it was xxv. degrees, and xxx. minutes of height of the bordure in the backeside, tho tourned I myne astrolabie, and bicause it was before middaie, I tourned my reete, and set the degree of the Soonne, that is to saie, the firste degree of Aries, in the right side in myne astrolabie, vppon the xxv. degree, and xxx. minutes of height, emong my almicanteras: tho laied I my label, vpon the degree of my Sonne, and found the poinct of my labell in the bordure, on the capital letter, that is cleaped an X. Tho reckened I all the capital letters, fro the line of midnight, vnto the foresaied letter X. and founde it was nine of the clocke of the daie. Tho looked I ouer my east orizont, and found there the twelue degree of Geminius ascendyng, whiche that I tooke for myne ascendente, and in this wise had I the experience for euermore, in whiche maner I should knowe the tide of the daie, and eke myne ascendente. Tho would I wete that same night followyng, the houre of the nighte, and wrought in this wise: emong an heape of sterres, it liked me to take the altitude, of the faire white sterre, that is cleaped the Alhabor, and founde her sittyng on the weste sidē of the line of middaie, eighten degrees of heighte, taken by my rule on the backside. Tho sette I the centure of this Alhabor, vpon eightone degrees, emong my almicanteras, vpon the weste side, bicause that he was founde vpon the weste side: tho laied I my labell ouer the degree of the Soonne, that was discended vnder the weste orizont, and reckened all the letters capitalles, fro the line of middaie, vnto the poinete of my label in the bordure, and founde that it was afternoone, passed seuen of the clocke, the space of a leuen degrees. Tho looked I doune vppon my easte orizont, and founde there twentie degrees

of Libra ascendyng, whom I tooke for myne ascendente, and thus learned ones for euer, to knowe in whiche maner, I should come to the houre of the nighte, and too myne ascendent, as verelie as maie be taken, by so small an instrumente. But nathelesse, this rule in generall will I warne thee foreuer: ne make thou neuer none ascendente at noone of the daie. Take a iuste ascendent of thyne astrolabie, and haue set iustlie a cloke, whan any celestiall bodie, by the whiche thou wenest gouerne thilke thynges, been nie the southe line, for trust well, whan the Sonne is nere the meridional line, the degree of the Sonne remaineth, so long concentrike vpon thyne almicanteras, that sothelie thou shalt erre fro the iuste ascendente. The same conclusion saie I, by my centure of my sterre fixe by the night, and moreouer by experience, I wote wel that fro our orizont, fro enleuen of the clocke, vnto one, in takyng of the iuste ascendente, in a portatife astrolabie, it is to harde to knowe, I meane from enleuen of the clocke before noone, till one of the clocke next followyng: and for the more declaracion, loe here thy figure nexte after this rule that foloweth.

To knowe the degree of the Sonne in thy zodiake, by the daies, in the backside of thine astrolabie.

THAN thou wolte weten, to recken and knowe, whiche is the daie of the moneth, that thou art in, and lay the rule of thy astrolaby, that is to saie, the alidatha vpon the daie, in the kalender of thine astrolabie, and he shall shewe thee thy degree of Sonne.

Speciall declaracion of the ascendente.

THE ascendente sothlie, is as well in all natiuities, as in questions, and as in eleccions of tymes is a thyng, whiche that these astrologiens greatlie obseruen, wherefore me semeth conuenient, sens I speake of the ascendent, to make of it a speciall declaracion. The ascendent sothlie, to take it at the largeste, is thilke degree that ascendeth, at any of these foresaied tymes, on the easte orizon: and therefore, if that any planet ascende at thilk same time, in the foresaid same gree of his longitude, men saie that thilke planet is in horoscopo, but sothelie the hous of that ascendent, that is to saie, the firste hous of the east angle, is a thynge more broade and large, for after the statutes of astrologiens, what celestiall body, that is v degrees aboue thilke degree, that ascendeth on the orizont, or within that nomber, that is to saine, nere the degree that ascendeth, yet recken thei thilk planete in the ascendent, and what planet that is vnder thilke degree, that ascendeth the space of xv degrees, yet saine thei that planette is like to hym, that is the houre of the ascendent. But sothelie, if he passe the boundes of the foresaied spaces, aboue or beneath, thei saine that thilke planette is fallyng fro the ascendent: yet sain these astrologiens, that the ascendent, and eke the lorde of the ascendent, maie be shapen for to bee fortunate, or infortunate: as thus. A fortunate ascendent cleapen thei, whan that no wicked planette of Saturne or Mars, or els the taile of the dragon, is in the hous of the ascendente, ne that no wicked planette, haue no aspecte of enemitie vppon the ascendente: but thei woll caste, that thei haue fortunate planet in hir ascendente, and yet in his felicitie, and than saie thei that it is well. Furthermore, thei saine that fortune of an ascendente, is the contrary of these foresaid thinges. The lorde of the ascendente saine thei, that he is fortunate, whan he is in good place for the ascendent, and eke the lorde of the ascentent, is in an angle, or in a succedent, where he is in his dignitie, and counforted with frendly aspectes receiued, and eke that he maie seen the ascendent not retrograde ne combust, ne ioined with no shrewe in the same signe, ne that he bee not in his discencion, ne reigned with no planette in his discencions, ne haue vppon hym none aspecte infortunate, and than thei saine that he is well.

Nathelesse, these been obseruaunces of iudiciall matter, and rites of Painims, in whiche my spirite hath no faithe, ne knowyng of hir horoscopun, for thei saine, that euery signe is departed in thre euen partes by 10 degrees and the ilke porcion thei cleapen a face. And although a planette haue a latitude fro the ecliptike, yet sain some folke, so that the planette arise in that same signe, with any degree of the foresaied face, in whiche his longitude is reckened. And yet is the planette in horoscopo, be in natiuities or in eleccion.

To knowe the verie equacion of the degrees of the Sonne, if it so be that it fall betwixt ii almicanteras.

FOR asmoche as the almicanteras of thyne astrolabie, been compouned by two and two, where as some almicanteras in sondrie astrolabies, be compouned by one, or els by twoo, it is necessarie to thy learnyng, to teache thee firste to knowe, and wriche with thyne instrumente: wherfore, whan that the degree of the Sonne, falleth betweene twoo almicanteras or elles if thyne almicanteras, been grauen with ouer greate a poincte of a compace, for bothe these thynges maie cause erroure, as well in knowyng of the tide of the daie, as of the verie ascendente. Thou muste werken in this wise: set the degree of the Sonne, vpon the higher almicanteras as of bothe. And waite well, where the almurie toucheth the bordure, and set there a pricke of ynke, set adoune againe the degree of the Sonne, vpon the neather almicanteras of bothe, and sette there an other pricke: remeue than thy almurie in the bordure, euen amides bothe prickes and this woll leaden iustlie the degre of the Sonne, to sit betwene bothe the almicanteras in his right place. Laie than the label on the degree of the Sonne, and finde in the bordure the very tyde of the day or of the night. And also verely shalt thou fynde vpon thy east orizonte thin ascendent.

To knowe the sprynge of the dawnyng and the ende of the evening, the whiche ben clepeth the two coepusculis.

SETTE the nadire of thy Sonne vpon eighteen degrees of height amonge thyn almycanteras on the west syde, and lay thy labell on the degree of the Sonne, and than shall the pointe of the label shewe the springe of the daye: also sette the nadire of the sonne vpon the 18 degrees of height among thin almicanteras on the eest side, and lay ouer thy label vpon the degre of the Sonne, and wyth the poynte of thy labell fynde in the bordure the ende of thin eueninge, that is very night. The

nadyre of the Sonne is thylke degre that is oppo-syte to the degre of the Sonne in the 320 signe, as thus. Euery degree of Aries by order, is nadire to euery degree of Libra by order, and Taurus to Scorpion, Gemini to Sagitarius, Cancer to Capry-corne, Leo to Aquary, Uirgo to Pices. And yf any degree in thy zodiake be derke, hys nadire shall declare him.

To knowe the arche of the day, that some folke callen the day artificial, fro the Sonne rising tyl it go downe.

Sette the degre of the Sonne vpon thin east orizonte, and lay thy label on the degree of the sonne, and at the poynte of thy label in the bordure sette a pricke: turne than thy reete aboute, tyll the degree of the Sonne syt vpon the weste orizonte, and laye the labell vpon the same degre of the Sonne, and at the poynte of the labell sette another pricke. Reken than the quantite of time in the bordure betwixe both prickes, and take there thine arche of the daye: the remnaunt of the bordure vnder the orizonte, is the arche of the night. Thus maist thou reken bothe arches of euery porcion where that thou likeste, and by this maner of werking maiste thou se how longe that any sterre fiyxe dwelleth aboue the erthe, fro the time that he riseth tyll he go to reste. But the daye naturell, that is to sayne, 24 houres, is the reuolucion of the equinoctiall, with as moche partye of the zodiake, as the sonne of his proper mouinge passethe in the meane while.

To turne the houres inequalles, and the houres equalles.

To knowe the nombre of the degrees in the houres inequalles, and departe hem by 15, and take there thyne houres equalles.

To knowe the quantite of the day vulgare that is to say, fro springe of the day vnto the very night.

Knowe thy quantyte of thyne coepusculis, as I haue it taught in the chapiter before, and adde hem to the arche of the day artificial, and take there thy space of al the hole day vulgare vnto the very nyght. In the same maner mayste thou werke to knowe the vulgare nyght.

To knowe the houres inequales by daye.

Vnderstande well that these houres inequales been cleped houres of the planettes: and vnderstonde wel that sometyme ben the longer by daye than they be by night, and somtyme contrarie. But vnderstand thou well, that euermore generally the houres inequale of the daye, wyth the houres inequale of the night, conteineth 30 degrees of the bordure, the whiche bordure is euermore answeringe to the degrees of the equinoctiall, wherfore depart the arche of the daye artificiall in 12, and take there the quantite of the houre inequale by day, and if thou abate the quantite of the houre inequale by daye out of 360 degrees, than shall the remnaunt that leaueth performe the hour inequale by night.

To knowe the quantite of houres equales.

The quantytes of houres equales, that is to saine the houres of the clocke, ben departed by 15 degrees alredy in the bordure of thy astrolabie, as wel by night as by daye, generally for euermore. What nedeth any more declaracion: wherfore whan thee lyste to knowe how many houres of the clocke ben passed, or any parte of any of these houres ben to comen, fro soch a time to soche a time, by day or by nygth, knowe the degree of thy Sonne, and laye thy labell on it: than turne thy rete aboute ioyntly with thy label and with the point of it recken in the border fro the Sonne arisynge, into the same place there thou desirest by day as by night. This conclusien woll I declare in the fourthe partye of the laste chapiter of this tretyse, so openly that there shal lacke no worde that nedeth declaracion.

Speciall declaracion of the houres of the planettes.

Vnderstand wel that euermore fro the arising of the Sonne tyl it go to reste, the nadyre of the Sonne shall shewe the houre of the planet, and fro that time for warde al the night tyll the Sonne arise, than shall the very degre of the Sonne shewe the houre of the planet. Ensample as thus. The 13. day of Marche fel vpon a Saturday paraunenture, and at the arising of the Sonne I founde the second degree of Aries sittinge vpon min east orizoute, al be it was but lytel. Than founde I the seconde degree of Libra nadire of my Sonne, discendynge on my weste orizonte, vpon whiche west orizont euery day generally at the Sonne arisyng, entrethe the houre of any planet, vnder the forsaid weste orizonte, after the whiche planete the day beareth his name, and endeth in the nexte strike of the planet vnder the forsaid weste orizonte: and euer as the Sonne clymbeth vpper and vpper, so gothe his nadire downer and downer, and echinge fro soch strikes the houres of planettes by order, as they sitten in Heuen. The fyrst hour inequale of euery Saturday is Saturne, and the seconde to Jupiter, the thirde to Mars the fourth to the Sonne, the fyfth to Uenus, the sixt to Mercurius, the seueuth to the Moue, and than ayen the eight to Saturne, the nineth to Jupiter, the thenthe to Mars, the eleuenth to the Sonne, the twelfth to Uenus. And nowe is my Sonne gon to rest as for that Saterday, than shewethe the very degre of the Sonne the houre of Mercury, entring vnder my weste orizont at euen. And nexte him succedeth the Moone, and so forthe by order planete after planet, in houre after houre al the night longe til the Sonne arise. Now riseth the Sonne the Sonday by the morowe, and the nadyre of the Sonne vpon the weste orizont, shewethe me the entrynge of the houre of the forsaid Sonne. And in this maner succedeth planete vnder planete fro Saturne vnto the Moone, and fro the Moone vp agayne to Saturne, houre after houre generally, and thus knowe I this conclusion.

To knowe with which degree of the zodyake any sterre fixe in thin astrolabie ariseth vpon the east oryzonte, although the orizonte be in an other signe.

Sette the centure of the sterre vpon the east orizonte, and loke what degree of anye signe that sitteth vpon the same orizonte at the same tyme: and vnderstande wel that with the same degree ariseth the same sterre. And this merualous arisinge with a stronge degree in another sygne, is by-

cause that the latitude of the sterre fyxe is either northe or southe fro the equinoctial. But sothly the latitudes of planettes ben comenly ireckened fro the ecliptike, bycause that none of hem declineth but few degrees out fro the brede of the zodiake. And take good kepe of this chapiter of arisinge of celestiall bodyes, for ther trusteth wel, that neither Moone neither sterre in our ambolife orizont, that ariseth with the same degre of his longitude, saue in one case, and that is whan they haue no longitude fro the eclyptieke lyne. But neuerthelesse somtime is euerych of these planettes vnder the same lyne.

To knowe the declinacion of any degree in the zodiake, fro the equinoctiall cercle.

SETTE the degree of anye sygne vpon the lyne meridional, and reken his altitude in the almicanteras, fro the east orizonte vp to the same degree sette in the forsaide lyne, and sette there a pricke: turne vp than thy reete and set the heed of Aries or Libra in the same meridional line, and set there another pricke. And whan that this is done, consider the altitudes of hem bothe: for sothly the differenee of thilke altitude is the declinacion of thilke degree fro the equinoctial. And yf it so be that thylke degree be northwarde fro the equinoctiall, than is his declinacion north, and if it be southward, than it is south.

To knowe for what latitude in any region the almicanteras in my tables ben compowned.

REKEN how many degrees of almicanteras in the meridionall line, be from the cercle equinoctial, vnto the signet or els from the pole artike vnto the north orizont, and for so great a latitude or so smale a latitude, is the table compouned.

To knowe the latitude of the Sonne, in the myddes of the day, that is cleped the altitude meridian.

SET the degree of thy Sonne vpon the lyne meridionall, and reken how many degrees of almicanteras ben bytwixe thin east orizonte, and the degree of thy Sonne, and take there thin altitude meridian, that is to sain, the highest degree of the Sonne, as for that daye. So mayst thou knowe in the same line the highest lyne that any starre fyxe clymbeth by nyght, this is to saine, that whan any starre fyre is passed the lyne meridional, than beginneth it to discende, and so doth the Sonne.

To knowe the degree of the Sonne, by the reet for a maner coryosyte.

SEEK busely with thy rule the highest of the Sonne in myddes of the daye, tourne than thyn astrolabye, and with a pricke of ynke marke the nombre of the same altitude, in the lyne meridional. Tourne than thy reet aboute tyl thou finde a degree of thy zodiake, accordyng with the pricke, this is to sain, sitting on the pricke, and in sothe thou shalt finde but two degrees in al the zodiake of that condicion. And yet thilke two degrees ben in diuers sygnes. Than mayst thou lightly by the season of the yere, knowe the signe in which is the Sonne.

To knowe whiche day is like to other in length throughout the yere.

COKE whiche degrees ben lyke from the heedes of Cancer and Capricorne, and loke whan the Sonne is in any of thilke degrees, than been the dayes yke of *length*, that is to sain, that as longe is that day in that moneth, as was soche a daye in soche a moneth, there varieth but lytell. Also if thou take two dayes naturelles in the yere, ylike farre from eyther points of the equinoctial, in the opposite parties, than as long is the daye artificial on that one day as on that other, and eke the contrarie.

This chapiter is a maner declaracion to conclusions that foloweth.

UNDERSTANDE well, that thy zodiake is departed into halfe cercles, fromе the heed of Capricorne vnto the heed of Cancer, and ayenwarde from the head of Cancer vnto the head of Capricorne. The head of Capricorn is the lowest point, whereas the Sonne goth in winter, and the head of Cancer is the highest point, in which the Sonne goth in sommer. And therefore vnderstande wel, than any two degrees that ben ylyke far from any of these two heades, trust wel that thilke two degrees ben lyke declinacion, be it southward or northwarde, and the dayes of hem ben lyke of length, and the nyghtes also, and shadowes ylyke and the altitudes ylyke at mydday for euer.

To knowe the very degree of any maner starre straunge after his latitude, though he be indetermitate in thyn astrolaby, sothly to the trouth thus he shal be knowen.

TAKE the altitude of thy starre, whan he is on the east side of the lyne meridional, as nyght as thou mayste gesse, and take that ascendent anone right by some maner starre fyxe, which thou knowest and forget not the altitude of the first starre ne thin ascendent. And whan that this is done, aspie dyligently whan this same first starre passeth any thing to the south westward, and catche him anone right in the same nombre of the altitude on the west syde of this lyne meridional, as he was caught on the east syde, and take a newe ascendent anone right by some maner fyxe, the whiche that thou knowest, and forgete not this secoude ascendent. And whan this is done, reken than howe many degrees been betwixt the first ascendent, and the seconde ascendent, and reken wel the middel degree bytwyxt bothe ascendentes, and set thilke myddel degree vpon thin easte orizonte, and than loke what degre sit vpon the line meridional, and take there the very degree of the ecliptike, in whiche the starre standeth for the tyme. For in the ecliptyke is the longitude of a celestial body, rekened euen fro the halfe of the head of Aries, vnto the ende of Pisces, and his latitude is rekened after the quantite of hys declynacion northe or south, towarde the poles of thys werke. As thus, if it be of the sonne or any fix Starre, reken his latitude or his declinacion fro the equinoctial cercle, and if it be of a planete, reken than the quantite of his latitude from the ecliptike line, al be it so that from the equinoctial, may the declinacion or the latitude of any body celestiall be rekened, after the

sight northe or southe, and after the quantite of his declinacion. And yet so may the latitude or the declinacion of anye body celestiall, saue onelye of the Sonne, after his sight northe or southe. And after the quantite of his declinacion be rekened from the ecliptike line, fro whiche lyne all planettes somtime decline, north or southe, saue onely the forsaide Sonne.

To know the degrees of longitudes of fyxe sterres, after that they ben determinate in thin astrolabye, if it so be that they ben trewly set.

Sette the center of the sterre vpon the lyne meridional, and take kepe of thy zodiake, and loke what degree of anye signe sitte vpon the same lyne meridional at the same tyme, and there the degre in whiche the sterre standeth, and with the same degree cometh the same sterre vnto the same line from the orizonte.

To know in special the latitude of our centre, I meane after the altitude of Oxenforde, and the hight of our pole.

Vnderstande wel that as farre is the heed of Aries or Libra in the equinoctial, from our orizonte, as is the synet from the pole artike, and as hie is the pole artike from the orizonte, as the equinoctial is ferre from the synet, I preue it thus by the latitude of Oxenforde, vnderstande wel that the height of our pole artike from our north orizont is 51 degrees, and 50 minutes, than is the sinet from the pole artike, 38 degrees and 10 minutes, than is the equinoctial from our sinet, 51 degrees, and 50 minutes, than is our southe orizonte from our equinoctial 38 degrees, and 10 minutes. Understande well this rekening also, forget not that the sinet is 90 degrees of height from the orizont, and our equinoctial is 90 degrees from our pole artike. Also this shorte rul is soth that the latitude of any planet in a region, is the distaunce from the sinet vnto the equinoctial.

To proue the latitude of any place in a region by the preffe of the height of the pole artike in that same place.

In some wintets nyght, whan the fyrmamente is clere and thicke sterred, waite a time tyll that euery ster fix sit line right perpendiculer ouer the pole artike, and clepe that ster A. and wayte another ster that sit lyne right vnder A. and vnder the pole, and clepe that sterre F. and vnderstand wel that F. is not considred but onely to declare that A. that syt euer on the pole. Take than anone right the altitude of A. from the orizonte and forget it not, let A. and F. go farwel tyl againste the dawning a great while, and come than again, and abide tyll that A. is euen vnder the pole vnder F. for sothely than wil F. sit ouer the pole, take than eftsones the altitute of A. from the orizonte, and note as wel the seconde altitude as the firste altitude. And whan that thys is done, reken howe many degrees that the first altitude, A. exceded his altitude, and take halfe the ilke porcion that is exceded, and adde it to his seconde altitude, and take there the elcuacion of the pole, and eke the altitude of thy region. For these two ben of one nombre, that is to sain, as many degrees as thy pole is eleuat, so moche is the latitude of thy region. Ensample as thus. Parauenture the altitude of A. in the eueninge is 92 degrees of height than wil the seconde altitude or the dawning be 21. that is to saine, lesse than 92, that was his first altitude at euen. Take than the halfe of 92. and adde to it 21, that was his seconde altytude, and than hast thou the height of the pole and the latitude of thy region. But vnderstande wel to preue this conclusion, and many another faire concluson, thou maiste haue a plomet hanginge on a lyne hygher than thy head on a perche and that lyne mote hange euen perpendiculer bytwixe the pol and thine eye, and than shalte thou se yf A. syt euen ouer the pole and ouer F. at euen. And also if F. syt euen ouer the pole and ouer A. or daye.

Another conclusion to preue the hyght of the pole artike from the orizont.

Take any sterre fyxe that euer descendeth vnder the orizont in thilk region, and consyde his hyghest altitude and his lowest altitude from the orizont, and make a nomber of these altitudes, take than and abate halfe that nombre, and take there the elenacion of the pole artike in that same region, and for the more declaracion, &c.

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Another conclusion to preve the latitude of a region that ye ben in.

Understande well that the latytude of anye place in a rigyon, is verely the space betwyxe the sygne of hem that dwelien there, and the equinoctial cercle, north or southe, takinge the measure in the merydyonal line, as sheweth in the almicanteras of thin astrolaby, and thilke space is as moch as the pole artike is hie in the same place from the orizont. And than is the depressyon of the pole artentike beneth the orizonte, the same quantite of space, neither more ne lesse, than if thou desire to knowe this latitude of the region, take the altitude of the Sonne in the myddle of the daye, whan the Sonne is the heed of Aries or of Libra, for than mouethe the Sonne in the lyne equinoctial, and abate the nombre of that saine Sonnes altitude out of 90 dogrees, and than is the remnaunt of the nombre that leueth, the altitude of the region, as thus. I suppose that the Sonne is thilke daye at noone, 38 degrees of heyght, abate than 38 degrees out of 90, so leueth ther 52, than is 52 degrees the latitude, I saye not this but for ensample, for wel I wote the latitude of Oxenforde is certain minutes lesse. Nowe if it so be that thee thinketh to longe a tariyng to abyde til that the Sonne be in the head of Aries or of Libra, than waite whan that the Sonne is in anye other degre of the zodiake, and consider the degre of this declynacion be northward from the equinoctial, abate than from the Sonnes altytude at noon the nombre of his declinacion, and than hast thou the highest of the heedes of Aries and Libra, as thus. My Sonne parauenture is in the 10 degre of Leo almoste 56 of height at noone, and his declinacion is almost 18 degrees northward from the equinoctial, abate than thilke, 18 degrees of declinacion out of the altitude at noone, than leueth 38 degrees, lo there the heed of Aries or Libra, and thin equinoctial in that region. Also if it so be that the Sonnes de-

clinacion be southwarde from the equinoctial, adde than thilke declinacion to the altitude of the Sonne at noon, and take there the heedes of Aries and Libra and thyn equinoctiall, abate than the height of the equinoctial out of 90 degrees, and than leueth there 38 degrees, that is the distaunce of the region from the equinoctial of any sterre fixe that thou knowest, and take the neither elongation lengthing from the same equinoctial lyne, and werke after the maner aforesaid.

Declaracion of the ascencion of signes as well in the circle directe, as in oblique.

The excellence of the sphere solide amonges other noble conclusions, sheweth manifest the diuers ascencions of signes in diuers places, as wel in right cercles as in embolyfe cercle. These auctours writen that thilke signe is cleped of right ascencion with which the more part of the cercle equinoctial and the lesse parte of the zodiake ascendeth, and thilke signe ascendeth embolyfe, with which the lesse of the zodiake equinoctial, and the more parte of the zodiake ascendethe, and euermo the arche of the daye and the arche of the night is there ylike longe, and the Soone twise euery yere passing through the signet of hir heed and two sommers and two winters in a yere haue these forsaide people, and the almycanteras in hir astrolabie ben streight as a line, so hathe shewed in this fygure. The vtilities to knowe the ascencions of sygnes in the right circle is this. Trust wel that be mediacyons of thilke ascencions, these astrologiens by hir table and hir instrumentes, knowen verely the ascencion of euery degre and minute in al the zodiake, in the embolife cercle, as shal be shewed. And note that this forsayd right orizonte that is cleped orizont rectum, deuideth the equinoctiall in to right angles, and embolife orizonte, where as the people is enhaunced vpon the orizonte, ouercomethe the equinoctial embolyfe angels.

This is the conclusion to know the ascencions of sygnes in the right cercle, that is circulus directus.

Sette the heed of what signe the lyst to knowe the ascending on the right cercle, vpon the lyne meridionall, and wayte were thin almurie touchethe the bordure, and set there a pricke, tourne than thy rete westwarde til the ende of the forsaid signe, sette vpon the meridional lyne, and eftsones waite where thine almurie thoucheth the bordure, and set there another pricke. Reken than the nombres of degrees in the bordure betwixe both prickes, and take than the ascencion of the signe in the right cercle, and thus maist thou werke with euery porcion of the zodiake.

To knowe the ascencyons of signes in the embolyfe cercle in euery region, I mene in circulo obliquo.

Sette the heed of the sygnes, which as the liste to knowe his ascencion vpon the eest orizonte, and wayte where thine almury toucheth the bordure, and sette there a pricke, tourne than thy rete vpwarde til the ende of the same sygne, set vpon the eest orizonte and waite eft sones where as thine almurie toucheth the bordure, and set there another prycke, reken than the nombre of the degrees in the bordure bytwixe bothe prickes, and take there the ascencion of the signe in the embolyfe cercle. And vnderstand wel that al the signes in the zodiake, from the heed of Aries vnto the ende of Virgo, ben cleped signes of the northe from the equinoctial, and these signes arisen betwixe the very eest and the verye northe in our orizont generally for euer: and all the signes from the heed of Libra, vnto the ende of Pisces, ben cleped signes of the southe fro the equinoctial, and these signes arisen euermore bytwixe the very eest and the very southe in our orizonte, also euery signe betwix the heed of Capricorne vnto the ende of Gemini, ariseth in our orizonte in lesse than two houres equalles, and these same signes from the heed of Capricorne vnto the ende of Geminy, ben called tortuous signes or croked signes, for they risen embolife in our orizonte, and these croked signes ben obedient to the signes that ben of the right ascencion. These signes of right ascencion, ben fro the heed of Cancer vnto the heed of Sagitary, and these signes arisen more vpright than dothe the other, and therfore they ben called soueraine signes, and euerye of hem ariseth in more space than in two houres, of whiche sygnes Gemini obeyeth to Cancer, and Taurus to Leo, and Aries to Virgo, Pisces to Libra, Aquarius to Scorpio, and Capricorne, to Sagitarie, and thus euermore two signes that ben like ferre from the heed of Capricorne, obeyeth eueriche of hem to other.

To knowe iustly the foure quarters of the worlde, as eest, west, south and north.

Take the altitude of thy Sonne whan thou liste, and note well the quarter of the worlde in wich the Sonne is from the tyme by the asymutes, tourne than thin astrolaby, and set the degree of the Sonne in the almicanteras of his altytude, on thilke syde that the Sonne standeth, as is in maner of taking of houres, and ley thy label on the degree of the Sonne, and reken howe many degrees of the Sonne, ben bytwene the lyne meridionall and the point of thy label, and note wel the nombres. Tourne than agayne thyne astrolabye, and set the point of thy great rule there thou takest thin altitudes, vpon as many degrees in hys bordure from his meridional, as was the pointe of thy label from the lyne meridional on the wombe syde. Take than thyne astrolabye with both handes sadly and slyly, and let the Sonne shine through bothe holes of thy rule, and slyly in thilke shynyng laye thyne astrolabye couche a doun euen vpon a playne grounde, and than wyl the meridionall lyne of thin astrolabye be euen sonth, and the eest lyne wil lye euen est, and the west lyne west, and the northe lyne northe, so that thou werke softely and auisely in the couchynge, and thou haste thus the foure quaters of the firmament, &c.

To knowe the altitude of planettes from the way of the Sonne, whether they ben northe or southe fro the way aforesayde.

Loke whan a planette is on the line meridional, yf that her altitude be of the same heighte, that is the degree of the Sonne for that daye, and than is the planette in the very way of the Sonne, and hath no latitude. And yf the altitude of the planette be hyer than the degree of the Sonne, than is the planette northe from the waye of the sygne

southe, a quantite of latitude as shewethe by thine almycanteras and yf the altitude be lesse than the degree of the Sonne, than is the planette south from the waye of the Sonne, soche a quantite of latitude as sheweth by thine almicanteras. This is to saine fron the waye of the Sonne in euerye place of the zodiake, for on the morowe the Sonne wyll be in another degre.

For to knowe the signet for the arising of the Sonne, this is to saine, the party of the orizonte in whiche the Sonne ariseth.

Thou muste first consider that the Sonne ariseth not in the verie easte signet, sometyme by north easte, and sometyme by southe easte, sothely the Sonne ariseth euermore in the verie easte in our orizonte, but if he bee in the hedde of Aries or Libra. Now is thine orizonte departed into 24 parties, of thy minutes in significacion, of 24 partes of the worlde, though it bee so, that shipmen reken all that parties in 32. Than is there no more, but waite in the whiche minute, that the Sonne entreth at his arising, and take there the signet of the rising of the Sonne.

The maner of deuision of thine astrolabie, is thus enioined, as in this case.

First, it is deuided in fower places principallie, with the line that cometh fro the east, to the weste, and than with an other line, that goeth fro the south to the north, than is it diuided in smal parties of minutes, as east and east by southe, where that is the firste minute aboue the east line, and so forthe fro partie to partie, till that thou come again to the easte line. Thus thou might vnderstand the signet of euery sterre, in which partie he ariseth.

To knowe in whiche partie of the firmament, is the coniunccion.

Consider the tyme of the coniunccion, by the kalender, as thus: howe many houres that the coniunccion is fro middaie of the daie before, as sheweth the canon of the kalender. Reken than that nomber in the bordure of thine astrolabie, as thou were wont to doe in knowyng of the houres of the daie, or of the night, and lay thy labell ouer the degree of the Sonne, than will the poinct of the labell, sit vpon the houre of the coniunccion. Loke than in whiche minute, the degree of the Sonne sitteth, and in that partie of the firmamente is the coniunccion.

To knowe the signet of the altitude of the Sonne.

This is no more to saie, but any time of the daie, take the altitude of the Sunne and by the minutes in whiche he aseendeth, thou might see in whiche partie of the firmamente he is, and in the same wise might thou see by night any sterre, wheder he sit easte, weste, or southe, or any part bitwixe, after the name of the minutes, in whiche the sterres standeth.

To knowe sothlie the longitude of the Moone, or any planette that hath no latitude, fro the tyme of the ecliptike line.

Take the altitude of the Moone and reken thyne altitude vp, emong thyne almicanteras, on whiche side that the Moone standeth, and set there a pricke. Take than anone right vppon the Moones side, the altitude of euery sterre fixe that thou knowest, and set his cercle vpon his altitude, emong thyne almicanteras, there the sterre is founden, waite than of whiche degree the zodiake is, to whiche the pricke of the altitude of the Moone, and there take the degree in whiche the Moone standeth. This conclusion is verie sothe, of the starres in thine astrolabie, and standeth after the trouth. Some treatise of the astrolabie, maketh non excepcion, whether the Moone haue latitude or none, nor whether side of the Moone, the altitude of the sterre be founde. And note if the Moone shewe her self by daie, than thou maieste woorche the same conclusion by the Sonne, as well as by the sterre fixe.

This is the werching of the conclusions to knowe whether any planette bee directe, or retrograde.

Take the altitude of any sterre, that is cleped a planette, and note it well, anone righte take the altitude of some sterre fixe, that thou knoweste, and note it well also, and come againe the thirde or the foweth night next folowyng, for than thou shalt perceiue well the meuyng of the planet whether he meue forward, or backward, and waite well than whan the sterre fixe, is in this same altitude that she was, whan thou tooke her firste altitude, of the foresaied planet, and note it well, for truste well, if so bee that the planet be in the right side of the meridionall line, so that his seconde altitude be lesse than the firste altitude was, than is the planet directe, and if he be in the west side in that condicion, than is he retrograde, and if so be that this planet be in the east side, whan his altitude is take, so that the seconde altitude, bee more than his firste altitude, than is he retrograde, and if he bee in the west side of the line meridionall, than is he direct, but the contrary mouing of these parties, is the cours of the Moone, for sothlie the Moone moueth the contrary fro either planettes, in her ecliptike line, but in none other maner.

The conclusion of equacions of houses, after the astrolabie.

Set the beginning of the degree that ascendeth vpon the ende of the viii. houre inequall, than will the line of the second house, sit vpon the line of midnight, remeue than the degree that ascendeth, and set hym vpon the ende of the x. houre inequall, than will the beginnyng of the iii. house, sitte vpon the midnight line, bring vp again the same degree that ascendeth firste, and set hym vpon the easte orizonte, and than will the beginning of the iiii. hous sit vppon the midnight line. Take than the nadere of the degree, that ascendeth firste, and set hym vpon the ende of the ii. houre inequall, and than will the beginnyng of the v. house, sit vpon the midnight line. Take than the nadere of the ascendent, and set him vpon the ende of the iiii. houre inequall, and than will the beginnyng of the vi. house set vpou the midnight line. The beginnyng of the seuenth house, is nadere of the ascendente, and the beginnyng of the viii. house, is nadere of the seconde, and the beginnyng of the nineth house, is nadere of the thirde, and the beginnyng of the tenth house, is nadere of

the iiii. and the beginnyng of the leueuth house, is nadere of the fiueth, and the beginning of the xii. house, is nadere of the vi. house.

An other maner of equacions of houses, by the astrolabie.

TAKE thyne ascendente, and than thou haste the fower angles, for well thou woteste, that thopposite is of thine ascendente, that is to saie, the beginnyng of the seuenth hous, sit vpon the west orizont, and the beginnyng of the tenthe house, vpon the line meridionall, and his opposite vpon the line of midnight, than laie thy labell vppon the degree that ascendeth, and reken than fro the poinct of thy labell, all the degrees in the bordure, till that thou come to the meridional line, and departe all thilke degrees into thre euen partes, and take there the euen porcions of three other houses, for to laie thy labell ouer euery of these three parties, and than thou might see by the labell in the zodiake, the beginning of these three houses fro the ascendent, that is to saie, the twelue next aboue the ascendente, and than the eleuenth house and the x. house, vpon the meridional line, as I first saied the same wise werche, fro the ascendent, doune to the line of midnight and thus thou haste three houses, that is to saie, the beginning of the seconde, the thirde, and the foweth house: than is the nadire of these three houses, the beginnyng of these iii houses that foloweth.

To finde the line meridionall, to dwell fixe in any certain place.

TAKE a rounde plate of metall, for warpyng the border the better, and make thereupon a juste compace, a little within the bordure, and laie this rounde plate vpon an euen grounde, or some euen stone, or on a euen stocke fixe in the ground, and laie it euen by a rule, in the centre of the compace, sticke an euen pinne or a wire vpright, the smaller the better, and set thy pinne or thy wire, by a plomme rules ende vpright euen, and let this pinne be no lenger than a quarter of thy diameter of the compace fro the pinne, and wait busilie aboute tenne or eleuen of the clocke, whan the Sonne sheweth, whan the shadow of the pinne entereth any thyng, within the cercle of the compace one heere brede, and make there a pricke with yuke: abide than still waityng on the Sonne, after one of the clocke, til that the shadowe of the pinne, or of the wire, passe any thyng out of the cercle or compace, bee it neuer so little, and sette there a pricke. Take than a compace and measure euen the middle, betwixt bothe prickes, and set there a pricke: take than a rule and drawe a strike, euen fro the pinne vnto the middle prick, and take there the line meridional for euermores as in the same place. And if thou draw a crosse ouerthwarte the compace, iustly ouer the line meridionall, than haste thou east and west, and perconsequens the oppositife, that is southe and north.

Discripcion of the meridionall line, and of the longitudes and latitudes, of citees and tounes, as well as of climates.

THIS line meridionall, is but a maner discripcion of a line ymagined, that passeth vpon the poles of the worlde, and by the signette of our hedde: and it is cleaped the signet, for in what place that any manne, is at any tyme of the yere, whan the Sonne by meuyng of the firmamente, cometh to his meridionall place, than is it the verie middaie, that wee cleape noone, and therefore it is cleaped the line of middaie. Than take heede that euermore of twoo citees, or of twoo tounes, of whiche the one approcheth nerer the east, than doeth the other toune, trust well that thilke twoo tounes haue diuers meridians. Take kepe also; that the arche of the equinocciall, that is conteined and bounded, betwene the twoo meridians, is cleaped the longitude of the toune. And if so be that twoo tounes haue meridian like, or one meridian, than is the distaunce of hym bothe like farre: and in this maner thei chaunge not hir meridian, but sothelie thei chaunge hir almicanteras, for the haunsyng of the pole, and the distaunce of the Sonne. The longitude of a climate maie be cleaped the space of the yearth, fro the beginnyng of the firste climate, vnto the laste ende of the same climate, euen directe against the pole artike, thus saie some auctheurs. And some clerkes saie, that if men cleape the latitude of a center, the arche meridian, that is conteined or intercepte, betwixe the signet and the equinocciall, than thei saie, that the distaunce fro the equinocciall, vnto the ende of the climate, euen ayenst the pole artike, is the longitude of the climate for southe.

To knowe with what degree of the zodiake, that any planet ascendeth on the orizonte, where his latitude be north, or south.

KNOWE by thyne alminacke, the degree of the ecliptike of any signe, in which that the planette is rekened for to bee, and that is cleped the degree of his longitude. And know also the degree of his latitude, fro the cliptike, north or south, and by these ensamples folowing in especialle, thou maieste wirche with euery signe of the zodiake. The longitude perauenture of Uenus, or of an other planet was of Capricorne, and the latitude of hem northward degrees, fro the ecliptike line, than tooke I subtil compas, and cleped the one poinct of my compace A, and that other F. than tooke I the poinct of A, and set it in the ecliptike line, and my zodiake in the degree of the longitute of heddes, that is to saie, in the ende of Capricorne, and than set I the poinct of F, upwarde in the same signe, bicause that the altitude was north, vpon the latitude of Uenus, that is to saie, in the degre fro the hed of Capricorn, and thus haue I the degrees betwixe my twoo prickes, than laied I doune softlie my compace, and set the degree of the longitude vpon the orizont, than toke I and waxed my label, in maner of a paire of tables, to receiue distinctly the pricke of my compace, than toke I this forsaid labell, and laied it fixe ouer the degree of my longitude, than toke I vp my compace, and the poinct of A, in the waxe of my labell, as I coud gesse, ouer the cliptike line, in the ende of the longitude I set the poinct ouer endlong on the labell, vpon the space of the latitude inwarde, and on the zodiake, that is to say, northward fro the ecliptike: than laied I doun my compace, and loked well in the waie vpon thecliptike of A, and F, than tourned I my reete, till that the pricke of F, sate vpon the orizont, than sawe I well, that the bodie of Uenus in her latitude of degrees septemtrionals, ascendeth

in the ende of degree, fro the hed of Capricorne. And note that in this maner, thou mightest werch with any latitude septentrionall in al signes: but sothly the latitude meridionall, of a planet in Capricorne maie not be take, bicause of the little space betwixe the ecliptike, and the bordure of the astrolabie, and sikerly in al other signes it maie bee take. Also the degree peraventure of Iupiter, or of any other planette, was in the first degree of Pisces in longitude and his latitude was degrees meridionall. Than toke I the poinct of A. and set it in the first degree of Pisces on thecliptike, than set I the poinct douward of F. in the same signe, bicause that the latitude was south degrees that is to saie, fro the hed of Pisces, and thus haue I degrees bitwixe both prickes. Than set I the degree of the longitude, vpon the orizont, than toke I my labell, and laied him fixe vpon the degree of longitude, than sette I the poinct of A. on my labell euen ouer the ecliptike line, in the ende of the degree of the longitude, and I sette the poincte of F. endelong on my labell, the space of degrees of the latitude outward fro the zodiake, that is to saie, southwarde fro the ecliptike towarde the bordure, and than tourned I my reete, til the poincte of F. sate vpon the orizont, than sawe I well that the bodie of Iupiter, in his latitude of degrees meridionall, ascendeth with the degree of Pisces in horescopo. And in this maner thou maieste werche, with any latitude, as I saied first, saue in Capricorne. And thou wilte plie this crafte, with the arisyng of the Moone, looke thou reken well the course of houre by houre, for she dwelleth in a degree of her longitude but a little while, as thou woste well: but neuerthelesse, if thou legen well her verie meuyng by the tables, or after her course houre by houre, thou shalte doe well inough.

Umbra recta.

If thou wilt wirche with umbra recta, if thou might come to the base of the toure, in this maner shalt thou wirche: take the altitude of the toure with bothe holes, so that the rule lie euen on a poincte. Ensample, as thus. I see him through the poincte of fower, than mete I the space, betwixe me and the toure, and I find it twentie fote, than behold I how fower is to twelue, and I find it is the third part of twelue: Right so the space betwixe thee and the toure, is the thirde parte of the altitude of the toure: than thrise twentie foote, is the highest of the toure, with thaddicion of thine owne bodie fro thyne iye. If the rule fall on fiue, than is fiue tymes twelue, the highest of the toure.

Umbra versa.

If thou maieste not come to the base of the toure, and thou fixe hym through the nomber of one, set there a pricke at thy foote, than go nere the toure, and see hym through at the poincte of two, and set there an other pricke, and than beholde howe one hath hym to twelue, and thou shalte finde that he hath hym twelue sithes, than behold how two haue hym to xii. and thou shalte finde it sixe sithes, and therefore the space betwixe two prickes, is sixe times thyne altitude. And note that at the first altitude of one, thou settest a prick, and afterward whan thou seest hym through at two, there thou settest a pricke, than thou findeste betwene ix. foote, than thou shalte finde that tenne is the sixte parte of ix. than is a foote the altitude of the toure, but if it fall vpon an other poincte, as thus. It falleth on sixe at the seconde takyng it, whan it falleth on fower, than shalt thou find that sixe is the second parte of twelue, and fower is the third parte of twelue, by the thirde parte, that is to say, the space betwixte two prickes, twise the height of the toure, and if the difference wer three, than would it be thre times the height. Et sic de singulis. An other maner werchyng by umbra recta: If thou maiest not come by the bace of the toure, wirche in this wise: sette thy rule vpon one, till thou see the altitude, and set at thy foote a prieke, and than set thy rule vpon two, and so dooe in the same maner: than looke what is the difference betwixe one and two, and thou shalte fine that it is one. Than measure the space betwixe the two prickes, and that is the twelue parte of the altitude of the toure, and so of all other.

Umbra recta.

If thy rule fall vppon the eighte poinct, on the right shadowe, than make the figure of eight, than loke howe moche space of the feete is betwixe thee and the toure, and multiplie that by twelue, and whan thou haste multiplied it by the same nomber, than deuide it by the nomber of eight, and kepe the residue, and adde thereto thy height vnto thyne iye, to the residue, and that shall be the verie heighte of the toure. And thus maieste thou woorche, on the same side from one to twelue, &c.

Umbra recta.

An other maner of woorkyng vpon the same side. Looke vpon what poincte thy rule falleth, whan thou seest the toppe of the toure, through the twoo holes, and than mete the space from thy foote, to the base of the toure, and right as the nomber of the poincte, hath hymself to twelue, right so the mesure, betwixt thee and the toure, hath hym self to the height of the same toure. Ensample as thus. I sette case thy rule fall vpon eight, than is eight twoo thirde partes of twelue, so is the space twoo thirde partes of the toure.

Umbra versa.

To knowe the height, by the poincte of umbra versa. If the rule fall vpon iii. whan thou seest the toppe of the toure sette a pricke there thy foote standeth, and go nere till thou maiest see the same toppe, at the poincte of iiii. and sette there an other prick: than mete howe many foote is betwixe the twoo prickes, and the height vp to thyne iye, and that shall be the height of the toure. And note, that iii. is the fowerth part of xii. and iiii. is the thirde part of xii. Now passeth iiii. the nomber of iii. by distaunce of i. therefore the same space with thy height to thy iye, is the height of the toure. And if it were so that there were twoo or three distaunces in the nombers, so should the measure betwixe the prickes, by twise or thrise the height of the toure.

Umbra recta.

To know the height, if thou maiest not come of the bace of the thing, set thy rule vpon what poinct thou wilte, so that thou maist se the toppe of the thing, through the twoo holes, and make a marke,

there as thy foote standeth, and go nere or ferther, till thou maieste see it through an other poinct and make there an other marke, and looke what difference is betwixe the twoo poinctes in the scale, and right as that difference hath hym to xii. right so the spaces betwixe the twoo markes hath hym to the height of the thing. Ensample. I set the case, that thou seest it through the poinct of iiii. and after at the poinct of iii. Now passeth the nomber of iiii. the nomber of iii. the distaunce of i. and right as this difference of one, hath hymself to xii. right so the measure betwixe bothe the markes, hath him to the height of the same thing puttyng therto the height of thy self to thine iye. And thus maiest thou werke from i. to xii.

Umbra versa.

FERTHERMORE, if thou wilte knowe in umbra versa, by the crafte of umbra recta, I suppose to take thine altitude at the poinct of iiii. and makest a marke, and than thou goest nere, till thou haste it at the poinete of iii. and makest there an other marke, than must thou deuide 144. by 4. the nomber that cometh thereof shall be 36. and after deuide 144. by 3. and the nomber that cometh thereof is 48. than loke what difference is betwixe 36. and 48. and that shalt thou finde 12. and right as 12. hath hym to 12. so the space betwixe the twoo prickes, hath him to the altitude of the thyng.

HERE ENDETH THE CONCLUSIONS OF THE ASTROLABIE.

THE PROLOGUE

OF THE TESTAMENT OF LOVE.

MANY men there ben, that with eeres openly sprad so moche swalowen the deliciousnesse of iestes and of ryme, by queynt knittinge coloures, that of the goodnesse or of the badnesse of the sentence, take they litel hede or els none.

Sothelye dulle witte and a thoughtfull soule so sore haue mined and graffed in my spirites, that soche craft of enditinge woll nat ben of mine acquaintaunce. And for rude wordes and boistous percen the herte of the herer to the inrest point, and planten there the sentence of thinges, so that with litel helpe it is able to spring. This booke that nothynge hath of the great floode of wytte, ne of semelyche colours, is doluen with rude wordes and boistous, and so drawe togider to maken the calthers therof ben the more redy to hent sentence.

Some men there ben, that painten with colours riche and some with vers, as with red inke, and some with coles and chalke: and yet is there good matter to the leude people of thylke chalkye portreyture, as hem thinketh for the tyme, and afterward the syght of the better colours yeuen to hem more ioye for the first leudenesse. So sothly this leude clowdy occupacyon is not to prayse, but by the leude, for comenly leude leudenesse commemdeth. Eke it shal yeue sight that other precyous thynges shall be the more in reuerence. In Latin and French hath many soueraine wittes had great delyte to endite, and haue many noble thinges fulfilde, but certes there ben some that speaken their poisye mater in French, of whiche speche the Frenche men haue as good a fantasye as we haue in heryng of Frenche mens Englishe. And many termes ther ben in Englyshe, whiche vneth we Englishe men connen declare the knowleginge: how should than a Frenche man borne, soche termes conne iumpere in his matter, but as the iay chatereth Englishe. Right so truely the vnderstandyng of Englishmen woll not stretche to the priuye termes in Frenche, what so euer wee bosten of straunge langage. Let than clerkes enditen in Latin, for they haue the propertie of science, and the knowinge in that facultie: and lette Frenchemen in their Frenche also enditen their queinte termes, for it is kyndely to their mouthes, and let vs shewe our fantasies in soche wordes as we lerneden of our dames tonge. And although this booke be lytel thauk worthy for the leudnesse in trauail, yet soch writing exiten men to thilke thinges that ben necessarie: for euery man therby may as by a perpetual myrrour sene the vices or vertues of other, in whyche thynge lightly may be conceiued to escheue perils, and necessaries to catch, after as anentures haue fallen to other people or persons. Certes the souerainst thinge of desire and most creature reasonable, haue or els shuld haue full appetite to their perfectyon: vnreasonable beestes mowen not, sithe reason hath in hem no werkinge: than reasonable that wol not, is comparisoned to vnreasonable, and made lyke hem. Forsothe the most soueraine and finall perfection of man is in knowynge of a sothe, withouten any entent deceiuable, and in loue of one very God, that is inchaungeable, that is to knowe, and loue his creature.

Nowe principally the meane to brynge in knowleging and louynge his creatour, is the consideracyon of thynges made by the creatour, wherthrough be thylke thinges that ben made, vnderstandynge here to our wyttes, arne the vnsene prynetie of God made to vs syghtfull and knowinge, in our contemplacion and vnderstondinge. These thinges than forsoth moche bringen vs to the ful knowleginge sothe, and to the parfyte loue of the maker of heuenly thynges. Lo Dauid saith: thou haste delited me in makinge, as who saith, to haue delite in the tune how God hath lent me in consideracion of thy makinge. Wherof Aristotle in the boke de Animalibus, saieth to naturell philosophers: it is a greate likynge in loue of knowing their creatoure: and also in knowinge of causes inkindelye thynges considred. Forsothe the formes of kindelye thinges and the shap, a great kyndely loue me shulde haue to the werkman that hem made. The crafte of a werkman is shewed in the werk. Herefore trulie the philosophers with a lytely studie manie noble thinges, righte precious and worthy to memorye writen, and by a great swetande trauaille to vs letten of causes the properties in natures of thinges, to whiche therfore philosophers it was more ioy, more lykinge, more herty lust in kindely vertues and matters of reason the perfection by busy study to knowe, than to haue had all the treasour, al the richesse, al the vaine glory that the passed emperours, princes, or kinges hadden. Therfore the names of hem in the booke of perpetuall memorie in vertue and peace arne writen, and in the contrarie, that is to saine, in Styxe the foule pitte of Helle arne thilke pressed that soch goodues hated. And bicause

this booke shall be of loue, and the prime causes of stering in that doinge with passions and diseases for wantinge of desire, I wil that this booke be cleped the Testament of Loue.

But now thou reder, who is thilke that will not in scorne laughe, to here a dwarfe or els halfe a man, say he wil rende out the swerde of Hercules handes. And also he shulde set Hercules gades a mile yet ferther, and ouer that he had power of strength to pull vp the spere, that Alisander the noble might neuer wagge.

And that passinge al thinge to ben mayster of Fraunce by might, there as the noble gracious Edwarde the thirde for all his great prowesse in victories ne might al yet conquere.

Certes I wote well, ther shall be made more scorne and iape of me, that I so vnworthely clothed al togither in the cloudie cloude of vnconning, wil putten me in prees to speke of loue, or els of the causes in that matter, sithen al the grettest clerkes han had ynough to don, and as who saith gathered vp clene to forne hem, and with their sharp sithes of conning al mowen and made thereof great rekes and noble, ful of al plenties to fed me and many another. Enuye forsothe commendeth noughte his reason, that he hath in vain, be it neuer so trusty. And al though these noble repers, as good workmen and worthy their hier, han al draw and bounde vp in the sheues, and made many shockes, yet haue I ensample to gader the smale crommes, and fullin my walet of the that fallen from the bourde among the smalle houndes, notwithstandinge the trauaile of the almoigner, that hath draw vp in the cloth al the remissailes, as trenchours, and the relief to here to the almesse. Yet also haue I leue of the noble husbande Boece, all though I be a straunger of conninge to come after his doctrine, and these great workmen, and glene my handfuls of the shedynge after their handes, and yf me faile ought of my ful, to encrease my porcion with that I shal drawe by priuyties out of shockes, a slye seruaunte in his owne helpe is often moche commended, knowynge of trouthe in causes of thynges, was more hardier in the firste sechers, and so sayth Aristotle, and lighter in vs that han followed after. For their passing study han fresshed our wittes, and oure vnderstandynge han excited in consideracion of trouth by sharpenes of their reasons. Utterly these thinges be no dremes ne iapes, to throwe to hogges, it is lyfelych meate for children of trouth, and as they me betiden whan I pilgramed out of my kith in wintere, whan the wether out of measure was boistous, and the wyld wind Borias as his kind asketh with dryinge coldes, maked the wawes of the occian see so to arise vnkindely ouer the commune bankes that it was in point to spill all the erthe.

THUS ENDETH THE PROLOGUE, AND HERE AFTER FOLOWETH THE FIRST BOKE OF THE TESTAMENT OF LOUE.

THE TESTAMENT OF LOUE.

Alas fortune alas, I that some tyme in delicious houres was wont to enioy blisful stoundes, am nowe dryue by vnhappy heuinesse to bewaile my sondrie yuels in tene. Trewlie I leue, in myn herte is writte of perdurable letters al the entencyons of lamentacion that now ben ynempned, for any maner disease outward in sobbyng maner, sheweth sorowful yexynge from within. Thus from my confort I ginne to spille, sith she that shulde me solace, is ferre fro my presence. Certes her absence is to me an Hell, my sternynge death thus in wo it myneth, that endelesse care is throughout myne herte cleuched, blysse of my ioye, that ofte me murthed is turned into galle, to thynke on thing that may not at my wil in armes me hent. Mirth is chaunged into tene, whan swink is there continually, that rest was wont to soiourne and haue dwellynge place. Thus witlesse thoughtfull, sightlesse lokynge, I endure my penaunce in this derke prisonne, caitisned fro frendshippe and acquaintaunce, and forsaken of al that any worde dare speake. Straunge hath by way of intrucioun made his home there me shulde be, yf reason were herde as he shulde. Neuer the later yet hertly lady precyous Margarit, haue minde on thy seruaunte, and thynke on his disease, howe lightles he lyueth, sithe the beames brenende in loue of thin, cien arn so bewet, that worldes and cloude atwene vs twey wol not suffre my thoughtes of hem to be enlumyned. Thinke that one vertue of a Margarite precious is amonges manye other the sorowfull to comforte, yet wil of that me sorowful to comforte, is my luste to haue nought els at this tyme, deede ne death, ne no maner trauelle hath, no power myne herte so mocne to fade, as shulde to here of a twincklinge in your disease. Ah, God forbede that, but yet lete me dey, let me sterue withouten any measure of penaunce, rather than myne hertely thinking comforte in ought were diseased. What may my seruice auelle in absence of her, that my seruice shulde accepte? is this nat endelesse sorowe to thinke? Yes, yes God wote, myne herte breaketh nie a sonder, how should the ground without kindly noriture, bringen forth any fruites? how should a ship withioten a sterne in the great sea be gouerned? how shold I withouten my blisse, my herte, my desire, my ioye, my goodnesse, endure in this contrarious prison, that thinke euery houre in the daie, an hundred winter? wel maie now Eue sain to me Adam, in sorowe fallen from wealthe, driuen art thou out of Paradise, with sweate thy sustenaunce to be swinke. Depe in this pinyng pitte, with wo I ligge istocked, with chaines linked of care, and of tene. It is so hie from thens I lie, and the common yerth, there ne is cable in no land maked, that might stretche to me, to drawe me into blisse, ne steyers to steye on is none, so that without recouer endlesse, here to endure I wote well I pureide. O where art thou nowe frendship, that sometyme with laughande chere, madest bothe face and countenaunce to me wardes? Truely nowe arte thou wente out of toune, but euer me thinketh, he weareth his old clothes, and that the soule, in the whiche the life of frendship was in, is drawen out from his other spirites. Now than farewell frendship, and farewell felawes, me thinketh ye all han taken your leaue: no force of you all at ones.

But ladie of loue, ye wote what I mean, yet think on thy seruaunt, that for thy loue spilleth, all thynges haue I forsake, to folowen thine hestes: reward me with a thought though ye doe naught els. Remembraunce of loue, lith so sore vnder my breste, that other thought cometh not in my mynde, but gladnesse to thinke on your goodnesse, and your merie chere, frendes and sorowe to think

on your wretche and your daunger, from whiche Christ me saue. My greate ioye it is to haue in meditacions, the bounties, the vertues, the nobley in you printed: sorowe and Hel comen at ones, to suppose that I be veined. Thus with care, sorowe, and tene am I shapt, min ende with death to make. Now good goodly thinke on this.

O wretched foole that I am fallen into folowe, the heate of my brenning tene hath me all defased: how should ye lady set prise on so foule filth: my conning is thinne, my witte is exiled, like to a foole-naturell, am I comparisoned. Truely ladie, but your mercie the more were. I wote well all my labor were in idell: your mercie than passeth right. God graunt that proposicion to be verified in me, so that by trust of good hope, I mowe come to the hauen of ease, and sith it is impossible, the colours of youre qualities to chaunge: and forsoth I wote well, wemme ne spot maie not abide, there so noble vertue haboundeth, so that the defasyng to you is verily imaginable, as countenance of goodnes what encreasing vertue, is so in you knit, to abid by necessarie maner, yet if the riuers might fal, which is ayenst kinde, I woll well myn herte, ne should therefore naught flit, by the leste poinct of geometrie, so sadlie is it sonded, that awaie from your seruice in loue, maie he not departe. O loue, whan shall I been pleased? O charitie, whan shall I been eased? O good goodlie, whan shall the dice tourne? O full of vertue, doe the chaunce of comforte, vpwarde to fall. O loue, whan wolt thou think on thy seruaunt? I can no more, but here out cast of all welfare, abide the daie of my death, or els to see the sight that might all my wellynge sorowes voide, and of the floode make an ebbe. These diseases mowen well by duresse of sorowe, make my life to vnbodie, and so for to die: but certes, ye ladie in a full perfeccion of loue, been so knitte with my soule, that death maie not thilke knotte vnbinde, ne departe, so that ye and my soulle together is endlesse, in blisse should dwel, and there shall my soule at the full been esed, that he maie haue your presence, to shewe the entent of his desires: ah dere God, that shall bee a greate ioye. Now yearthlie goddesse, take regarde of thy seruaunt, though I be feble, for thou art wonte to praise them better, that would conserue in loue, all be he full meaner than kinges or princes, that woll not haue that vertue in minde. Now precious Margarite, that what thy noble vertue, hast drawen me into loue firste, me wenyng thereof to haue blisse, as galle and aloes are so moche sprong, that sauour of swetenesse maie I not atast. Alas that your benigne iyen, in which that mercie semeth, to haue all his noriture, nill by no waie tourne the clerenesse of mercie to mewardes. Alas that your brennande vertues, shinyng emonges all folke, and enluminyng all other people, by habundaunce of encreasyng, sheweth to me but smoke, and no light. These thinges to thinke in myne harte, maketh euery daie wepyng in myne iyen to renne. These liggen on my backe so sore, that importable burden me semeth on me backe to be charged, it maketh me backwarde to meue, whan my steppes by comon course euen forthe pretende: these thynges also on right side and lefte, haue me so ennolued with care, that wanhope of helpe is throughout me ronne truelie, and leue that gracelesse is my fortune, whiche that euer sheweth it mewardes by a cloudie disease, all readie to make stormes of tene, and the blisfull side halte still awaiward, and woll it not suffer to mewardes to turne: no force yet woll I not been conquered.

O, alas that your nobley so moche emong all other creatures, commended by folowyng streme, by al maner vertues, but there been wonderfull, I not whiche that let the flood to come into my soul, wherfore purely mated with sorowe through sought, my self I crie on your goodnes, to haue pitee on this caitife, that in the inrest degree of sorowe and disease is left, and without your goodlie will, from any help and recouery. These sorowes maie I not susteine, but if my sorowe should bee tolde, and to you werdes shewed, although moche space is betwene vs twaine, yet me thynketh that by soche foleinyng woordes, my disease ginneth eb. Truelie me thynketh that the soune of my lamentacious wepyng, is right now flowe into youre presence, and there crieth after mercie and grace, to whiche thynge me semeth, thee liste none answere to yene, but with a deinous chere, ye commaunded it to auoide, but God forbidde that any woorde should of you spryng, to haue so little ruth. Parde pitie and mercie, in euery Margarit is closed by kinde, emongs many other vertues, by qualities of comforte, but comfort is to me right naught worthe, withouten mercie and pitie of you alone whiche thinges hastly God me graunt for his mercie.

Rehearsing these things and many other, without time or moment of rest, me semed for anguishe of disease, that all togither I was rauisshed, I can not tell how, but holly al my passions and felynges weren loste, as it semed for the time, and sodainly a maner of dreade, light in me al at ones, nought soche feare as folke haue of an enemie, that were mightie, and would hem greue, or dooen hem disease: for I trowe this is wel knowe to many persones, that otherwhile if a man be in his soueraines presence, a maner of ferdnesse creapeth in his herte, not for harme, but of goodlie subiection: namelie as men reden that aungelles been afeide of our Sauiour in Heauen. And parde there ne is, ne maie no passion of disease beey but it is to meane, that aungelles been a dradde, not by frendes of drede, sithen thei been perfitly blissed, as affeccion of wonderfulnes, and by seruice of obedience, soche ferde also han these louers in presence of their loues, and subiectes aforne their soueraines: right so with ferdnesse, mine herte was caught. And I sodainlie astoined, there entered into the place, there I was lodged a ladie, the semeliche and moste goodlie to my sight, that euer to forne appeared to any creature, and trulie in the blustring of her looke, she yaue gladness and comforte, sodainly to all my wittes, and right so she doeth to euery wight, that cometh in her presence. And for she was so goodlie (as me thought) mine herte began somedele to be enbolded, and wext a little hardie to speake, but yet with a quakynge voice, as I durst, I salued her, and enquired what she was, and why she so worthie to sight, dained to enter into so foule a dongeon, and namely a prison, without leaue of my kepers. For certes, although the vertue of deedes of mercie, stretchen to visiten the poore prisoners, and hem after that faculties been had to comforte, me semed that I was so ferre fallen into misenie and wretched hid caitif-

nesse, that me should no precious thing neigh: and also that for my sorowe euery wight should been heauie, and wisshe my recouery. But whan this lady had somedeale appereeiued, as well by my woordes, as by my chere, what thought busied me within, with a good womanlie countenaunce she said these wordes. "O my norie, wenest thou that my maner bee, to foryet my frondes, or my seruauntes? Naie" (quod she) "it is my full entent, to visite and comfort all my frendshippes and alies, as well in tyme of perturbacion, as of moste propertie of blisse, in me shall vnkindnesse neuer be founden. And also sithen I haue so fewe especial true, now in these daies, wherfore I maie well at more leisar, come to hem that me deseruen, and if my comyng maie in any thyng auaile, wete well I woll come often."

"Now good ladie" (quod I) "that art so faire on to loke, rinyng honie by thy woordes, blisse of paradise arne thy lokynges, ioye and comfort are thy mouinges. What is thy name? How is it that in you is so mokell werking vertues enpight, as me semeth, and in non other creature, that euer sawe I with mine iyen?"—"My disciple" (quod she) "me wondreth of thy wordes, and on thee, that for a litle disease hast foryeten my name. Wost thou not well that I am Loue, that firste thee brought to thy seruice?"—"O good ladie" (quod I) "is this worship to thee, or to thyne excellence, for to come into so foule a place? Parde somtime tho I was in prosperite, and with forain goodes enuolued, I had mokil to doen to draw thee to mine hostell, and yet many werninges thou madest, ere thou liste fullie to graunt, thine home to make at my dwelling place: and now thou comest goodlie by thine owne vise, to comfort me with wordes, and so there through I ginne remember, on passed gladnes. Trulie ladie I ne wot, whether I shall saie welcome or none, sithen thy commyng woll as moche doe me tene and sorowe, as gladnesse and mirth: se why. For that me comforteth to thinke on passed gladnesse, that me anoyeth eft to be in doing. Thus thy comming both gladdeth and teneth, and that is cause of moche sorowe: lo ladie, how than I am comforted by your conning, and with that I gan in teares to distill, and tenderlie wepe."—"Now certes" (quod Loue) "I se well (and that me ouer thinketh) that wit in the faileth, and art in poinct to dote."—"Trulie" (quod I) "that haue ye maked, and that euer wol I rue."—"Wottest thou not well" (quod she) "that euery shepherde ought by reason, to seke his sperkeland shepe that arne ron into wildernesse, emong busshes and perils, and hem to their pasture ayen bryng, and take of hem priuie busie cure on keping: and tho the vnconning shepe, scattred would been lost, renning to wildernesse, and to desertes drawe, or els woulden put hem self to the swallowyng wolfe, yet shall the shepherde, by businesse and trauaile, so put him forthe, that he shall not let him be lost by no waie. A good shepherd putteth rather his life to been lost for his shepe.

"But for thou shalt not wene me, being of werse condicion, truelie for eueriche of my folke, and for all tho that to mewarde, bee knit in any condicion, I woll rather die than suffre hem through errour to been spilte. For me liste, and it me liketh, of all myne a shepherdesse to bee cleaped. Wost thou not well, I failed neuer wight, but he me refused, and would negligentlie go with vnkindnesse? And yet parde, haue I many soche holpe and releued, and thei haue ofte me begiled, but euer at thende, it discended in their owne neckes. Haste thou not redde, howe kinde I was to Paris, Priamus' soone of Troie? How Iason me falsed, for al his fals behest? How Sesars sonke, I lefte it for no tene, till he was troned in my blisse, for his seruice. What" (quod she) "moste of all, maked I not a louedaie, bitwene God and mankind, and chese a maide to be nompere, to but the quarell at ende: lo, how I haue trauailed to haue thanke on all sides, and yet list me not to reste, and I might finde on whom I should werche. But trulie mine owne disciple, bicause I haue the founde at all assais in thy will to bee redie, mine hestes to haue followed, and haste been true to that Margarite Perle, that ones I thee shewed, and she alwaie ayenward, hath made but daungerous chere, I am come in proper persone to put thee out of errours, and make thee glad by waies of reason, so that sorow ne disease shal, no more hereafter the amaistrie. Wher through I hope, thou shalt lightlie come to the grace, that thou longe haste desired, of thilke iewell. Haste thou not heard many ensamples, how I haue comforted, and releued the scholers of my lore? Who hath worthied kinges in the felde? Who hath honoured ladies in boure, by a perpetuall mirror of their truth in my seruice? Who hath caused worthie folke, to voide vice and shame? who hath holde citees, and realmes in prosperitie? if thee list clepe ayen thyne olde remembraunce, thou coudest euery poincte of this declare in especiall, and saie that I thy maistres haue be cause, causyng these thinges, and many mo other."

"Now iwis madame" (quod I) "all these thinges I knowe well my self, and that thyne excellence, passeth the vnderstandyng of vs beastes, and that no mannes witte yearthlie, maie comprehende thy wertues."—"Well than" (quod she) "for I see thee in disease and sorowe, I wote well thou art one of myne nories, I maie not suffer thee, so to make sorowe, thine owne self to shende: but I my self come to be thy fere, thine heuy charge to make to seme the lesse, for wo is him that is a loue: and to the sory to been moued by a sorowfull wight it is great gladnes. Right so with my sicke frendes I am sicke, and with sorie, I can not els but sorowe make, till whan I haue hem releued, in soche wise that gladnesse in a maner of counterpaisyng, shall restore as mokell in ioye, as the passed heuinesse biforne did in tene. And also" (quod she) "whan any of my seruauntes been alone in solitarie place, I haue yet euer busied me to be with hem, in comfort of their hartes, and taught hem to make songes of plainte and of blisse, and to enditen letters of rhetorike, in queint vnderstandinges, and to bethinke hem in what wise, thei might beste their ladies in good seruice please, and also to learne maner in countenaunce, in wordes, and in bearyng, and to been meke and lowlie to euery wight, his name and fame to encrease, and to yeue greate yeftes and large, that his renome maie spryngen, but thee thereof haue I excused, for thy losse and thy greate costages, where through thou arte neadie, arne nothing to me vnknowen, but I hope to God sometime it shal been amended, as thus, as I saied. In norture haue I taught al mine, and in curtesie made hem expert, their ladies hertes to winne, and if any would endeinous, or proude, or

be enuious, or of wretches acquaintaunce, hastliche haue soche voided out of my schole: for all vices truelie I hate: uertues and worthinesse in all my power I auaunce."

"Ah worthie creature" (quod I) "and by iuste cause, the name of goddes dignely ye mow beare: in thee lithe the grace, through whiche any creature in this world hath any goodnesse, truly all maner of blisse, and' preciousuess in vertue out of thee springen, and wellen, as brookes and riuers, proceaden from their sprynges, and like as all waters by kinde, drawen to the sea, so all kindly thinges thresten, by ful appetite of desire to drawe after thy steppes, and to thy presence aproche, as to their kindlie perfeccion how dare than beastes in this world, aught forfete ayenst thy diuine purueighaunce? Also lady ye knowen all the priuie thoughtes, in hertes no counsaile maie been hidde from your knowyng. Wherefore I wote wel ladie, that ye knowe your self, that I in my conscience am, and haue been willyng to your seruice, all coude I neuer dooe as I should, yet forsothe fained I neuer to lone otherwise, than was in myne harte: and if I coud haue made chere to one, and ithought an other, as many other dooen aldaie afore myne iyen, I trowe it would not me haue vailed." "Certes" (quod she) "haddest thou so dooen, I would not now hane thee here visited."—"Ye wete well ladie eke" (quod I) "that I haue not plaid raket, nettle in, docke out, and with the weathercocke waued, and truely there ye me sette, by accorde, of my conscience, I would not flie, till ye and reason by aperte strength, maden myne harte to tourne."

"In good faithe" (quod she) "I haue knowe thee euer of tho condicions, and sithen thou wouldest (in as moche as in thee was) a made me priuie of thy counsaill, and iudge of thy conscience, though I forsoke it in the daies, till I sawe better my tyme, would neuer God that I should now faile, but euer I woll be readie, witnessyng thy sothe, in what place that euer I shall, ayenst al tho that woll the contrary sustein, and for as moche as to me is naught vnknowen, ne hid of thy priuie herte, but all haste thou tho thynges, made to me open at the full, that hath caused my comyng into this prison, to voide the webbes of thine iyen to make thee clerely to see the errours thou haste been in, and bicause that men been of diuers condicions, some a dradde to saie a sothe, and some for a sothe, anone readie to fight, and also that I maie not my self been in place, to withsaie thilke men, that of thee speaken, otherwise than the sothe, I woll and charge thee, in vertue of obedience, that thou to me owest, to writen my wordes, and set hem in writynges, that thei mowe as my witnessyng, been noted emong the people. For bookes written, neither dreden ne shamen, ne striue conne, but onely shewen the entente of the writer, and yeue remembraunce to the hearer: and if any woll in thy presence saie, any thinge to tho writers, looke boldlie, trust on Mars to answere at the ful. For certes, I shal him enforme of all the trouthe in thy loue, with thy conscience, so that of his helpe thou shalt not varie at thy nede. I trowe the strongest and the best that maie bee founde, woll not transners thy wordes, whereof than wouldest thou drede."

GREATLIE was I tho gladded of these wordes, and as who saith, wexen somdele light in herte, both for thaucthoritie of witnesse, and also of sikernesse of helpe of the foresaied beheste, and said. "Truely ladie now am a well gladded, through comforte of your wordes: be it now likyng vnto your nobly to shewe, whiche folke diffame your seruantes, sith your seruice oughte aboue all other thynges to been commended."—"Yet" (quod she) "I see well thy soule is not al out of the amased cloude: the were better to heare thing, that thee might light out of thyne heauie charge and after knowyng of thyne own helpe, than to stiue swete woordes, and soche reasons to heare: for in a thoughtfull soule (and namely soch one as thou art) woll not yet soche thinges sinken. Come of therefore, and let me seen thy heuie charge, that I maie the lightlier for thy comfort purueigh."

"Now certes ladie" (quod I) "the moste comfort I might haue, were vtterlie to wete me bee sure in hertes, of that Margarite I serue, and so I thinke to doen with all mightes, while my life dureth." "Than" (quod she) "maieste thou thereafter, in soche wise that mispleasaunce ne entre?"—"In good faithe" (quod I) "there shall no mispleasaunce be caused, through trespace on my side."—"And I dooe thee to wenten" (quod she) "I sette neuer yet persone to serue in no place (but if he caused the contrary, in defaultes and trespaces) that he ne sped of his seruice."—"Myne owne yearthly ladie" (quod I tho) "and yet remember to your worthinesse how long sithen by many reuoluyng of yeres, in tyme whan October, bis leaue ginneth take, and Nouember sheweth hym to sight, whan bernes been full of goodes, as is the nutte on euery halke, and than good londe tillers, ginneth shape for the yearth, with greate trauaile to bryng forthe more corne, to mannes sustenaunce, ayenste the next yeres folowing. In soche tyme of plentie, he that hath an home, and is wise, liste not to wander meruailes to seche, but he be constrained or excited: oft the lothe thing is doen, by excitacion of other maunes opinion, whiche woulden faine haue myne abidyng, take in herte of luste to trauaile, and see the windyng of the yearth, in that tyme of winter, by woodes that large streates werne in, by small pathes, that swine and hogges hadden made, as lanes with ladels their maste to seche, I walked thinkyng alone, a wonder greate while, and the greate beastes that the woode haunten, and adorneth al maner forestes, and heerdes gone to wilde: than ere I was ware, I neighed to a sea banke, and for ferde of the beastes, shipcraft I cride: for ladie I trowe ye wete well your self, nothyng is werse than the beastes that shoulden been tame, if thei catche hir wildenesse, and ginne again waxe ramage: thus forsothe was I aferde, and to shippe me hied. Than were there inowe to lache myne handes, and drawe me to shippe, of whiche many I knewe well the names. Sight was the firste, Luste was an other, Thought was the thirde, and Will eke was there a master: these broughten me within borde, of this shippe of traueile. So whan the saile was sprad, and this shippe gan to moue, the winde and water gan for to rise, and ouertwhartlie to tourne the welken, the wawes semeden as thei kiste togither, but often vnder colour of kissyng, is mokell olde hate priuelie closed and kepte. The storme so straungelie, and in a deuouryng maner, ganne so fast vs assaile, that I supposed the date of my death, should haue made there his ginning, now vp, now doun nowe vnder the wawe, and nowe

abouen was my shippe a greate while. And so by mokell duresse of weathers, and of stormes, and with greate auowyng pilgrimages, I was driuen to an ile, where vtterlie I wend first to haue be rescowed, but trulie as the firste beginnyng, it semed me so perillous, the hauen to catch, that but through grace I had been comforted, of life I was full dispaired. Truelie ladie, if ye remember a right of all maner thynges, your self came hastelie to seen vs sea driuen, and to weten what we weren: but firste ye were deinous of chere, after whiche ye gon better alight, and euer as me thought, ye liued in greate drede of disease, it seemed so by your chere. And whan I was certified of your name, the lenger I looked in you, the more I you goodlie dradde, and euer myne herte on you opened the more, and so in a little tyme, my shippe was out of mynde. But ladie as ye me lad I was ware, bothe of beastes and of fishes, a greate nomber throngyng togider: emong whiche a muskell in a blewe shell, had enclosed a Margarite perle, the moste precious, and best that euer toforn came in my sighte, and ye tolden your self, that ilke iewell in his kinde, was so good and so vertuous, that her better should I neuer finde, all sought I thereafter to the worldes ende, and with that I helde my peace a greate while: and euer sithen I haue me bethought on the man, that sought the precious Margarites, and whan he had founden one to his likyng, he solde all his good to buy that iewell: iwis thought I, and yet so I think, now haue I founden the iewell, that mine herte desireth, whereto should I seche further, trulie nowe woll I stinte, and on this Margarite I sette me for euer. Now than also, sithen I wiste well it was your will, that I should so soche a seruice me take, and so to desire that thynge, of whiche I neuer haue blisse, there liueth none, but he hath disease: your might than that brought me to soch seruice, that to me is cause of sorowe and of ioye, I wonder of your worde that ye sain, to bringen men into ioye, and parde ye wot well that default ne trespace, maie not reasonable been put to me wardes, as ferre as my conscience knoweth: but of my disease me list now a while to speake, and to enforme you in what maner of blisse ye haue me throng. For truly I wene that all gladnesse all ioye, and all mirthe is beshet vnder lock, and the keie throwe in soche place that it maie not be founde: my brenning who hath altered all my hewe. Whan I should slepe, I walowe and I thinke, and me disporte. Thus combred, I seme that all folke had me mased. Also ladie mine, desire hath long dured, some speakyng to haue, or els at the leaste haue been enmoised with sight: and for wantyng of these thynges, my mouthe would and he durste, pleine right sore, sithen euils for my goodnesse, arne manifold to me holden. I wonder ladie truely, saue euermore your reuerence, howe ye mowe for shame soche thynges suffer on your seruaunte, to be so multiplied: wherefore kneling with a lowe herte, I praie you to rue on this caitife, that of nothyng now maie serue. Good ladie, if you liste now your help to me shew that am of your priuiest seruauntes, at all assaies in this tyme, and vnder your winges of proteccion. No helpe to mewardes is shapen, how shall than straungers in any wise after succour looke, whan I that am so priuie, yet of helpe, I doe faile? Further maie I not, but thus in this prisone abide: what bondes and chaines me holden, ladie ye se wel your self: a reniant forludged hath not halfe the care. But thus sighyng and sobbyng I waile here alone, and nere it for comforte of your presence, right here would I sterue. And yet a little am I gladded, that so goodlie soche grace and none happe haue I hente, graciouslie to finde the precious Margarite, that all other lefte, men should buie, if thei should therefore sell all hir substaunce. Wo is me that so many let games, and purpose breakers been maked waiters, soche prisoners as I am euermore, to ouerlooke and to hinder, and for soche lettours, it is harde any soche iewell to winne. Is this lady an honour to thy deitie? Me thinketh by right, soche people should haue no maistrie, ne been ouerlookers, ouer none of thy seruauntes. Truely were it lefull vnto you, to all the goddes would I plaine, that ye rule your diuine purueighaunce emonges your seruauntes, nothing as ye should. Also ladie my moeble is insuffisaunte, to counteruaile the price of this iewell, or els to make theschaunge: eke no wight is worthie, soche perles to weare, but kynges or princes, or els their peers: this iewell for vertue, would adorne and make faire all a realme, the nobley of vertue is so moche, that her goodnesse ouer all is commended. Who is it that would not waile, but he might soche riches haue at his wille, the vertue thereof out of this prisone maie me deliuer, and nought els. And if I bee not there thorowe holpen, I see my self withouten recouery: although I mighte hence voide, yet would I not, I would abide the daie, that destonie hath me ordeined, which I suppose is without amendemente, so sore is myne herte bounden, that I maie thinken none other. Thus straite (ladie) hath sir Daunger laced me in stockes, I leue it be not your will: and for I see you taken so little heede, as me thinketh, and woll not maken by your might, the vertue in mercie of the Margarite on me for to stretch, so as ye mowe wel, in case that you list: my blisse and my mirth arne felde, sickenesse and sorowe been alwaie readie, the cope of tene is wounde about all my bodie, that standyng is me beste, vnneth maie I ligge for pure miseasie sorowe, and yet al this is little inough, to be the earnest siluer, in forward of this bargaine, for treble folde, so mokell muste I suffer, ere tyme come of myne ease. For he is worthie no wealth, that maie no wo suffer. And certes, I am heauie to thinke on these thinges, but who shall yeue me water inough to drinke, lest mine iyen drie for rennyng streames of teares? Who shall wailen with me myne owne happie heauinesse? Who shall counsaile me now in my likyng tene, and in my goodlie harse? I not. For euer the more I brenne, the more I coueite: the more that I sorowe, the more thirst I in gladnesse. Who shall than yeue me a contrarious drinke, to staunch the thrust of my blisfull bitternes? Lo thus I brenne and I drenche, I shiuer and sweate, to this reuersed yuel was neuer yet ordeined salue, forsoth al liches ben vnconninge, saue the Magarite alone, any soche remedy to puruey."

And wyth these wordes I braste out to wepe, that euery teare of myne eyen for greatnesse semed they boren out the bal of my syght, and that al the water hadde been out ronne. Than thought me, that Loue gan a litel to heauy for myscomforte of my chere, and gan soberly and in easy maner

speake, wel auising what she said. Comenly the wise speaken easylie and softe for many skilles: one is, their wordes are the better beleued, and also in easy speakynge, auisement men may catche, what to put forthe, and what to holden in. And also the auctoritie of easye wordes is the more, and eke they yeuen the more vnderstandynge to other intencion of the mater. Ryght so this Jadye easely and in a softe mauere, gan say these wordes.

"Meruaile" (quod she) "great it is, that by no maner of semblaunt, as ferre as I can espie thou lyst not to haue any recour, but euer thou plainest and soroweste, and wayes of remedie for foolishe wilfulnesse the liste not to seche: but enquire of thy nexte frendes, that is thyne inwitte, and me that haue ben thy maistresse, and the recour and fyne of thy diseuse, for of disease is gladuesse and ioye, with a ful vessel so helded, that it quencheth the feling of the first tenes. But thou that were wonte not onely these thynges remembre in thyne herte, but also fooles therof to enfourmen, in adnulling of their errours, and distroiynge of their derke opinions, and in comfort of their seare thoughtes: nowe canste thou not ben comforte of thin owne soule: in thinkinge of these thinges. O where haste thou be so long commeasal, that haste so mikel eaten of the potages of foryetfulnesse, and dronken so of ignorance that the olde souking, whiche thou haddest of me, arne a maistred and lorne fro all maner of knowinge? O this is a worthy persone to helpe other, that can not counsaile hem selfe." And with these wordes for pure and stronge shame I wox all reed.

And she than seinge me so astonied by diuers stoundes, sodainly (whiche thynge kynde hateth) gan delyciously me comforte with sugred words, putting me in ful hope that I shulde the Magarite getten, if I folowed her hestes, and gan with a faire clothe to wipen the teares that hyngen on my chekes: and than said I in this wise. "Now welle of wisedome and of all welthe, withouten the may nothynge ben lerned; thou bearest the keies of all priuy thinges. In vaine trauaile men to catche anye stedshyp, but if ye lady firste the locke vnshet, ye lady lerne vs the waies and the bypathes to Heauen: ye lady maken all the heuenly bodies goodly and benignely to done hir course, that gouernen vs beestes here on erthe. Ye armen your seruauntes ayenst al debates, with imperciable harneis, ye setten in hir hertes insuperable bloode of hardenesse, ye leden hem to the parfite good. Yet al thinge desireth, ye werne no man of helpe that wele done your lore, graunt me nowe a litell of your grace, all my sorowes to cease."—"Myne owne seruaunt" (quod she) "trewly thou sittest nie myne herte, and thy badde chere gan sorely me greue: but amonge thy plaining wordes, me thought thou allegest thinges to be letting of thine helping, and thy grace to hinder, wherthrough me thinketh that wanhope is crope through thine herte: God forbid that nise vnthrifti thought shoulde come in thy mynde thy wittes to trouble, sithen euery thynge in commynge is contingent, wherefore make no more thy proposytion by an impossible. But nowe I pray the reherse me ayen tho thynges, that thy mystrust causen, and thilke thinges I thinke by reason to distroyen, and put full hope in thine herte. What vnderstandest thou there?" (quod she) "by that thou saidest, many letgames are thin onerlokers. And also by that thy moeble is insuffysaunt, I not what thou therof meanest.

"Trewly" (quod I) "by the first, I say that inglers euermore arne speakinge, rather of euyll than of good, for euery age of man rather enclineth to wickednesse, than any goodnesse to auaunce. Also false wordes springen so wyde, by the sterynge of false liynge tonges, that fame als swyftly flieth to her eares, and saithe manye wicked tales, and as sone shal falsenesse ben leued as trouth, for all his greate sothnesse. Now by that other" (quod I) "me thinketh thilke iewel so precious, that to no soch wretche as I am wolde vertue therof extende, and also I am to feble in worldely ioyes, any soche iewell to contreuaile. For soche people that worldely ioyes han at hir will, ben sette at the highest degre, and moste in reuerence ben accepted, for false weninge maketh felicite therin to be supposed: but soche caytiues as I am euermore ben hindred."—"Certes" (quod she) "take good heede and I shal by reason to thee sheuen, that all these thinges nowe not let thy purpose, by the lest point that any wight conde pricke.

"Remembrest nat" (quod she) "ensample is one of the strongest maner, as for to preue a mannes purpose. Than yf I nowe by ensample enduce thee to any proposicion, is it nat proued by strength?" "Yes forsothe" (quod I). "Well" (quod she) "radde ste thou neuer howe Paris of Troye and Helaine loued togider, and yet had they not entrecommuned of speche? also Acrisius shete Dane his doughter in atour, for suertie that no wight shulde of her haue no maistrie in my seruice, and yet Iupiter by sygnes without any speech, had al his purpose ayenst her fathers will. And many soche mo haue ben knitte in trouthe, and yet spake they neuer togider, for that is a thinge enclosed vnder secretenes of priuitie, why twey persons entremellen hertes after a sight. The power in knowing of soche thynges so preuen, shal nat al vtterly be yeuen to you beestes, for manye thynges in soche precious matters, ben reserued to iudgement of deuine purueiaunce, for amonge lyuing people, by mannes consideracion moun they not be determined. Wherfore I saye, all the enuye, al the ianglinge, that welny people vpon my seruauntes maken efte, is rather cause of esploite, than of any hindringe."

"Why than" (quod I) "suffre ye soche wronge, and moun whan he list, lightly all soche yuels abate, me semeth to you it is a great vnwurship."—"O," (quod she) "holde nowe thy peace, I haue founden to many that han ben to me vnkind that trewly I woll suffre euery wyght in that wise to haue disease, and who that continueth to the ende wel and trewly, hem wol I helpen, and as for one of mine into blysse to wende, as marcial doing in Grece. Who was yerowned by God, nat the strongest, but he that rathest come and lendest abode and continued in the iourney, and spared nat to trauaile as longe as the play lest. But thilke persons that profered him nowe to my seruice theryn is a while, and anon voideth and redy to another, and of nowe one he thinketh, and nowe another, and in to water entreth and anon respireth, soche one liste me nat in to perfite blisse of my seruyce bring. A tree oft set in diuers places woll not by kinde endure to brynge forth fruites. Loke nowe I pray the, howe myne olde seruauntes of tyme passed continued in hir seruice, and folow-

thou after their steppes, and thanne might thou not faile, in case thou worche in this wise."—"Certes" (quod I) "it is nothinge lich, this world to time passed, eke this countre hath one maner, and another countre hath another. And so manie nat a man alwaye put to hys eye, the salue that he healed with his hele. For this is sothe, betwyxe two thynges liche, ofte diuersite is required. Now" (quod she) "that is sothe, diuersite of natyon, dyuersite of lawe, as was maked by many reasons, for that diuersyte cometh in by the contrarious malice of wicked people, that han enuious hertes ayenst other. But trewly my law to my seruauntes euer hath ben ingenerall, whiche maie not faile, for ryght as mannes lawe, that is ordeined by manie determinacions, may not be knowe for good or badde, tyl assay of the people han proued it, and to what ende it draweth, and than it sheweth the necessite therof or elles the impossibilite. Right so the law of my seruauntes so wel hath ben proued in general, that hitherto hath it not failed. Wiste thou not well that all the lawe of kinde is my lawe, and by God ordeined and stablished to dure by kinde reasoun, wherfore allow by mannes witte pureied, ought to be vnderputte to lawe of kinde, whiche yet hath be commune to euery kindely creature, that my statutes and my lawe that been kyndely, arne generall to all peoples. Olde doinges, and by many turninges of yeres vsed, and with the peoples maner proued, mowen not so lightly been defased, but newe doinges contrariauntes soche old, often causen diseases and breaken many purposes. Yet saie I nat therefore, that ayen new mischiefe, men should not ordained a newe remedye, but alway looke it contrary not the olde, no ferther than the malice stretcheth. Than foloweth it, the olde doinges, in loue han been vniuersall, as for moste exploite for the vsed: wherfore I wold not yet that of my lawes nothinge be adnulled.

"But thanne to thy purpose, soche iangelers and lookers, and waiters of games, if thei thinke in ought they mowe dere, yet loue wel alway, and sette hem at nought, and lette thy porte been lowe in euery wightes presence, and readie in thine herte to mainteine that thou hast begone, and a litell the faine with mekenesse in wordes, and thus with sleight shalte thou surmounte and dequace the ynell in their hertes. And wisedome yet is to seme flye other while there a manne woll fight. Thus with soche thynges, the tonges of ynell shal been stilled: els fully to graunte thy full meaning, forsothe euer was and euer it shall be, that mine enemies ben aferde to trust to any fighting: and therfore haue thou no cowardes herte in my seruice, no more than somtime thou haddest in the countrarye, for if thou drede soche ianglers thy viage to make: vnderstand wel, that he that dredeth any rain to sowe his cornes, he shall haue thin bernes, also he that is a ferde of his clothes, let him daunce naked. Who nothinge vndertaketh, and namelie in my seruice, nothinge acheueth. After great stormes the wether is often mery and smothe. After moche clatering, there is mokill rowninge: thus after iangling wordes cometh huishte, peace and be still."—"O good lady" (quod I than) "se now how seuen yere passed and more, haue I graffed and groubed a vine, and with al the waies that I coude, I sought to a fede me of the grape, but fruite haue I non founde. Also I haue this seuen yere serued Laban to awedded Rachel his doughter, but bleré eyed Lia, is brought to my bedde, whiche alway engendreth my tene, and is full of children in tribulacion and in care: and although the clippinges and kyssynges of Rachell shulde seme to me swete, yet is she so baraine, that gladnesse ne ioye by no way wol springe, so that I may wepe with Rachel, I may not been counsailed with solace, sithen issue of min hertely desire is failed. Nowe than I pray that to me some fredom and grace, in this eight yere, this eyghteth mowe to me bothe by kyureste and masse-day after these seuen werke daies of trauail, to folow the christen lawe: and what euer ye do ells, that thilke Margarite be holden so lady in your pryuy chambre, that she, in this case, to none other person be committed."—"Loke than" (quod she) "in this cace to none other persone be committed: looke than" (quod she) "thou persener in my seruice, in whiche I haue thee grounded, that thilke skorne in thy enemies mowe this on thy person be not sothed: lo this man began to edifie, but for his foundement is bad, to the ende maye he it nat bring. For mekenesse in countenaunce, with a manly herte in dedes and in longe continuaunce, is the conisance of my liuery, to al my retinue deliuered. What wenest thou that me lyst auaunce soche persones as louen the firste sittinges at feestes, the higheste stoles in churches, and in hal, loutinges of peoples in markettes and faires, vnstedfaste to byde in one place any while togider, wenyng his owne wit more excellent than other, scorning all maner deuise but his owne: nay nay God wot, these shuld nothing parten of my blysse. Truely my maner here to forn hath ben, worship with my blisse, lions in the felde, and lambes in chamber, egles at assaute, and maidens in halfe, foxes in counsaile, stil in their dedes, and their protection is graunted redy to ben a bridge, and their baner is arered like wolues in the felde. Thus by these wayes shul men ben auaunced: ensample of Dauid that from keping of shepe, was drawen vp in to the order of kingly gouernaunce, and Iupiter from a bole to been Europes fere, and Iuli Cesar from the lowest degre in Rome, to be maister of al erthly princes, and Eneas from Hell, to be kynge of the countre there Rome is now stonding. And so to the I say thy grace by bering thereafter, maye set the in soch plight, that no iangling may greue the lest tucke of thy hemmes, that are their ianghes, is nought to counte at a cresse in thy disauauntage.

"Euer (quod she) hath the people in this worlde desired to haue had great name in worthinesse, and hated foule to bere any fame, and that is one of the obiections thou alegest to be ayen thin hertely desire."—"Ye forsothe" (quod I) "and that so comenly the people wol lye and bringe about soche enfame."—"Now" (quod she) "if men with leasinges put on the enfame, wenest thy self thereby ben enpeired? that wening is wrong, se why, for as moch as they lien thy merite encreaseth, and make the ben more worthy to hem that knowen of the sothe, by what thing thou art apeired, that in so mokil thou arte encreased of thy beloued frendes: and sothely a wounde of thy frend to the lasse harme, ye sir, and better than a false kyssynge in disceiuable glosinge of thin enemy, aboue that than to be wel with thy frende maketh soch enfame.

Ergo thou art encreased and nat apeired."—"Lady" (quod I) "somtyme yet if a man be in disease, thestimacion of the enuious people ne loketh nothing to desertes of men, ne to the merites of theyr doynges, but onely to the auenture of fortune, and thereafter they yeuen their sentence. And some loken the voluntary wil in his herte, and therafter telleth his iudgement, not taking hede to reason ne to the qualyte of the doing, as thus. If a man be riche and fulfilde with wordly welfulnesse, some commenden it, and saine it is so lente by iustice cause, and he that hath aduersite, they saine he is weaked, and hath deserued thilke anoye. The contrarye of these thinges some men holden also, and sain that to the rich, prosperite is purueied in to his confusion, and vpon this matter, many autorites, of many and great witted clerkes they alegen. And some men sayne, though all good estimacion forsaken folke that han aduersite, yet is it merite and encrease of hys blisse, so that these purposes arne so wonderful in vnderstondinge, that trewly for mine aduersite, nowe I not how the sentence of the indifferent people wyll iudgen my fame."—"Therefore" (quod she) "if anye wight shulde yeue a trew sentente on soche matters, the cause of the disease maist thou se well, vnderstande therupon after what ende it drawethe, that is to sayne good or bade, so ought it to haue his fame, or by goodnesse ensame by baddenesse: for euery reasonable persone, and namelye of a wise man, his witte ought not without reason to forne herde, sodainly in a matter to iuge. After the sawes of the wise, thou shalt not iuge ne deme toforne thou knowe."—"Lady" (quod I) "ye remembre wel that in moste laude and praising of certain saintes in holy church, is to rehearsen their conuersacion frome badde in to good, and that is so rehersed, as by a perpetuall myrour of remembraunce in wurshiping of tho saintes, and good ensample to other misdoers in amendement. How turned the Romaine zedeories fro the Romaines, to be with Haniball ayenst his kind nacion: and afterwardes him seming the Romains to be at the next degre of confusion, turned to his olde alies, by whose witte after was Hanibal discomfited. Wherfore to enfourme you lady, the maner, why I meane, se now in my youth I was drawe to be assentaunt, and in my mightes helping to certaine coniuracions, and other great matters of rulynge of citezins, and thylke thinges been my drawers in, and exitours to tho matters werne so painted and coloured, that at the prime face, me semed them noble and glorious to al the people: I than wenynge mykell merite, haue deserued in furtherynge and maintenaunce of tho thinges, besyed and laboured with all my diligence, in werkinge of thilke matters to the ende. And trewly lady to tell you the sothe, me rought lytell of any hate of the mighty senatours in thilke cite, ne of communes malice, for two skilles: one was I had comforte to ben in soche plite, that both profite were to me and to my frendes. Another was, for commen profite in comunaltie, is not but peace and tranquilite, with iust gouernaunce proceden from thilke profite, sithen by counsaile of mine in witte, me thought the first painted thinges, malice and euyll meaninge, withouten any good auailinge to anye people: and of tyrannye purposed, and so for pure sorowe and of my medlyng, and badde infame that I was in, ronne, tho teares lashed out of myne eyen, were thus awaye washe, thanne the vnder hydde malice and the rancoure of purposinge enuie forneeaste and ymagined, in distruction of mobil people, shewed so openly, that had I been blinde, with mine handes all the circumstaunce I might wel haue feled.

"Nowe than tho persones that soch thinges haue caste to redresse, for wrathe of my firste medlynge, shopon me to dwel in this pynande prison, tyll Lachases my threde no lenger wolde tweyne. And euer I was sought, if me lyste to haue grace of my lyfe and frenesse of that prison, I shulde openly confesse howe peace might been endused to enden al the firste rauncours. It was fullie supposed, my knowinge to be ful in tho matters. Than lady I thought that euery man that by any waye of ryght, ryghtfully done, maye helpe anye comune helpe to been saued, whiche thing to kepe aboue all thinges I am holde to mayntaine, and namely in distroiyng of a wrong, al shulde I therthrough enpeche myne owne fere, if he wer gilty, and to do misdede assentaunt. And maister ne frende maye nought auaile, to the soule of hym that in falsenesse deyeth, and also that I nere desired wrathe of the people, ne indignacion of the worthy, for nothing that euer I wrought or dyd, in anye doinges my selfe els, but in the maintenaunce of these foresaid errours, and in hydyng of the priuities thereof.

"And that al the peoples hertes holding on the errours side, weren blinde and of elde so ferforthe begiled, that debate and strife they maintained, and in distruction on that other side, by whiche cause the peace, that moste in communaltie should be desired, was in pointe to be broken and adnulled. Also the cytye of London, that is to me so dere and swete, in whiche I was forth growen and more kindely loue haue I to that place than to any other in yerth, as euery kindly creature hath full appetite to that place of his kindely engendrure, and to wilne reste and peace in that stede to abyde: thilke peace should thus there haue been broken, and of al wise it is commended and desired. For knowe thynge it is, all menne that desiren to comen to the parfite peace euerlasting, muste the peace by God commended, bothe maintaine and kepe. This peace by angels voice was confirmed, our God entryng in this worlde. This as for his testament, he lefte to al his frendes, whan he retourned to the place from whence he came: this his apostell admonesteth to holden, without whiche man parfitly may haue none insight. Also this God by his comynge, made not peace alone betwene heuenly and yerthely bodies, but also among vs on yearth, so he peace confirmed, that in one heed of loue, one body we should perfourme. Also I remembre well howe the name of Athenes was rather after the God of peace, than of bataile, shewyng that peace moste is necessarie to communalties and cytyes. I than so stered by al these wayes to forne nempned, declared certain pointes in this wise. First that thilke persons that hadden me drawen to their purposes, and me not witting the priuy entent of their meaninge, drawen also the feoble witted people, that haue none insight of gubernatife prudence, to clamure and to crie on matters that they stired, and vnder pointes for commune auauntage, they enbolded the passife, to take in the actiues doyng, and also stired innocentes of conning to crie after thinges, whiche

(quod they) maye not stand but we ben executours of tho matters, and auctorite of execucion, by comen election to vs be delyuered, and that muste enter by strength of your maitenaunce, for we out of soch degree put, oppression of these olde hindrers shal againe surmounten and putten you in soche subiection, that in endlesse wo ye shul complaine. The gouernementes (quod thei) of your citee left in the handes of torcencious citezins, shal bring in pestilence and distrucion to you good menne, and therfore let vs haue the comune administracion to abate soche yuelles. Also (quod they) it is worthy the good to commende, and thy gilty desertes to chastice. There ben citezins many for ferde of execucion that shall be doone, for extorcions by hem committed ben euer more ayenst these purposes, and al other good meninges. Neuer the latter ladie, trewly the meaninge vnder these wordes, was fully to haue apeched the mighty senatours, whiche hadden heauy hertes for the misgouernaunce that they seen. And so lady, whan it fel that free eleccion, by great clamour of moche people, for great disease of misgouernaunce so ferquently stoden in hir election, that they hem submitted to euery maner face, rather than haue suffered the maner and the rule of the hated gouernours, notwithstandyng that in the contrary helden moch comune meiny, that haue no consideracion, but onelye to voluntary lustes withouten reason. But than thilke gouernour so forsaken, faininge to forne his vndoinge for misrule in his time, shope to haue letted thilke election, and haue made a newe himselfe to haue bene chosen, and vnder that mokyl rore haue arered. These thinges lady knowen amonge the princes, and made open to the people, draweth in amendement, that euery degree shal bene ordained to stande there as he shulde, and that of errours coming herafter, men may lightly to forne hande puruaye remedye, in thys wise, pace and rest to be furthered and hold. Of the which thinges ladie, thilke persons broughten in answer to forne, their most soueraine iudge, not coarted by paininge dures openly knowlegeden, and asked therof grace, so that apertely it preueth my words ben soche without forginge of leasinges.

" But nowe it greueth me to remembre these diners sentences, in iangling of these shepy people: certes me thinketh they oughten to maken ioy that a sothe maie be knowe. For my trouth and my conscience bene witnesse to me bothe, that this knowing sothe haue I saide for no harme, ne malyce of tho persones, but onely for trouth of my sacrement in my leigeaunce, by whiche I was charged on my kinges behalfe. But see ye not nowe lady, how the felonous thoughtes of this people, and couins of wicked men, conspiren ayeu my sothfast trouth. Se ye not euery wight that to these erronious opinions, were assentaunt and helpes to the noise, and knewen all these thinges better than I my seluen, apparayien to fynden newe frendes, and cleapen me false, and studyen howe they mowen in hir mouthes werse plyte nempne. O God what maye this be, that thylke folke which that in tyme of my mayntenaunce, and whan my might auailed to streth to the forsaid matters, the me commended, and yaue me name of trouth, in so manye folde meaneres, that it was nighe in euery wightes eare, there as any of thylke people weren: and on the other syde, thylke companie somtyme passed, yeuynge me name of badde loos. Nowe bothe tho peoples turned the good into badde, and badde into good, whiche thing is wonder, that they knowing me saiyng but soth arne nowe tempted to reply hir olde praysinges, and knowen me well in all doinges to ben trewe, and saine openly that I false haue said many thinges. And they aleged nothinge me to ben false or vntrewe, saue thilke mater knowleged by the parties hemselfe: and God wot other mater is none. Ye also lady knowe these thinges for trewe, I auaunte not in praising of myselfe, therby shulde I lese the precious secre of my conscience. But yet se well that false opinion of the people for my trouthe, in tellinge out of false conspired maters, and after the iudgement of these clerkes I shulde not hide the soth of no maner person, maister ne other, wherefore I wolde not drede, were it put in the consideracion of trewe and of wyse. And for comers hereafter shullen fully out of denwere, all the sothe knowe of these thinges in acte, but as they werne, I haue put it in scripture, in perpetuel remembraunce of true meaning. For truely lady me semeth, that I ought to beare the name of trouth, that for the loue of rightwisenesse haue thus me submitten: but nowe than the false fame whiche that clerkes saine flieth as faste as dothe the fame of trouthe, shall so wide sprede, til it be brought to the iewel that I of meane, and so shall I ben hindred withouten any measure of trouthe."

THAN gan Loue sadlye me beholde, and saide in a chaunged voyce, lower than she hadde spoken in any tyme. " Faine wolde I" (quod she) " that thou were holpen, but hast thou said any thinge, whiche thou might not prouen ?"—" Parde" (quod I) " the persons euery thinge as I haue said, han knowleged hem selfe."—" Yea" (quod she) " but what yf they hadden naied, how woldest thou haue mainteined it."—" Sothelye" (quod I) " it is well wiste bothe amongest the greatest, and other of the realme, that I profered my body so largely into prouinge of tho thinges, that Mars shuld haue iudged thende: but for sothnesse of my wordes they durst not to thilke iudge trust."—" Nowe certes" (quod she) " aboue all fames in this world, the name of marcyal doynges moste pleasen to ladies of my lore, but sythen thou were redy, and thine aduersaries in thy presence refused thilke doynge, thy fame ought to be so borne, as if inded it had take to the ende. And therfore euery wight that anye droppe of reason hath, and heareth of the infame, for these thinges hath this answere to saye: trewly thou saidest for thyne aduersaries thy wordes affirmed. And yf thou haddest lied, yet are they discomfited, the prise leaned on thy side, so that fame shall holde downe infame, he shall bringe vpon none half. What greueth thee thine enemy to saine their owne shame, as thus: we arn discomfited, and yet oure quarell is trewe. Shall not the loos of thy frendes, ayenward dequace thilke enfame, and say they graunted a sothe without a stroke or fighting. Many men in batail ben discomfited and ouercome in a right full quarell, that is Goddes priuy iudgement in Heauen: but yet although the partie be yolden, he may with wordes say his quarell is trew, and to yelde him in the contrarie for dread of dethe, he is compelled, and he that graunteth and no stroke hath feled, he may not crepe away in this wise, by none excusacion. Indifferent folke will say, ye who is trew, who is false him self

knowlegeth tho thinges. Thus in euery side fame sheweth to the good and no badde."—"But yet" (quod I) "some will saye I ne shuld for no death haue discouered my maistresse, and so by vnkindnes they wol knette infame to pursue me aboute: thus enemies of wil in manifold maner wol seche priuie serpentines queintises, to quenche and destroye venime of many businesses, the light of truthe, to make hertes to murmoure ayest my persone, to haue me in haine, withouten any cause."

"Nowe" (quod she) "heare me a fewe wordes, and thou shalt fully been answered, I trowe. Me thinketh" (quod she) "right nowe by thy woordes, that sacramente of swearyng, that is to saie, charging by othe was one of the causes, to make thee discouer, the malicious ymaginacions tofore nempned, euery othe by knittyng of copulacion, must haue these lawes. That is true iudgemente and rightwisenesse, in whiche thyng, if any of these lacke, the othe is iturned into the name of periurie: than to make a true sermente, muste nedes these thynges followe, for ofte tymes a man to saie sothe, but iudgement and iustice folowe, he is forsworne: ensample of Herodes for holdyng of his serment, was dampned.

"Also to saie truthe rightfulliche, but in iudgement otherwhile is forboden, by that all sothes be not to saine. Therefore in iudgement, in truthe and rightwisenesses, is euery creature bounden vp paine of periurie full knowyng to make, tho it were of his owne persone, for drede of sinne, after that worde better is it to dey, than liue false, and all wouldd peruerted people, false reporte make in vnkindnes, in that entent thy fame to reise, whan light of truthe in these matters is forthe sprongen, and openly published emong commons, than shall not soche dark enfame dare appeare, for pure shame of his falsnes, as some men there been that their owne enfame, can none otherwise voide, or els excuse, but be hindring of other mennes fame, whiche that by none other cause, clepen other men fals, but for with their owu falsnesse, mowen thei not been auaunsed, or els by false sclandryng woordes, other men shendin their owne true sclaunder, to make seme the lasse, for if soche men wouldden their iyen of their conscience reuoluen, shoulden seen the same sentence, thei legen on other, spring out of their sides, with so many branches, it wer impossible to nomber. The which therfore maie it be saied in that thing, this man thou demest, therein thyself thou condempnest. But" (quod she) "vnderstande not by these wordes, that thou wene me saie thee, to bee worthie sclander, for any matter tofore written, truly I would witnesse the contrary, but I saie that the beames of sclandring words maie not been dooen awaie, till the daie of dome. For how should it not yet emonges so great plentie of people, been many shrewes, sithen whan no mo but eighte persones, in Noes ship wer closed, yet one was a shrewe, and scorned his father. These things" (quod she) "I trowe, shewen that false fame is not to drede, ne of wise persones to accepte, and namely not of thy Margarite, whose wisedome hereafter I think to declare, wherfore I wot well soche thyng shall not her astert, than of vnkindnesse, thine oth hath thee excused at the full. But now if thou wouldest not greue, me liste a fewe thinges to shewe."

"Saie on" (quod I) "what ye wol, I trow ye mean but trouthe, and my profite in tyme commyng."

"Truelie" (quod she) "that is sothe, so thou con wel kepe these wordes, and in the inrest secrete chamber of thine herte, so faste hem close, that ther neuer flitte, than shalte thou finde hem auailyng. Looke now what people haste thou serued, whiche of hem all in tyme of thine exile euer thee refreshed, by the value of the lest coigned plate, that walketh in money. Who was sorie, or made any rueth for thy disease? If thei hadden getten their purpose of thy misauenture, sette thei not an haw. Lo whan thou wer enprisoned, howe faste thei hied in helpe of thy deliueraunce. I wene of thy death, thei yeue but lite: thei looked after no thyng, but after their owne lustes. And if thou liste saie the sothe, all that meinie that in this brigge thee broughten, lokeden rather after thyne helpes, than thee to haue releued.

"Owen not yet some of hem money for his commons? paidest not thou for some of hir dispences, till thei were tourned out of Selande? who yaue thee euer ought, for any ridyng thou maidest? Yet pardie, some of hem tooken money for thy chamber, and putte tho pens in his pourse, vnwetyng of the renter.

"Lo, for which a companie thou medlest, that neither thee, ne them self mighten helpe of vnkindenesse, nowe thei beare the naine, that thou supposest of hem for to haue. What might thou more haue doen, than thou diddest, but if thou wouldest in a false quarell, haue been a stinking martire? I wene thou fleddest as long as thou might, their priuitie to counsaile, which thyng thou beleste lenger than thou shouldest. And thilke that ought thee money, no pennie would paie, thei wend thy returne had been an impossible. How might thou better haue hem proued but thus in thy nedie diseases? Now haste thou ensample, for whom thou shalt meddle: truelie this lore is worth many goodes."

Ofte gan Loue to sterne me these wordes, "thinke on my spech, for truelie here after, it woll dooe thee likyng, and how so euer thou see Fortune shape her whele to tourne, this meditacion by no waie reuolue. For certes Fortune sheweth her fairest, whan she thinketh to begile. And as me thought here toforne, thou saidest thy loos in loue, for thy rightwisenesse ought to be raised, should bee alowed in tyme comyng. Thou might in loue so thee haue, that loos and fame shull so been raised, that to thy frendes comforte, and sorowe to thin enemies, endlesse shul endure.

"But if thou were that one shepe emonges the hundred, were luste in deserte, and out of the waie had erred, and nowe to the flocke art restored, the shepherde hath in thee no ioye, and thou ayen to the forreste tourne. But that right as the sorowe and anguishe was greate, in tyme of thyne out waie goyng, right so ioye and gladnes shall bee doubled, to seen thee conuerted, and not as Lothes wife ayen lookyng, but hoole counsaile with the shepe folowyng, and with them grasse and herbes gader. Neuer the later" (quod she) "I saie not these thynges for no wantruste that I haue, in supposyng of thee otherwise than I should. For truelie I wote wel, that now thou art sette in soche a purpose, out of whiche thee liste not to part. But I saie it, for many men ther been that to knowyng of other mennes doyngs, setten all their cure, and lightly desiren the badde to clatter, rather than the good,

and haue no will their owne maner to amende. Thei also hate of old rancour lightly hauen, and there that soche thing abideth, sodainly in their mouthes procedeth, the habundaunce of the herte, and wordes as stones, stones out throwe. Wherfore my counsaile is euermore, openlie and apertlie, in what place thou sit, counterplete therrours and meaninges, in as ferre as thou hem wistest false, and leaue for no wight, to make hem be knowe in euery bodies eare, and be alwaie pacient, and vse Jacobes woordes, what so euer menne of the clappen, I shall sustain my ladies wrathe, whiche I haue deserued, so long as my Margarite hath right wised my cause. And certes" (quod she) "I witnesse myself, if thou thus conuerted, sorowest in good meanyng in thyne herte, wolt from all vanitie partfitely departe, in consolacion of al good pleasaunce of that Margarite, which that thou desirest after wil of thine herte, in a maner of a mothers pitie, shull fullie accept thee into grace. For right as thou rentest clothes in open sight, so openlie to sowe hem at his worshippe, withouten reproofe commended. Also, right as thou were ensample of moche folde errour, right so thou muste bee ensample of manyfolde correccion, so good fauour to forgoyng all erroure destoiyng, causeth diligente loue, with many plaited praisynges to followe, and thau shall all the firste errours, make the followyng worshippes, to seme hugelie encreased, blacke and white sette togider, euery for other more semeth, and so doth euery things contrarie in kinde. But infame that goeth alwaie tofore, and praising worship by any cause folowyng after, maketh to rise thilke honour, in double of wealth, and that quencheth the spotte of the firste enfame. Why weneste I saie these thynges, in hinderyng of thy name? naie naie God wotte, but for pure encreasyng worshippe, thy right wisenesse to commende, and thy trouthe to seme the more. Woste not well thyself, that thou in forme of makyng, passeth not Adame, that eate of the apple. Thou passeth not the stedfastnes of Noe, that eatyng of the grape become dronke. Thou passeth not the chastitie of Lothe, that laie by his doughter. Eke the nobley of Abraham, whom God reproued by his pride. Also Dauides mekenesse, whiche for a woman made Urie bee slawe. What also Hector of Troie, in whom no defaute might bee founde, yet is he reproued that he ne had with manhood, not suffred the warre begon: ne Paris to haue went into Grece, by whome ganne all the sorowe: for truelie hym lacketh no venime of priuie consentyng, whiche that openly leaueth a wrong to withsaie. Lo eke an olde prouerbe, emong many other. He that is stille, semeth as he graunted.

"Now by these ensamples, thou might fully vnderstand, that these thinges been writ to your learning, and in rightwisnes of tho persones, as thus: to euery wight his defaut committed, made goodnesse afterwardes doen, be the more in reuerence, and in open shewyng, for ensample is it not song in holy churche. Lo how necessarie was Adams sinne, Dauid the kyng gatte Salomon the king, of her that was Uries wife. Truelie for reprofe, is none of these thynges writte: right so tho I rehearse thy before deede, I repreue thee neuer the more, ne for no villany of thee, are thei rehearsed, but for worship so thou continue well hereafter, and for profite of thy self, I rede thou on hem thinke."

Than saied I right thus. "Ladie of vnitie and accorde, enuie and wrathe lurken, there thou comeste in place, ye weten well yourselue, and so dooen many other, that while I administred the office of common doyng, as in rulyng of the stablishementes emonges the people, I defouled neuer my conscience for no maner deede, but euer by wit and by counsail of the wisest, the matters weren drawen, to their right endes. And thus truly for you ladie, I haue desired soche cure, and certes in your seruice was I not idle, as far as soch doing of my cure stretcheth."—"That is a thing" (quod she) "that may drawe many hertes of noble, and voyce of common into glorie, and fame is not but wretched and fickle.

"Alas, that mankinde couiteth in so leud a wise, to bee rewarded of any good deede, sithe glorie of fame in this worlde, is not but hinderyng of glorie in tyme commyng. And certes" (quod she) "yet at the hardeste soche fame into Heauen, is not the yearthe but a centre, to the cercle of Heauen. A pricke is wonder little, in respecte of all the cercle, and yet in all this pricke, maie no name be borne, in maner of persyng, for many obstacles, as waters and wildernesse, and straunge languages, and not onelie names of menne been stilled, and holden out of knowleging, by these obstacles, but also citees and realmes of prosperitie, been letted to be knowe, and their reason hindred, so that thei mow not been perfitely in mennes proper vnderstandyng. Howe should than the name of a singuler londenoys, passe the glorious name of London, whiche by many it is commended, and by many it is lacked, and in many mo places in yearth not knowen, than knowen: for in many countrees, little is London in knowyng, or in speache, and yet emong one maner of people, maie not soche fame in goodnesse come, for as many as praisen, commonly as many lacken. Fie than on soche maner fame; slepe and suffre him that knoweth priuitie of hertes, to deale soche faine in thilke place, there nothing ayenst a sothe shal neither speake, ne dare apere, by atturney, ne by other maner. How many greate named, and many greate in worthinesse losed, han bee tofore this tyme, that now out of memorie are slidden, and cleanly forgetten, for defaute of writynges, and yet scriptures for great elde, so been defased, that no perpetualtie maie in hem been iudged. But if thou wolt make comparison to euer, what ioye maiest thou haue in yearthly name, it is a faire likenesse, a pees or one graine of wheat, to a thousande shippes full of corne charged. What nomber is betwene the one and the other, and yet mowe bothe thei bee nombred, and ende in reckenyng haue. But truely al that maie be nombred, is nothing to recken, as to thilke that maie not bee nombred, for ofte thinges ended is made comparison, as one little, and other greate, but in thynges to haue an ende, and an other no ende, soche comparison maie not bee founden. Wherfore in Heauen to been losed, with God hath none ende, but endlesse endureth, and thou canste nothyng doen arighte, but thou desire the rumour thereof bee healed, and in euery wightes eare, and that dureth but a pricke, in respecte of the other. And so thou seekest rewarde of folkes, smale woordes, and of vain praisynges. Truelie therein thou lekeste the guerdone of vertue, and lesest the greatest valour of conscience, and vphap thy renome euerlastyng. Therefore boldly

renome of fame, of the yearth should be hated, and fame after death should be desired, of werkes of vertue asketh guerdoning, and the soule causeth all vertue. Than the soule delinered out of prison of yearthe, is moste worthie soche guerdone emong, to haue in the euerlastyng fame, and not the bodie, that causeth all mannes euils.

"Of twey thynges art thou answered, as me thinketh" (quod Loue) "and if any thyng be in doubte in thy soule, shewe it foorthe, thyne ignoraunce to cleare, and leaue it for no shame."—"Certes" (quod I) "there ne is no bodie in this worlde, that aught could saie by reason, ayenst any of your skilles, as I leue, and by my wit now fele I well, that euill speakers, or bearers of enfame, may little greue or let my purpose, but rather by soche thing my quarell to bee forthered."—"Yea" (quod she) "and it is proued also, that the ilke iewell in my kepyng, shall not there through bee stered, of the lest moment that might be imagined."—"That is sothe" (quod I). "Well" (quod she) "than leneth there, to declare that thy insuffisaunce, is no maner letting, as thus, for that she is so worthie, thou shouldest not climbe so high, for thy moebles and thine estate arn voided thou thinkeste fallen in soche miserie, that gladnes of thy pursute, woll not on thee discende."—"Certes" (quod I) "that is sothe: right soche thought is in mine herte, for commonlie it is spoken, and for an olde prouerbe it is ledged: he that heweth to hie, with chippes he maie lese his sight. Wherefore I haue been about in al that euer I might, to studie wayes of remedie, by one side or by an other." "Now" (quod she) "God forbede, ere thou seke any other doynges, but soche as I haue learned thee in our restyng whiles, and soche herbes as been planted in our gardins. Thou shalte well vnderstande, that aboue man is but one God alone." "How" (quod I) "han men to forne this tyme, trusted in writtes and chauntementes, and in helpes of spirites, that dwellen in the aire, and thereby thei han getten their desires, where as firste for all his manlie power he daunced behinde.

"O," (quod she) "fie on soche matters, for truelie that is sacrilege, and that shal haue no sort with any of my seruauntes, in myne iyen shal soche thing not be loked after. How often is it commanded by these passed wise, that to one God shall men serue, and not to goddes. And who that liste to haue mine helpes, shall aske non help of foule spirites. Alas, is not man maked semblable to God? Woste thou not well, that all vertue of liueliche werkyng by Goddes purueighaunce, is vnderput to reasonable creature in yerth? is not euery thyng a thisshalfe god, made buxome to mannes contemplacion, vnderstandyng in Heauen, and in Yearthe, and in Helle. Hath not manne beyng with stones, soule of wexyng with trees and herbes.

"Hath he not soule of feling, with beastes, fisshes, and foules, and he hath soule of reason, and vnderstanding with angels, so that in him is knitte all maner of liuinges, by a reasonable proporcion. Also man is made of all the fower elementes. All vniuersitie is rekened in him alone: he hath vnder God principalitie aboue al thinges. Now is his soule here, now a thousande mile hence, now farre, now nigh, now highe, now lowe, as farre in a moment, as in mountenaunce of ten winter, and all this is in mannes gouernaunce and disposicion. Than sheweth it, that menne been liche vnto goddes, and children of most height. But nowe sithen all thynges vnderput, to the wille of reasoble creatures, God forbede any man to win that lordship, and aske helpe of any thyng, lower than hym selfe, and than namelie of foule thynges innominable.

"Nowe than, why shouldest thou wene to lowe to high, sithen nothyng is thee aboue, but God alone. Truelie I wote well, that the ilke iewell is in a maner, euen in line of degree, there thou art thyselue, and nought aboue, saue thus. Angell vpon angell, man vpon man, and deuill vpon deuill, han a maner of souerainitie, and that shall cease at the daie of dome: and so I saie, though thou bee put to serue thilke iewell, duryng thy life, yet is that no seruage of vnderputyng, but a maner of trauailing pleasance, to conquere and get that thou haste not.

"I set nowe the hardest in my seruice, now thou deidest for sorowe, of wantyng in thy desires: truelie all heauenlie bodies, with one voyce shull come, and make melodie in thy coming, and saie welcome our fere, and worthie to enter into Jupiters ioy, for thou with mighte haste ouercome deathe, thou wouldest neuer flitte out of thy seruice, and we all shull now praie to the goddes, rowe by rowe, to make the ilke Margarite, that no routhe had in this persone, but vnkindely without comforte lette thee deie, shall beset herself in soch wise, that in yearth for part of vengeance, shall she no-ioye haue in loues seruice: and whan she is dedde, than shal her soule been brought vp into thy presence, and whider thou wilte chese, the ilke soule shal been committed. Or els after thy death, anone all the foresaid heauenlie bodies by one accorde, shall bee nommen from thilke perle, all the vertues that firste her were taken, for she hath hem forfeited, by that on thee my seruaunte, in thy line she would not suffer to worche all vertues, withdrawen by might of the high bodies: why than shouldest thou wene so any more. And if thee liste to looke vpon the lawe of kinde, and with order, whiche to me was ordained, sothlie none age, none ouertournyng tyme, but hitherto had no tyme ne power, to chaunge the weddyng, ne that knotte to vnbinde of two hertes, through one assente in my presence, togither accorden to enduren till death hem departe. What trowest thou euery ideot wot the meanyng and the priuie entente of these thinges? Thei wene for soth, that soche accorde maie not be, but the rose of maidenhede bee plucked, dooe waie dooe waie, thei knowe nothyng of this: for consente of twoo hertes alone, maketh the fastenyng of the knot, neither lawe of kind ne mannes lawe, determineth neither the age, ne the qualitie of persones, but onelie accorde betwene thilke twaie. And truelie, after tyme that soche accorde, by their consent in herte, is ensealed and put in my tresorie, emonges my priuie thinges: than ginneth the name of spousaile, and althoughe thei breaken forward bothe, yet soche matter ensealed, is kepte in remembraunce for euer. And se now that spouses haue the name anon after accorde, though the rose be not take. The aungell bade Joseph, take Mari his spouse, and to Egipt wende: lo she was cleped spouse, and yet toforne ne after, neither of hem bothe meante, no fleshely luste knowe, wherefore the wordes of trouth accorden, that my seruantes

shoulden forsake bothe father and mother, and be adherand to his spouse, and thei twoo in vnitie of one fleshe, shoulden accorde. And this wise twoo that werne firste, in a little maner disacordaunte, higher that one, and lower that other, been made euenliche in gree to stonde.

" But nowe to enforme thee, that ye been liche Goddes, these clerkes saine, and in determinacion shewen, that thre thinges hauen the names of goddes been cleped, that is to saine: man, deuill and images, but yet is there but one God, of whom all goodnesse, all grace, and all vertue cometh, and he is louyng and true, and euerlasting, and prime cause of all beyng thynges: but men been goddes, louing and true, but not euerlasting, and that is by adopcion, of the euer lastyng God. Deuils been goddes, stirring by a maner of liuyng, but neither been thei true, ne euerlasting, and their name of godlihede, thei han by vsurpacion, as the prophete saieth: all goddes of Gentiles, that is to saie, painims, are deuils. But images been goddes by nuncupacion, and thei been neither liuing ne true, ne euerlasting: after these woordes, thei clepen goddes images, wrought with mennes handes.

" But nowe reasonable creature, that by adoption alone, art to the greate God euerlastyng, and thereby thou art god cleaped: let thy fathers maners so entre thy wittes, that thou might folowe, in as moche as longeth to thee thy fathers worship, so that in nothing, thy kinde from his will decline, ne from his nobley pouertie. In this wise if thou werche, thou art aboue al other thinges, saue God alone, and so saie no more thine herte, to serue in to hie a place.

" Fullie haue I nowe declared, thin estate to be good, so thou followe thereafter, and that the abieccion first be thee aleged, in worthines of thy Margarite, shall not thee let, as it shall forther thee, and encrease thee, it is now to declare, the last obieccion in nothing maie greue."—" Yes certes" (quod I) " bothe greue, and let muste it nedes, the contrary maie not been proued, and see now why. While I was glorious in worldlie welfulnesse, and had soch goodes in wealth, as maken men riche, tho was I drawe into compaignies that loos, prise, and name yeuen: tho louteden blasours, tho curreiden glosours, tho welcomeden flatterers, tho worshipped thilk, that now deinen not to looke. Euery wight in soche yearthlie weale habundaunt, is hold noble, precious, benigne, and wise, to dooe what he shall, in any degree that men hym set, all be it that the sothe be in the contrary of all tho thinges: but he that can, ne neuer so wel him behaue, and hath vertue haboundaunte, in manyfolde maners, and be not wealthed with soche yearthlie goodes, is holde for a foole, and saied his wit is but sotted. Lo how false for auer is holde true. Lo howe true is cleaped false, forwantyng of goodes. Also ladie, dignitees of office, maken menne mikell comended, as thus: he is so good, wer he out, his pere should men not find. Truelie I trowe of some soch that are so praised, were thei out ones, an other should make him so bee knowe, he should of no wise no more been loked after: but onely fooles well I wot, desiren soche newe thinges. Wherfore I wonder that thilke gouernour, out of whom alone the causes proceden, that gouernen all thinges, which that hath ordeined this worlde, in werkes of the kindly bodies so be gouerned, not with vnstedfast or happious thinge, but with rules of reason, whiche shewen the course of certain thinges: why suffreth he soche sliding chaunges, that misturnen soche noble thinges as been we men, that arne a faire persell of the yearth, and holden the vpperest degree vnder God of benigne thinges, as ye saiden right now your self, should neuer man haue been set in so worthie a place, but if his degree were ordained noble. Alas, thou that knittest the purueighaunce of all thynges, why lookest thou not to amenden these defautes: I see shrewes that han wicked maners, sitten in chaires of domes, lambes to punishen, there wolues should been punished. Lo, vertue shined naturelly, for pouertie lurketh, and is hid vnder cloude: but the More false forsworne, as I knowe myself, for auer and yeftes hath vsurped, to shine by daie light, with peinture of other mennes praisynges: and truely thilke forged light fouly should fade, were the trouth awaie of colours feined. Thus is night tourned into daie, and daie into night, winter into sommer, and sommer into winter, not in dede but in miscleapyng of foolishe people."

" Nowe" (quod she) " what weneste thou of these thynges? how felest thou in thyne herte, by what gouernance that this cometh about?

" Certes" (quod I) " that wotte I neuer, but if it be, that Fortune hath graunt from aboue, to lede the ende of menne as her liketh."—" Al now I se" (quod she) " the entent of thy meanyng: lo, bicause thy worldly goodes, been fulliche dispente, thou berafte out of dignitie of office, in which thou madest thy gathering, of thilke goodes, and yet diddest in that office, by counsaile of wise, any thynge were ended: and true were vnto hem, whose profite thou shouldest looke, and seest now many, that in the ilke heruest made of thee mokell, and now for glosyng of other, deineth thee nought to forther, but enhaunsen fals shrewes, by witnessyng of trouthe. These thinges greueth thine herte, to seen thyself thus abated, and than frailtie of mankinde ne setteth but litle, by the lesers of soche richesse, haue he neuer so moche vertue, and so thou wenest of thy iewell, to renne in dispite, and not been accepted into grace: all this shall thee nothyng hinder. Now" (quod she) " first thou woste well, thou lostest nothyng, that euer mightest thou chalenge for thine own: whan nature brought thee forth, come thou not naked, out of thy mothers womb? thou haddest no richesse, and whan thou shalt enter, into the ende of euery fleshly bodie, what shalte thou haue with thee than? So euery richesse thou haste, in tyme of thy liuing nis but lent, thou might therin chalenge no propertie. And se now, euery thing that is a mannes owne, he maie dooe therewith what hym liketh, to yeue or to keepe: but richesse thou plainest from thee loste, if thy might had stretched so ferforthe, faine thou wouldes haue kepte, multiplied with mo other: and so ayenste thy will, been thei departed from thee, wherefose thei wer neuer thine. And if thou laudest and ioyest any wight, for he is stuffed with soche maner richesse, thou art in that beleue begiled, for thou wenest thilk ioye to be selinesse, or els ease, and he that hath loste soche haps, to been vnsesie."—" Ye forsothe" (quod I). " Well" (quod she) " than woll I proue that vnsely, in that wise is to praise, and so the tother is the contrary to be lacked."—" Howe so" (quod I)? " For

vnselie" (quod she) "begileth not, but sheweth the entent of her workyng. Et e contra. Selinesse begileth, for in prosperitie, she maketh a iape in blindenesse, that is she windeth hym to make sorowe, whan she withdraweth. Wolte thou not" (quod she) "praise hym better, that sheweth to thee his herte, tho it be with bitande wordes, and dispitous, than hym that gloseth, and thinketh in their absence, to dooe the many harmes."—"Certes" (quod I) "the one is to commende, and the other to lacke and dispise."—"Aha" (quod she) "right so ease while he lasteth, gloseth and flattereth, and lightly voideth, whan she moste pleasauntly sheweth, and euer in her absence, she is aboute to dooe thee tene and sorowe in herte: but vnselie all bee it with bitande chere, sheweth what she is, and so dooeth not that other, wherefore vnselie doeth not begile. Selinesse disceiueth: vnselie put awaie doubt. That one maketh men blind, that other openeth their iyen, in shewyng of wretchednesse. The one is full of drede, to lese that is not his owne: that other is sober, and maketh men discharged of mokell heauinesse in burthen: the one draweth a man from very good, the other haleth him to vertue, by the hokes of thoughtes. And wenest thou not, that thy disease hath doen thee mokell more to winne, than euer yet thou lostest? And more than euer the contrary made thee winne. Is not a greate good to thy thinking, for to knowe the hertes of thy sothfast frendes. Parde thei been proued to the full, and the true haue disceuered from the false. Truely at the goyng of thilke brotell ioye, there yede no more awaie, than the ilke that was not thyne proper: he was neuer from that lightly departed, thine own good therfore leaueth it stil with the. Nowe good" (quod she) "for how moche woldest thou sometyme haue bought, this very knowynge of thy frendes, frome the flaterynge flyes that they glosed, whan thou thought thy selfe sely. But thou that plainest of losse in richesse, hast founden the most dere worthy thinge that thou cleapest vnsely, hath made the moche thing to winnen. And also for conclusioun of all, he is frend that nowe leueth not his herte from thin helpes. And if that Margarit denieth now not to suffre her vertues shine to the wardes wyth spreadinge beames, as farre or farther than if thou were sely in worldely ioye: trewly I saye not elles but she is some dele to blame."

"Ah, peace" (quod I) "and speake no more of thys mine herte braketh, nowe thou touchest any soche wordes."—"A well" (quod she) "thanne lette vs syngen, thou herest no more of these thinges at this thime."

THUS ENDETH THE FIRST BOOKE OF THE TESTAMENT OF LOUE, AND HERE AFTER FOLOWETH THE SECONDE.

BOOK II.

VERY welth maye not be founden in al this world, and that is wel sene: lo howe in my moste comfort, as I wende and most suposed to haue had full answer of my contrary thoughtes, sodainly it was vanished. And all the workes of man faren in the same wise whan folke wenen beste hir entente for to haue, and willes to perfourme, anon chaunging of the lift side to the right halue, tourneth it so clene in to another kind, that neuer shal it come to the firste plite in doinge.

O this wrongful steering so soone, otherwised out of knowing, but for my purpose was at my beginninge, and so dureth yet, yf God of his grace tyme woll me graunt, I thinke to performe this worke, as I haue begonne in loue, after as my thinne witte, wyth inspyracyon of him that hildeth all grace woll suffre. Greuouslye God wotte haue I suffred a great throwe that the Romayn emperour, whiche in vnyte of loue shuld accorde and euery with other, in cause of other to auaunce, and namely sithe this empire to be corrected of so many sectes in heresy, of faith, of seruice, of rule in loues religion. Trewly all were it but to shende erronious opinions, I maye it no lenger suffre: for many menne there ben that sain loue to ben in grauell and sande, that with sea ebbing and flowing woweth, as riches that sodainly wanisheth. And some saine that loue shulde be in windy blastes, that stoundemele tourneth as a phane, and glorie of renome, whiche after lustes of the variaunt people is areysed or stilled. Manie also wenen that in the Sunne and the Moone, and other sterres, loue shulde ben founden, for amonge all othef planettes moste souerainlie they shinen, as dignitees in reuerence of estates rather than good han, and occupien. Full many also there ben that in okes and in huge postes supposen loue to ben grounded, as in strength and in might, which mowen not helpen their owen wretchednesse, whan they ginne to fal. But soche diuersite of sectes ayenst the rightfull byleue of loue, these errours been forth spredde, that loues seruauntes in the treue rule and stedfast faith, in no place darne apere: thus irrecuparable ioy is went, and anoy endlesse is entred. For no man aright reproueth soche errours, but comfirmen their wordes, and sain that badde is noble good, and goodnes is badde, to whiche folke the prophet biddeth, wo without ende.

Also many tongues of great false techinges in gilinge maner, principallye in my times, not onely with wordes, but also with armes, loues seruaunts and profesee in his religion of trew rule, pursewen to confounden and to distroyen. And for as moche as holy fathers, that our christen faithe aproued and strengthed to the Iewes, as to men reasonable, and of diuinite lerned, proued thilke faithe with reasones, and with auctoritees of the Olde Testament, and of the Newe, hir pertinacie to distroy: but to painyms, that for beestes and hounde wer holde to putte hem out of their errour, was myracles of God shewed. These thinges were figured by coming of thangell to the shepeherdes, and by the sterre to painims kinges as who saith: angel reasonable to reasonable creature and sterre of miracle to people bestiall not learned, werne sent to enforme. But I ouersclerke in al my conning and with al my mightes, trewly I haue no soche grace in vertue of miracles, ne for no disconfite falshedes, suffiseth not auctorites alone, sithen that suche heretikes and mayntaynours of falsites. Wherfore I wot well sithen that they been men, and reason is approued in hem, the clonde of errour hath hir reason bewond probable reasons, whiche that catchende wit rightfully may not with sitte. But my trauaillynge studie I haue ordeined hem, with that auctorite mysglosed by mannes reason to graunt shall bee enduced.

Now ginneth my penne to quake, to thinken on the sentences of the enuious people, whiche alwaye been redy, both ryder and goer to skorne, and to iape this leude booke and me for rancoure and hate in their hertes they shulleu so dispyse, that althoughe my booke be leude, yet shal it ben more leude holden, and by wicked wordes in manye maner apaired. Certes me thinketh the sowne of their badde speche, right nowe is full bothe mine eares. O good precious Margarite, mine herte shulde wepe, yf I wist ye token hede of soche maner speche, but trewly I wotte wel in that your wysedome shall not asterte. For of God maker of kind witnesse I toke, that for none enuy ne yuel haue I drawe this matter togider, but only for goodnesse to maintain, and errours in falsetes to distroy. Wherfore (as I said) with reason I thinke, thilke for said errours to distroye and dequace. These resons and soch other, yf they enduce men in loues seruice, trewe to beleue of parfite blisse, yet to full faithe in credence of desert, fully nowe they not suffise, sithen faith hath no merite of mede, whan mannes reason sheweth experience in doing. For vtterly no reason the parfite blisse of loue by no way maye make to be comprehended. Lo what is a persell of louers ioye, parfite science in good seruice, of their desire to comprehende in bodely doinge, the liking of the soule, nat as by a glasse to haue contemplacion of tyme conninge, but thilke firste imagined and thought, after face to face in beholdinge: what herte, what reason, what vnderstandinge can make his Heuen to be feled and know without assay of doing: certes none. Sithen than of loue cometh soche fruite in blisse, and loue in him selfe is the moste amonge other vertues, as clerkes sain: the sede of soche springinge in all places, in all countreis, in all worldes shulde been sowe.

But o well away thilke sede is forsake, and nowen not been suffred the loude tillers to set a werke, without moddlyng of cockle, badde wedes which somtime stonken hath caught the name of loue amonge ydiotes and badde meaning people. Neuer the latter, yet howe so it be that menne cleape thilke kinge preciousest in kinde, with many eke names, that other thinges, that the soule yeuen the ilke noble name, it sheweth well that in a maner men haue a great lyking in wurshipping of thilke name; wherfore this worke haue I writte, and to the tytled of loues name, I haue it auowed in a maner of sacrifice, that where euer it be radde, it mow in merite be the excellence of thilke name the more wex in authorite and wurshippe of takinge in hede, and to what entente it was ordained, the in feeres mowen been moued: euery thinge to whome is owande occasion done as for his ende, Aristotle supposeth that the actes of euery thinge been in a maner his finall cause. A final cause is noblerer, or els euen as noble as thilke thinge that is finally to thilke ende, wherfore accion of thinge euerlasting is demed to be eternall, and not temporall, sithen it is his finall cause: right so the actes of my booke loue, and loue is noble, wherfore though my booke be leude, the cause with whiche I am stered, and for whom I ought it don, noble forsothe been bothe. But bycause that in conninge I am yonge, and canne yet but crepe, thys leude A, b, c, haue I set in to lerning, for I can not passen the tellinge of thre as yet: and yf God will in shorte time, I shall amend this leudnesse in ioyninge of sillables, which thing for dulnesse of witte I maye not in thre letters declare. For trewly I say the goodnesse of my Magarite perle wolde yeue matter enditinge to many clerkes: certes her mercy is more to me swetter than anye lyuynges, wherfore my lyppes mowen not suffice in speaking of her ful laude and worshippe as they shuld. But who is that in knowing of the orders of Heuen, and putteth his resones in the erthe: I forsothe may not with blere eyen, the shininge Sonne of vertue in bright whele of this Margarite beholde, therfore as yet I maye her not discriue in vertue as I wolde. In time comming in another tretise thorow Goddes grace, this Sonne clerenesse of vertue to be knowe, and howe she enluminethe al this day, I think to declare.

In this meane while this comfortable lady gan sing, a wounder mater of enditing in Latin, but trewly the noble colours in rhetorike, wise knit were so craftely, that my conning woll not stretche to remembre, but the sentence I trowe somedele haue I in minde. Certes they were wonder swete of sowne, and they were touched al in lamentacion wise, and by no werbelles of mirthe lo thus ganne she sing in Latin, as I may constrewe it in our Englishe tonge.

"Alas that these heuenlye bodies their lyght and course shewen, as nature yaue hem in commaundement at the ginning of the firste age, but these thinges in fre choise of reason han none vnderstandinge: but manne that ought to passe all thynge of doinge, of right course in kinde, ouer whelmed sothenesse by wrongful tytle, and hath drawen the sterre of enuy to gon by his side that the clipes of me that shoulde be his shinande Soune, so ofte is sey, that it wened thilke errour thorowe hem come in, shulde been myne owne defaute. Trewly therfore I haue me withdrawe, and made my dwellynge out of lande in an yle by my selfe, in the occian closed, and yet saine there many they haue me harberowed, but God wot they faylen. These thinges me greuen to thinke, and namely on passed gladnesse, that in this worlde was wonte me disporte of highe and lowe, and nowe it is failed: they that wolden maistries me haue in thilke stoundes. I Heauen on high aboue Saturnes sphere, in seasonable tyme wer they loged, but nowe come queinte counsaillours that in no house woll suffre me seiourne, wherof is pite: and yet sain some that they me haue in celler with wine shed, in garnere their corne is laide, couered with whet, in sacke sowed with wol, in purse with money faste knitte, among pannes mouled in a wiche, in presse among clothes laid with riche pelure araied, in stable amonge horse and other beestes as hogges, shepe, and nete, and in other maner wise. But thou maker of light (in winkinge of thin iye the Sonne is queint) woste right well that I in trewe name was neuer thus herberowed. Somtyme to forne the Soune in the seuenth partie was smiten, I bare both crosse and mitre, to yeue it were I wolde. With me the pope went a fote, and I tho was wurshiped of al holy churche, kinges baden me their crownes holden. The lawe was set as it shuld: tofore the iudge as wel that pore durst shewe his grefe as the riche, for all his money. I defended tho tailages, and was redy for the poore to pay. I made great feestes in my time and noble songes, and maried damoselles of

gentill feture, withouten golde or other rychesse. Poore clerkes for witte of schole, I sette in churches, and made soche persones to preache: and tho was seruice in holy churches honest and deuoute, in plesaunce bothe of God and of the people. But nowe the leude for simonie is auanced, and shendeth al holye churche. Now is steward for his achates, nowe is courtiour for his debates, now is eschetoure for his wronges, nowe is losell for his songes, personer and prouendre alone, with whiche many thriftye shulde encrease. And yet is this shrewe behinde, fre herte is forsake, and losengeour is take. Lo it accordeth, for soche there ben that voluntarie lustes haunten in courte with ribaudrie, that til midnight and more wol playe and wake, but in the churche at matins he is behinde, for euil disposicion of his stomake: therfore he shuld eate beane breade, and so dyd his sire, his estate there with to strengthen. His aulter is broke, and lowe lithe in pointe to gone to the yerthe, but his horse must ben easy and hie to beare him ouer greate waters. His chalice poore, but he hath riche cuppes. No towaile but a shete there God shall been handeled. And on his meate borde there shall been borde clothes and to welles many paire. At masse serueth but a clergion: fiue squiers in hall. Poore chauncell, open holes in euery side: beddes of silke with tapites going al about his chambre. Poore masse booke and leude chapelaine, and broken surplice with manye an hole: good houndes and manye, to hunte after harte and hare, to fede in their feestes. Of poore men haue they greate care, for they euer craue, and nothing offren, they wolden haue hem doluen. But amonge legystres there dare I not come, my doinge they saine maked hem nedie, they ne wolde for nothing haue me in town, for than wer tort and forth nought worthe an haw about, and pleasen no men, but thilke greuous and torcious been in might and in doinge: these thinges toforne said mowe wel if men liste ryme, trewly they acorde nothinge. And for as moch as al thinges by me shulden of right ben gouerned, I am sorye to se that gouernaunce faileth, as thus: to sene smale and low gouerne the hie, and bodies aboue. Certes that polisye is nought, it is forbode by them that of gouernaunce treaten and enformen. And right as beestly witte shulde ben subiecte to reason, so erthely power in it self, the lower shuld ben subiect to the hier.

"What is worth thy body but it be gouerned with thy soule? right so litel or nought is worthe erthely power, but if regnatife prudence in heedes gouerne the smale, to whiche heedes the smal owen to obey, and suffice in their gouernaunce. But souerainnesse ayenwarde shulde thinke in this wise; I am seruaunt of these creatures to me deliuered; not lord but defendour: not maister but enfourmer; not possessour but in possessyon, and to hemlyche a tree in whiche sparowes shullen stelen, here byrdes to norishe and forth bringe vnder sueritie ayenst al reueinous foules and beestes, and not to be tiraunt them selfe. And than the smale in reste and quiete, by the heedes wel disposed, owen for their soueraines helth and prosperite to pray; and in other doinges, in maintenaunce thereof performe wythouten other administracion in rule of anye maner gouernaunce. And they wit haue in hem, and grace to come to soch thinges, yet shuld they cease tyll their heedes them cleped, although profit and pleasaunce shulde folowe. But trewly other gouernaunce ne other medlinge ought they not to claime, ne the heedes on hem to put. Trewly amonges cosinage dare I not come, but if richesse be my meane, sothly she and other bodily goods maketh nigh cosinage, ther neuer propinquite ne alyaunce in lyue was, ne shulde haue be, nere it for her medlinge maners, wherfore kindely am I not there leged. Pouert of kindred is behind, richesse suffreth him to passe: truly he saithe he come neuer of Iaphetes children: wherof I am sory that Iaphetes children for pouert, in no linage ben rekened, and Caines children for riches be maked Iaphetes heirs. Alas this is a wonder chaunge bytwene tho two Noes chidren, sithen that of Iaphetes ofspringe comeden knyghtes, and of Cain discended the line of seruage to his brothers children. Lo howe gentilnesse and seruage as cosins, both discended out of two bretherne of one body: wherefor I say sothnesse that gentilesse in kinrede maken not gentil linage in succession, without desert of a mannes own selfe. Where is nowe the lyne of Alysaundrie the noble, or els of Hector of Troye? Who is discended of right blode of lyne fro kinge Artour? Parde sir Perdicas, whom that kinge Alysandre made to been his heire in Grece, was of no kinges blod, his dame was a tonbystere. Of what kinred been the gentils in our daies: I trow therfore if any good be in gentylesse, it is onely that it semeth a maner of necessyte be input to gentilmen, that they shulden not varien fro the vertues of their auncestres. Certes all mauer lynage of men bene euen lyche in birth, for one father maker of all goodnes enformed hem al, and al mortal folke of one sede are greined. Wherto auaunt men of hir lynage, in cosinage or in elde fathers. Loke nowe the ginning, and to God maker of mans person, there is no clerke ne no worthy in gentilesse: and he that norisheth he his corare with vices and vnresonable lustes, and leueth the kinde course, to whiche ende him brought forthe his byrthe, trewly he is vngentil, and amonge clerkes may been nempned. And therefore he that wol been gentil, he mote daunten his fleshe fro vyces that causen vngentilnesse, and leaue also reignes of wicked lustes, and draw to him vertue, that in al places gentilnesse gentilmen maketh. And so speake I in feminine gendre in generall, of tho persones at the reuerence of one, whom euery wight honoureth, for her bountie an her noblesse ymade her to God so dere that his mother she became, and she me hath had so great in worship, that I nil for nothinge in open declare that in any thing ayenst her fecte maye so wene: for al vertue and al worthinesse of plesaunce in hem haboundeth. And although I wolde any thing speake, truly I can not, I may finde in yuel of hem no mauer mater."

Right with these wordes she stinte of that lamentable melodie, and I ganne with a lyuely herte to praye, if that it were lykynge vnto her noble grace, she wolde her deine to declare me the mater that first was begonne in whiche she lefte and stinte to speake beforne she ganne to singe.

"O" (quod she) "this is no newe thynge to me to sene you menne desyren after mater, whiche your selfe caused to voyde."

"Ah good lady" (quod I) "in whom victorye of strength is proued aboue all other thing, after the

indgement of Esdram, whose lordshyp al lignes: who is that right as emperour hem commaundeth, whether thilke ben not women, in whose likenesse to me ye aperen. For right as man halte the principalte of al thing vnder his beinge, in the masculyne gender, and no mo genders been there but masculine, and femynyne, all the remnaunte been no genders but of grace, in facultie of grammer. Ryght so in the feminine, the women holden the ypperest degree of al thinges, vnder thilke gendre conteyned. Who bringeth forth kinges, which that been lordes of see and of yerthe, and al peoples of women ben borne: they norishe hem that graffen vines, they make men comforte in their gladde cheres. Hir sorowe is death to mannes herte. Without women the beyng of men were impossible. They conne with their swetenesse the cruel herte rauish and make it meke, buxome, and benyng, without violence meuing. In beautie of their eyen, or elles of other manere fetures is all mens desires, ye more than in golde, precycious stones, eyther anye richesse. And in this degree lady your self manye hertes of men haue so bounden, that parfite blisse in womankind to ben men wenen, and in nothinge els. Also lady the goodnesse the vertue of women, by propertie of discrecion, is so wel knowen, by litelnesse of malice, that desire to a good asker by no way conne they warne, and ye thanne that woll not passe the kinde werehinge of your sectes by general discrecion, I wotte well ye woll so encline to by prayere, that grace of my requeste shal fully been graunted."—"Certes" (quod she) "thus for the more parte fareth al mankinde to praye, and to crie after womans grace, and faine manie fantasies to make hertes to encline to your desires: and whan these sely women frely of their kind beleuen your wordes, and wenen all be gospell the promise of your behestes, than graunt they to you their hertes, and full fyllen your lustus, wherthrough their liberte in maistership that they toforne had is thralled, and so maked souerain and to be praid, that first was seruaunt, and voice of prayer vsed. Anone as filled is your luste manye of you be so trewe, that litell hede take ye of soche kindnesse, but with traisoun anone ye thinke hem begile, and let light of that thynge whiche first ye maked to you wonders dere, so what thing to women is to loue any wight er she him well know, and haue him proued in many halfe, for euery glittering thing is not golde, and vnder colour of faire speche many vices may be hid and conseled. Therfore I rede no wight to trust on you to rath mens chere, and hir speche right gileful is ful ofte, wherfore without good assaye, it is not worthe on many on you to truste: truly it is right kindly to euery man that thinketh women betraye, and shewen outward al goodnes, tyl he haue his wil performed. Lo the birde is begiled with the mery voice of the foulers whistell. Whan a woman is closed in your nette, than wol ye causes finden, and beare vnkindnes her on hande, or falset vpon her putte, your own malicious traison with soche thing to excuse. Lo than han women non other wreche in vengeaunce, but bloder and wepe til hem lyst stint, and sorily hir mishap complaine, and is put in to wonyng that al men ben so vntrew. How-often haue men chaunged hir loues in a litel while, or els for failing their wil in their places hem sette: for frendship shal be one, and fame with another him list for to haue, and a thirde for delyte, or els were he lost both in packe and in clothes: is this faire, nay God wot? I maye nat tel by thousand partes, the wronges in trechery of soche false people, for make they neuer so good a bonde, all set ye at a myte whan youre herte tourneth: and they that wenen for sorow of you dey, the pite of your false herte is flow out of towne. Alas therfore, that euer any woman wolde take any wighte in her grace, til she know at the ful on whome she might at all assayes truste. Women con no more crafte in queinte knowinge, to vnderstande the false disceiuable coniectementes of mannes begilinges. Lo howe it fareth, though ye men gronen and crien, certes it is but disceit, and that preueth wel by thendes in your werking. How manye women haue bene lorne, and with shame foule shent by longe lastynge time, whiche thorowe mennes gile haue been disceiued? euer their fame shall dure, and their dedes radde and songe in many londes, that they han doue recoueren shal they neuer, but alway been demed lightly, in soche plite ayen shulde they fal, of whiche slaunders and tenes ye false men and wicked bene the very causes, on you by right ought these shames and these reproues all holy discende. Thus arne ye al nighe vntrewe, for all your faire speche your herte is full fickell. What cause han ye women to dispise? better fruite than they bene, ne swetter spices to your behoue mowe ye not finde, as farre as wordly bodyes stretchen. Loke to their forminge at the makinge of their persones by God in ioye of paradice, for goodnesse of mannes propre bodye were they maked, after the sawes of the Bible, rehersing Godds wordes in this wise: it is good to mankinde that we make to him an helper. Lo in paradise for youre helpe was this tree grafted, out of whiche all linage of man discendeth: yf a man be noble frute of noble frute it is sprongen: the blysse of paradise to mennes sory hertes, yet in this tree abydeth. O noble helpes ben these trees, and gentil iewel to ben worshipped of euery good creature: he that hem anoith doth his owne shame, it is a comfortable perle ayenst al tenes. Euery company is mirthed by their present being. Trewly I wist neuer vertue, but a woman were therof the rote. What his Heauen the worse, though Sarazins on it lien? is your faith vntrew though rennogates maken theron leasinges. If the fire doth anye wight bren, blame his own witte that put himself so farre in the heate. Is not fyre gentillest and moste element comfortable amonges all other? fire is chefe werker in forthering sustenaunce to mankinde, shal fire bene blamed for it brend a foole naturelly, by his owne stulty witte in steringe. Ah wicked folkes, for your propre malice, and shrewdenesse of your self, ye blame and dispise the precious thinge of your kinde, and whiche thinges amonge other most ye desiren. Trewly Nero and his children been shrewes, that dispisen so their dames. The wickednesse and giling of men, in disclaundring of thilke that most hath hem gladded and pleased, were impossible to write or to nempne. Neuer the later yet I saye he that knoweth a waye, may it lightly passe: eke an herbe proued may safely to smertande sores ben laide: so I say in him that is proued is nothing soch yuels to gesse. But these thinges haue I rehersed to warne you women all at ones, that to lyghtly without good assay ye assenten not to

mans speche. The Sonne in the day light, is to knowen from the Moone that shineth in the nighte. Nowe to thee thy self" (quod she) "as I haue oft said, I know wel thine herte, thou arte none of all the tofore nempned people, for I know wel the continuaunce of thy seruice, that neuer sithen I set the a werke, might thy Margarite for pleasaunce, frendeship, ne fairehede of none other be in pointe moued from thin herte, wherfore in to myne household hastelye I woll that thou entre, and all the parfyte priuyte of my werkynge make it bee knowe in thy vnderstandynge, as one of my priuy familyers. Thou desirest" (quod she) "faine to here of tho thiges there I left."

"Ye forsothe" (quod I) "that were to me a great blisse."—"Nowe" (quod she) "for thou shalt not wene that womans condicyons for faire speche, soche thinge belongeth.

"Thou shalte" (quod she) "vnderstand first amonge all other thynges, that all the cure of my seruyce, to me in the parfyte blisse in doinge, is desyred in euery mannes herte, be he neuer so moche a wretche, but euery man travaileth by diuers studye, and seke thilke blysse by diuers waies, but all the endes are knitte in selynesse of desire in the perfite blisse, that is soche ioye, whan men it haue gotten, there liueth no thing more to ben coueited: but how that desire of soche perfection in my seruice be kindely set in louers hertes, yet hir erronious opinions misturne it by falsenesse of wenynge. And although mennes vnderstandinge be misturned, to knowe whiche shoulde been the waye vnto my persone, and whyther it abydeth: yet wote they ther is a loue in euery wight, weneth by that thing that he coueyteth most, he shoulde come to thilke loue, and that is parfite blysse of my seruauntes, but than fulle blysse maye not bee, and there lacke anye thinge of that blisse in anye side. Eke it foloweth than, that he that muste haue ful blysse, lacke no blysse in loue on no side."

"Therfore lady" (quod I tho) "thilke blisse I haue desired, and sothe to forne this my self by wayes of riches, of dignite, of power, and of renome, weninge me in tho thrages had ben thilke blisse, but ayenst the heere it turneth. Whan I supposed best thilke blisse haue get and come to the full purpose of your seruice, sodainly was I hindred, and throwen so fer abacke, that me thinketh an impossible to come there I lefte."—"I wol" (quod she) "and therfore haste thou failed, for you wentest not by the hye waye, a litell misgoynge in the ginning, causeth mikel errour in the ende, wherefore of thilke blisse thou failedest for hauing of richesse, ne none of thother thinges thou nempnedest, mowen not make soche perfite blisse in loue, as I shall shewe. Therfore thei be not worthie to thilke blisse; and yet somewhat must been cause and waie to thilke blisse: ergo there is some soche thing, and some waie, but it is little in vsage, and that is not openly iknow. But what felest in thyn herte of the seruice, in which by me thou art entred: wenest aught thy self, yet bee in the hie waie to my blisse? I shall so shewe it to thee, thou shalt not con saie the contrary."

"Good ladie" (quod I) "altho I suppose it in my herte, yet would I heare thyne wordes, how ye meane in this matter." (Quod she) "that I shall with my good will. The ilke blisse desired, somedeale ye knowen, altho it bee not perfitely, for kindelie entencion leadeth you thereto, but in three maner liuynges, is all soche waies shewed. Euery wight in this worlde to haue this blisse, one of the ilke three waies of liues muste proceade, whiche after opinions of greate clerkes, arne by names cleped, beastialliche, reasonabliche, in vertuous: manliche is worldliche, beastialich is lustes and delitable, nothing restrained by bridle of reason, all that ioieth and yeueth gladnesse to the herte, and it be ayenst reason, is likened to bestitall liuing, whiche thing followeth lustes and delites, wherfore in soche thing maie not that precious blisse, that is maister of al vertues abide, Your fathers toforne you, haue cleaped soche lustie liuynges, after the flesh passions of desire, whiche are innominable tofore God and man bothe. Than after determinacion of soche wise, wee accorden that soche passions of desire, shull not been nempned, but holden for absolute from all other liuinges and prouinges, and so liueth into liuinges, manliche and reasonable, to declare the matters begon. But to make thee fullie haue vnderstanding in manliche liuinges, which is holden worldlich in these things, so that ignoraunce be made no letter, I wol" (quod she) "nempne these forsaied waies by names and conclusions.

"Firste, riches, dignitee, renomme, and power, shull in this woorke bee cleaped bodily goodes, for in hem hath been a great throw mannes trust of silines in loue, as in riches suffisaunce to haue maintained that was begonne, by worldlie eattell in dignitie, honour, and reuerence of hem that werne vnderput, by maistrie thereby to obeie. In renome glory of peoples praising, after lustes in their herte, without hede taking to qualitie and maner of doyng, and in power, by trouth of lordships mainteinaunce, thing to procede foorthe in dooyng. In all whiche thynges a longe tyme, mannes coueitise in commune hath been greatly grounded, to come to the blis of my seruice, but truely thei wer begiled, and for the principall must nedes faile, and in helping mowe not auaile. Se why for holdest him not poor that is nedy: "yes parde" (quod I). "And him for dishonored that moche folke dem not to reuerence."—"That is soth" (quod I) "and what him that his mightes failen and mowe not helpen."—"Certes" (quod I) "me semeth of all menne, he should bee holden a wretche."—"And wenest not" (quod she) "that he that is little in renome, but rather is out of the praisinges, of mo men than a fewe be not in shame?"—"for sothe" (quod I) "it is shame and villanie to hym that coueiteth renome, that more folke not praise in name than praise."—"Soth" (quod she) "thou saiest sothe, but all these thynges are folowed of soche maner doyng, and wenden in riches suffisaunce, in power might, in dignitie worship, and in renome glorie, wherefore thei discended into disceiuable wening, and in that seruice disceite is folowed. And thus in generall, thou and all soche other that so worchen, failen of my blisse, that ye long han desired, wherfore truly in life of reason, is the hie waie to this blisse, as I thinke more openlie to declare hereafter. Neuer the later, yet in a little to comforte thy herte, in shewyng of what waie thou art entred thy self, and that thy Margarite maie knowe thee set in the hie waie, I wol enforme thee in this wise. Thou hast failed of thy first purpose, bicause thou weteste wrong, and leftest the hie

waie on thy right side, as thus, thou lokedest on worldly liuing, and that thyng thee begiled, and lightly therfore as a litle assaie thou songedest, but whan I tourned thy purpose, and shewed thee a part of the hie waie, tho thou abode therin, and no death ne ferdnesse of none enemie might thee out of thilke waie reue, but euer one in thine herte, to come to thilk blisse, whan thou wer arested, and first time emprisoned, you wer loth to change thy waie, for in thy herte thou wendest to haue been there thou shouldest, and for I had routh to sen thee miscaried, and wist wel thine absences my seruice to forther and encrease, I come my self without other meane to visite thy persone, in comforte of thy herte: and parde in my commyng thou were greatly gladad, after whiche time, no disease, no care, no tene might moue me out of thy herte. And yet I glad and greatly enpited, how continually thou haddest me in minde, with good auisement of thy conscience, whan thy king and his princes, by huge wordes and great, looked after variaunce in thy speach, and euer thou wer redy for my sake, in pleasaunce of that Margarite perle, and many mo other, thy body to oblige in to Marces doing, if any contrariedy thy sawes, stedfast waie maketh stedfaste herte, with good hope in the ende. Truely I woll that thou it well knowe, for I se thee so set, and not chaunging herte haddest in my seruice, and I made thou haddest grace of thy king, in forgeuenesse of mikel misdeede: to the gracious king, art thou mikel holden, of whose grace and goodnesse sometime hereafter I thinke to enforme, whan I shewe the ground, where as mortall vertue groweth. Who brought the to werke? Who brought this grace about? Who made thy herte hardie? Truely it was I, for haddest thou of me failed, than of this purpose had neuer taken in this wise. And therfore I saie, thou might well trust to come to thy blisse; sithen thy ginnyng hath been heard, but euer graciously after thy hertes desire hath proceaded. Siluer fined with many heates, menne knowen for true, and safely men maie trust in thee alwaie in werkyng. This diseases hath proued, what waie hence forwarde thou thinkeste to holde."—"Nowe in good faith ladie" (quod I tho) "I am now in, me semeth it is the hie waie and the righte."—"Ye forsothe" (quod she) "and nowe I woll disproue thy first waies, by whiche many men wenen to gette thilke blisse. But for as moche as euery herte that hath caught full loue, is tied with queinte knittinges, thou shalt vnderstande that loue, and thilke forsaied blisse toforne declared, in this prouynges shall hote the knotte in the herte."—"Well" (quod I) "this impossession I woll well vnderstand."—"Now also" (quod she) "for the knotte in the herte must be from one to an other, and I knowe thy desire: I woll thou vnderstande these matters, to been saied of thy self, in disprouyng of thy firste seruice, and in strengthyng of thilk that thou hast vndertake to thy Margarite perle."—"A goddes halfe" (quod I). "right wel I fele that all this case is possible and true, and therefore I admitted all togither."—"Understanden well" (quod she) "these termes, and loke no contradiccion thou graunt."—"If God wol" (quod I) "of all these thinges woll I not faile, and if I graunte contradiccion, I should graunt an impossible, and that were a foule inconuenience, for whiche thinges, ladie ywis hereafter I thinke me to kepe."

"Well" (quod she) "thou knowest that euery thyng is cause, wherethrough any thyng hath beyng; that is cleaped caused, than of riches causen knot in herte, thilke riches arne cause of the ilke precious thyng beyng: but after the sentence of Aristotle, euery cause is more in dignitie, than his thyng caused, wherethrough it followeth richesse, to been more in dignitie than thilke knotte, but richesse arne kindly naughtie, badde, and nedy, and the ilke knotte is thing kindly good, moste praised and desired: ergo thyng naughtie, badde, and neadie, in kindly vnderstanding is more worthie, than thyng kindely good, moste desired and praised: The consequence is false, neandes the antecedente mote been of the same condicion. But that richesses been badde, naughtie, and nedie, that woll I proue wherefore thei mowe cause no soch thing, that is so glorious and good: the more richesse thou haste, the more nede hast thou of help hem to kepe. Ergo thou nedest in richesse, whiche nede thou shouldest not haue if thou hem wantest. Than must riches been nedy, that in their hauyng maken the nedy to helpes, in suretie thy richesse to kepen, wherethrough foloweth richesse to been nedie. Euery thing causyng euills is bad and naughtie: but riches in one causen misease in another thei mowen not euenly stretchen al about. Wherof cometh plee, debate, theft, begilinges, but riches to win, which thinges been bad, and by richesse arn caused: ergo the ilke richesse been badde, whiche badnesse and nede, been knitte into riches, by a maner of kindlie propertie, and euery cause and caused accorden, so that it followeth the ilke richesse, to haue the same accordaunce, with badnes and mede, that their cause asketh. Also euery thing hath his beeyng by his cause, than if the cause bee destroyed, the beeyng of caused is vanished: and so if richesse causen loue, and richesse weren destroyed, the loue should vanishe, but the ilke knotte and it bee true, maie not vanishe for no goyng of no richesse: ergo richesse is no cause of the knotte. And many men as I saied, setten the cause of the knotte in richesse, the ilke knitten the richesse, and nothyng the euill: the ilke persones what euer thei been, wenen that riches is moste worthie to be had, and that make thei the cause: and so wene thei thilke riches, be better than the persone. Commenly soche asken, rather after the quantitie, than after the qualitie, and soche wenen as well by hem self, as by other, that coniunccion of his life and of his soule is no more precious, but in as mekell as he hath of richesse. Alas, howe maie he holden soche thynges precious or noble, that neither han life ne soule, ne ordinaunce of werchyng limmes: soche richesse been more woorthie, whan thei been in gatheryng, in departyng ginneth his loue of other mennes praisyng. And auarice gatheryng, maketh bee hated, and neadie to many out helpes: and whan leaueth the possession of soche gooddes, and thei ginne vanishe, than entereth sorowe and tene in their hertes. O bad and straite been thilke, that at their departyng, maketh men teneful and sorie, and in the gatheryng of hem, maketh menne neady: moche folke at ones mowen not togither, moche thereof haue. A good geste gladdeth his hoste, and al his meine, but he is a bad geste, that maketh his hoste neadie, and to bee aferde of his gestes goyng."—"Certes" (quod I) "me wondereth therefore, that the common opinion

is thus: he is worthe no more than that he hath in cattell."—"O" (quod she) "looke thou bee not of that opinion, for if golde or money, or other maner of riches, shinen in thy sight, whose is that? not thine: and tho thei haue a little beautie, thei bee nothyng in comparison of our kinde, and therefore ye should not set your worthinesse in thing, lower than your self, for the riches, the fairnesse, the worthinesse of thilke goodes, if there be any soche preciousnesse in hem ar not thin, thou madeste hem so neuer, from other thei come to thee, and to other thei shull from the: wherfore enbracest you other wightes gooddes, as tho thei wer thin: kinde hath drawe hem by hem self. It is soth the goodes of the yearth, been ordeined in your fode and nourishing, but if thou wolte holde thee apaied with that suffiseth to thy kinde, thou shalt not be in daunger of no soch riches, to kind suffiseth little thing, who that taketh hede. And if thou wolt algates with superfluitie of riches bee a throted, thou shalt hasteliche be anoied, or els euill at ease. And fairnesse of fieldes, ne of habitacions, ne multitude of meine, maie not bee rekened as riches, that are thine owne, for if thei be bad, it is great sclander and villanie to the occupier, and if thei be good or faire, the matter of the work man that hem made, is to praise. How should otherwise bountie be compted for thine, the ilke goodnesse and fairnesse be proper to tho thinges hem self, than if thei be not thin, sorowe not whan thei wend, ne glad thee not in pompe and in pride, whan thou hem hast for their bountie and their beauties, cometh out of their owne kind and not of thine owne persone: as faire been thei in their not hauing, as whan thou haste hem, thei bee not faire, for thou hast hem, but thou hast getten hem for the fairenesse of them self. And there the valance of men, is demed in riches outforthe, wenen me to haue no proper good in them self, but seche it in straunge thinges. Truely the condicion of good wening is in the mistourned, to wene your noblenes be not in your self, but in the goodes and beautie of other thinges: Parde the beastes that han but feling soules, haue suffisaunce in their owne self: and ye that been like to God, seken encrease of suffisaunce, from so excellente a kinde, of so low thinges, ye do great wrong to him that you made lordes, ouer al yerthly thinges, and ye put your worthinesse vnder the nomber of the feete, of lower things and foule, whan ye iudge thilke riches to be your worthinesse, than put ye your self by estimacion, vnder thilke foule thinges, and than leue ye the knowing of your self, so be ye viler than any dombe beast, that cometh of shreude vice. Right so thilk persons that louen none euil, for dere worthines of the persone, but for straunge goodes, and saith the adornement in the knotte lieth in soche thinge, his errour is perilous and shrende, and he wrieth moche venime, with moche wealth, and that knotte maie not be good, whan he hath it getten. Certes thus hath riches with flickering sighte anoied many: and often whan there is a throw out shrewe, he coineth al the gold, all the precious stones that mowen be founden to haue in his bandon, he weneth no wight be worthi to haue soch thinges but he alone. How many hast thou knowe now in late time, that in their richesse, supposed suffisaunce haue folowed, and now it is all failed."—"Ye ladie" (quod I) "that is for misse medling, and otherwise gouerned thilke richesse, than thei should."—"Yea" (quod she tho) "had not the floode greatlie areised, and throwe to hemwarde, bothe grauell and sande, he had made no medlyng. And right as sea yeueth flood, so draweth sea ebbe, and pulleth ayen vnder wawe, all the firste out throwe, but if good piles of noble gouernaunce in loue, in well meanyng maner, been sadlie grounded, to whiche hold thilke grauell, as for a while, that ayen lightly mowe not it turne: and if the piles been true, the grauel and sande woll abide. And certes, full warning in loue shalt thou neuer, through hem get ne couer that lightlie with an ebbe ere thou beware, it will ayen mene.

"In richesse, many men haue had tenes and diseases, which thei should not haue had, if thereof thei had failed. Through whiche nowe declared, partlie it is shewed, that for richesse should the knotte in herte, neither been caused in one, ne in other: truely knot maie been knitte, and I trow more stedfast in loue, though richesse failed, and els in richesse is the knot, and not in herte. And than soche a knotte is false, whan the sea ebbeth and withdraweth the grauel, that soche richesse voideth, thilke knotte woll vnknitte. Wherefore no truste, no waie, no cause, no parfite being is in richesse, of no soche knot therefore an other waie must we haue.

"Honor in dignitie is wened, to yeuen a full knotte"—"ye certes" (quod I) "and of that opinion ben many, for thei saine dignitie, with honour, and reuerence, causen hertes to encheinen, and so able to knitte togither, for the excellence in soueraint of soche degrees."

"Now" (quod she) "if dignitie, honoure, and reuerence, causen thilke knotte in herte, this knotte is good and profitable. For euery cause of a cause, is cause of thynge caused: than thus, good thynges and profitable, been by dignitie, honour, and reuerence caused. Ergo thei accorden, and dignities been good with reuerences and honour, but contraries mowen not accorden: wherfore by reason there should no dignitie, no reuerence, none honour accorde with shrewes, but that is false: thei haue been cause to shrewes, in many shreudnesse, for with hem thei accorden. Ergo from beginning, to argue ayenwarde, till it come to the laste conclusion, thei are not cause of the knotte. Lo all daie at iye, arne shrewes not in reuerence in honour, and in dignitie: yes forsothe, rather than the good. Than foloweth it, that shrewes rather than good, shull been cause of this knotte. But of this contray, of al louers is beleued, and for a sothe openlie determined to holde."

"Now" (quod I) "fain would I heare, how soch dignities accorden with shrewes."

"O" (quod she) "that woll I shewe in manifolde wise. Ye wene" (quod she) "that dignities of office here in your citee, is as the Sonne, it shineth bright withouten any cloude: whiche thynge, whan thei comen in the handes of malicious tyrauntes, there cometh moche harme, and more greuaunce therof, than of the wilde fire, though it brende all a streate. Certes in dignitie of office, the werkes of the occupier, shewen the malice and the badnesse in the persone, with shrewes thei maken manifolde harmes, and moche people shamen. How often han rancours, for malice of the gouernour should been maintained? Hath not than soche dignities caused debat, rumours, and euils? yes God

wote, by soche thinges haue been trusted to, make mennes vnderstandynge encline to many queinte thynges. Thou wottest well, what I meane."—"Ye" (quod I) "therfore as dignitie soche thyng in tene iwrought, so ayenwarde the substaunce in dignitie chaunged, relied to bryng ayen good plite in dooyng."—"Dowaie, dowaie" (quod she) "if it so betide, but that is seld that soche dignitie is betake in a good mannes gouernaunce. What thyng is to reken in the dignities goodnesse? parde the bountie and goodnesse is hers, that vsen it in good gouernaunce, and therefore cometh it, that honour and reuerence, should been doen in to dignitie, bicause of encreasyng vertue in the occupier, and not to the ruler, bicause of soueraintie in dignitie, Sithen dignitie maie no vertue cause, who is worthie worship for soche goodnesse? Not dignitie, but persone that maketh goodnesse in dignitie to shine."—"This is wonder thyng" (quod I) "for me *thinketh, as the persone in dignitie is worthie* honour for goodnesse, so tho a persone for badnesse, magre hath deserued, yet the dignitie leneth to be commended."—"Let be" (quod she) "thou errest right foule, *dignitie with badnesse, is helper to performe the felonous dooyng:* parde wer it kindly good, or any propertie of kindly vertue, hadden in hem self, shrewes should hem neuer haue, with hem should thei neuer accorde. Water and fire that been contrarious, mowen not togider been assembled, kinde woll not suffre soche contraries to ioyn. And sithen at iye by experience in dooyng, we seen that shrewes haue hem more often, than good men, siker maist thou se, that kindly good in soch things, *is* not approprel. Parde wer thei kindly good as well one as other, shoulden euenliche in vertue of gouernance been worthe: but one faileth in goodnesse, an other doeth the contrary, and so it sheweth kindly goodnesse, in dignitie not be grounded. And this same reason" (quod she) "maie bee made in generall, on all the bodily goods, for thei comen oft to throw out shrewes. Ifter this he is stronge, that hath might to haue greate burthens, and he is light and swift, that hath soueraintie in ronning to passe other, right so he is a shrew on whom shreude thinges and bad, han moste werching. And right as philosophy maketh philosophiers, and my seruice maketh louers: right so if dignities weren good or vertuous, thei should maken shrewes good, and tourne hir malice, and make hem be vertuous, but that dooe thei not, as it is proued, but causen rancour and debate. Ergo thei be not good, but vtterly bad. Had Nero neuer been emperor, should neuer his dame haue be slaine, to maken open the priuitie of his engendrure. Herodes for his dignitie, slewe many children. The dignitie of king Thon would haue destroied all Englande. Therefore mokell wisedome and goodnes bothe, nedeth in a persone, the malice in dignitie, slily to bridell, and with a good bit of areste to withdrawe, in case it would praunce otherwise than it should: truly ye yeue to diguities wrongful names in your cleping. Thei shuld hete not dignitie, but monstre of badnesse, and mainteiner of shrewes. Perde shine the Sonne neuer so bright, and it bring forth no heat, ne seasonably the herbes out brynge of the yearth, but suffre frostes and cold, and therath baraine to ligge, by time of his compas, in circuite about, ye would wonder and dispreise that Sonne. If the Moone be at full, and sheweth no light, but darke and dimme to your sight appereth, and make distruccion of the waters, wol ye not suppose it be vnder cloude, or in clips? And that some priuie thing vnknowen to your wittes, is cause of soche contrarious dooyng. Than if clerkes that han full insight, and knowing of soche impedimentes, enforme you of the soth, very idiotes ye been, but if ye yeuen credence to thilke clerkes wordes. And yet it doth me tene, to seen many wretches reioycen, in soch many planettes. Truly little con thei on philosophy or els on my lore, that any desire hauen soche lighting planettes, in that wise any more to shewe."—"Good ladie" (quod I) "tell ye me how ye mean in these things."—"Lo" (quod she) "the dignities of your citee, Sonne and Moone, nothing in kinde shew their shining as thei should. For the Sonne made no brenning heate in loue but fresed enuie, in mens hertes, for feblenes of shining heate: and the Mone was about vnder an old cloud, the liuynges by waters to destroye."—"Ladie (quod I) "it is supposed thei had shined as thei should."—"Ye" (quod she) "but now it is proued at the full, their beutie in kindly shining failed, wherefore dignitie of him seluen, hath no beautie in fairenesse, ne drineth yot awaie vices, but encreaseth, and so be thei no cause of the knotte. Now se in good truthe, bolde ye not soche sounes worthie of no reuerence and dignities, worthie of no worship, that maketh men to dooe the more harmes:"—"I not" (quod I). "No" (quod she) "and thou se a wise good man, for his goodnesse and wisenesse, wolt thou not doe hym worship? Thereof he is worthie."—"That *is good skil" (quod I)* "it is dewe to soche, bothe reuerence and worshippe to haue."—"Than" (quod she) "a shrewe for his shreudnesse, altho he be put forth toforn other for ferde, yet is he worthie for shreudnesse, to bee vnworshipped: of reuerence no parte is he worthie to haue, to contrarious dooyng belongeth, and that is good skille. For right as he bee smiteth the dignities, thilk same thing ayenward him smiteth, or els should smite. And ouer this thou woste well" (quod she) "that fire in euery place, heateth where it be, and water maketh weat: why? For kindly werking is so iput in hem, to do soche thinges: for euery kindely in werking sheweth his kind. But though a wight had been maior of your citee, many winter together, and come in a straunge place, there he were not knowen, he should for his dignitie haue no reuerence. Than neither worship ne reuerence, is kindelie proper in no dignitie, sithen thei shoulden doen their kinde, in soche dooyng if any were. And if reuerence ne worshippe, kindely be not sette in dignities, and thei more therein been shewed than goodnesse, for that in dignitie is shewed, but it proueth that goodnesse, kindlie in hem is not grounded. Iwis neither worship ne reuerence, ne goodnesse in dignitie, dooen none office of kind, for thei haue none soche propertie, in nature of dooyng, but by false opinion of the people. Lo, howe sometyme thilke that in your citee werne in dignitie noble, if thou liste hem nempne, thei been nowe ouertourned, bothe in worshippe, in name, and in reuerence, wherefore soche dignities, haue no kindely werchyng of worship, and of reuerence, he that hath no worthinesse on it self. Now it riseth, and now it vanisheth, after the variaunte opinion in false hertes of vnstable people.

"Wherefore if thou desire the knot of this iewelle,

or els if thou wouldest suppose, she should set the knotte on thee, for soche maner of dignitie, than thou wenest beautie or goodnesse of the ilke somewhat, encreaseth the goodnesse or vertue in the bodie: but dignitie of hem self been not good, ne yeuen reuerence ne worship by their owne kinde, howe should thei than, yeue to any other a thing, that by no waie mow thei haue hem self? It is seen in dignitie of the emperour, and of many mo other, that thei mowe not of hem selue, kepe their worship ne their reuerence, that that in a little while, it is now vp, and now doun, by vnstedfast hertes of the people. What bountie mowe thei yeue, that with cloude, lightlie leaueth his shinyng? Certes; to the occupier is mokell apeired, sithen soche doing doeth vilanie, to him that maie it not maintain, wherfore thilke way to the knotte is croked: and if any desire to come to the knot, he must leaue this waie on his left side, or els shal he neuer come there.

"AUAILETH aught" (quod she) "power of mighte, in maintenaunce of worthie, to come to this knot." "Parde" (quod I) "ye, for hertes been rauished from soche maner thyngs."—"Certes" (quod she) "though a fooles herte, is with thyng rauished, yet therfore is no generall cause of the powers, ne of a siker parfite herte, to be loked after. Was not Nero the moste shrewe, one of thilke that men rede, and yet had he power to make senatours, justices, and princes of many landes? Was not that greate power?"—"Yes certes" (quod I). "Well" (quod she) "yet might he not helpe hymself out disease, whan he gan fall. Howe many ensamples canst thou remember of kynges, greate and noble, and huge power holden, and yet thei might not keepe hem selue from wretchednesse. How wretched was kyng Henry Curmantil ere he diede? He had not so moche as to couer with his members: and yet was he one of the greateste kynges, of all the Normandes ofspring, and moste possession had. O, a noble thing and cleare is power, that is not founden mightie to kepe hymself.

"Now truelie a greate foole is he, that for soche thyng, would set the knotte in thyne herte. Also power of realmes, is not thilke greateste power, emonges the worldlie powers reckened: and if soche powers han wretchednesse in hemself, it foloweth other powers of febler condicion, to been wretched, and than that wretchednesse, should been cause of soch a knot. But euery wight that hath reason, wote well that wretchednesse by no waie, maie been cause of none soche knotte, wherefore soche power is no cause. That powers haue wretchenesse in hem self, maie right lightly been preued.

"If power lacke on any side, on that side is no power, but no power is wretchednes: for all bee it so, the power of emperous or kinges, or els of their realmes (which is the power of the prince) stretchen wide and brod, yet besides is there mokell folke, of whiche he hath no commaundemente ne lardeship, and there as lacketh his power, his nonpower entereth, where vnder springeth, that maketh hem wretches. No power is wretchednesse, and nothyng els: but in this maner hath kinges, more porcion of wretchednes, than of power, Truly soche powers been vnmightie, for euer thei ben in drede, how the ilke power from lesyng, maie be keped of sorowe, so drede sorily prickes, euer in their hertes: little is the power, whiche careth and ferdoth itself to maintaine. Unmightie is that wretchednesse, whiche is entered by the ferdfull wenyng of the wretche hymself: and knotte imaked by wretchednesse, is betwene wretches, and wretches all thyng bewailen: wherefore the knotte should bee bewailed, and there is no soche parfit blisse that we supposed at the ginnyng. Ergo power in nothing, should cause soch knottes. Wretchednesse, is a kindlie propetie in soche power, as by waie of drede, whiche thei mowe not eschue, ne by no waie liue in sikernesse. For thou woste welle" (quod she) "he is nought mighty, that wolde not done that he may not don ne performe."—"Therfore" (quod I) "these kinges and lordes that han suffysaunce at the ful of men and other thinges, mowen well been holden mighty: their commaundementes been done, it is neuermore denied."—"Foole" (quod she) "or he wot him selfe mightye or wotte it not: for he is nought mighty, that is blinde of his might and wotte it not."—"That is soth" (quod I). "Than yf he wot it, he must nedes been a drade to lesen it. He that wote of his might is in doute that he mote nedes lese, and so leadeth him drede to been vnmighty. And if he retche not to lese, litel is that worth that of the lesing reason retcheth nothinge: and if it were mighty in power or in strength, the lesing shulde ben withset, and whan it cometh to the lesinge he may it not withsitte, Ergo thilke might is leude and naughty. Soch mightes arne ylike to postes and pillers that vpright stonden, and great might han to beare manye charges, and yf they croke on any side, litel thinge maketh hem ouerthrowe."—"This is a good ensample" (quod I) "to pillers and postes that I haue sene ouerthrowed my self, and hadden they been vnderput with anye helpes, they had not so lightlye fal."—"Than holdest thou him myghty that hath many men armed and may seruauntes, and euer he is adradde of hem in his herte, and for he gasteth hem somtime he mote the more feare haue. Comenly he that other agasteth, other in him ayenward werchen the same: and thus warnished mote he be, and of warnishe the houre drede: litel is that might and right leude, who so taketh hede."—"Than semeth it" (quod I) "that soche famulers aboute kinges and great lordes, shull great might haue. Althoughe a sipher in augrim haue no might in significacion of it selue, yet he yeueth power in significacion to other, and these clepe I the helpes to apost, to kepe him from fallinge."—"Certes" (quod she) "thilke skilles ben leude. Why? but if the shores been well grounded, the helps shullen sliden and suffre the charge to fal, hir myght lytel auaileth."—"And so me thinketh" (quod I) "that a poste alone stondynge vpright vpon a basse, maye lenger in great burthen endure, than croked pillers for all their helpes, and hir grounde be not siker."—"That is sothe" (quod she). "for as the blind in bearing of the lame ginne stomble, bothe shuld fal, right so soch pillers so enuironed with helpes in falinge of the grounde, faileth all togider, howe ofte than soche famulers in their moste pride of prosperite been sodainly ouerthrowen. Thou haste knowe manye in a moment so ferre ouerthrowe, that couer might they neuer, whan the heuinesse of soche faling cometh by case of fortune, they mowe it not eschewe: and might and power, if ther wer any shulde of strength soche thinges voide and weiue, and so it is not. Lo than whiche things is this

power that tho men han it they ben agast, and in no time of fell hauing be thei siker: and if they wold wewe dredr, as they mowe not, lytel is in worthines. Fye therfore on so noughty thing any knot to cause. Lo in aduersitie, thilke been his foes that glosed and semed frendes in welth thus arne his familiers his foes and his enemies: and nothing is werse ne more mighti for to anoy, than is a familier enemye, and these thinges may they not weiue, so truely their might is not worth a cresse. And ouer al thinge, he that may not withdrawe the bridel of his fleshly lustes and his wretched complaintes (now thinke on thy self) trewly he is not mighty: I can sene no way that lithe to the knotte. Thilke people than that setten their hertes vpon soch mightes and powers, often ben begiled. Parde he is not myghty that may do any thinge, that another may done him the selue, and that men haue as greate power ouer hym as he ouer other. A iustice that demeth men, ayenward hath ben often demed. Buserus slew his gestes, and he was slayne of Hercules his gest. Hugest betraished many menne, and of Collo was he betraied. He that with swerde smiteth, with swerde shal be smitten." Than gan I to studien a while on these thinges, and made a countenaunce with my hande in maner to been huishte. "Nowe let sene" (quod she) "methinketh somwhat there is within thy soule, that troubleth thy vnderstanding, saye on what it is." (Quod I tho) "me thinketh that although a man by power haue soche might ouer me as I haue ouer other, that disprouseth no might in my persone, but yet maye I haue power and might neuer the later." — "Se now" (quod she) "thine owne leudenesse: he is mighty that maye without wretchednesse, and he is vnmighty that may it not withsitte: but than he that might ouer the, and he woll put on the wretchednes, thou might it not withsitte. Ergo thou seest they selfe what foloweth. But nowe" (quod she) "wouldest thou not skorne and thou se a flye han power to don harme to an other flie, and thilke haue no might ne ayenturninge him selfe to defende." "Yes certes" (quod I). "Who is a frailer thinge" (quod she) "than the fleshlye body of a man, ouer whiche haue often tyme flyes, and yet lasse thing than a flye mokel myght in greuaunce and anoyonge, withouten anye wyth sittynge, for all thylke mannes mightes. And sythen thou seest thine fleshly body in kindely power faile, howe shoulde than the accident of a thynge been in more suretie of being than substancial: wherfore thilke thinges that we clepe power, is but accident to the fleshly body, and so they maie not haue that suretie in might, which wanteth in the substanciall body. Why there is no waye to the knotte, that loketh aryght after the hye waie as he shulde.

"Verelye it is proued that richesse, dignite, and power ben not trewe way to the knotte, but as rath by soche thinges the knotte, to be vnbound: wherfore on these thynges I rede no wight trust, to gette anye good knotte. But what shulde we saye of renome in the peoples mouthes, shuld that ben any cause what supposest thou in thin herte?"

"Certes" (quod I) "yes I trowe, for your slye reasons I dare not safely it saye." — "Than" (quod she) "wol I proue that shrewes as rathe shul ben in the knotte as the good, and that wer ayenst kinde." "Fayne" (quod I). "Woulde I that hear, me thinketh wonder how renome shuld as well knitte a shrewe as a good persone: renome in euery degree hath auaunced, yet wist I neuer the contrarye: shulde than renome accorde with a shrewe? it maye not sinke in my stomake till I here more." — "Now" (quod she) "haue I nat said alwayes, that shrewes shul not haue the knotte." — "What nedeth" (quod I) "to reherse that any more, I wotte wel euery wight by kindely reason, shrewes in knittinge woll eschewe." "Than" (quod she) "the good ought thilke knotte to haue." — "How els" (quod I). "It were greate harme" (quod she) "that the good were weued and put out of espoire of the knot, if he it desired." — "O" (quod I) "alas, on soche thinke to thinke, I wene that heuen wepeth to se soch wronges here ben suffred on yearth: the good ought it to haue and no wight elles." — "The goodnesse" (quod she) "of a person maye not ben knowe outforth, but by renome of the knowers, wherefore he must be renomed of goodnes to come to the knot." — "So muste it be" (quod I) "or elles all loste that we carpen." — "Sothly" (quod she) "that were greate harme, but if a good man might haue his desyres in seruice of thilke knot, and a shrewe to be veined, and they been not knowen in general but by lacking and praising and in renome, and so by the consequence it followeth, a shrewe ben praised and knit, and a good to be forsake and vnknit." — "Ah" (quod I tho) "haue ye lady ben her abouten, yet wold I se by grace of our argumentes better declared, howe good and bad do accorden by lacking and praising, me thinkethe it ayenst kinde." — "Nay" (quod she) "and that shalt thou se as yerne: these elementes han contrarious qualites in kinde, by whiche they mow not accorde no more than good and bad: and in qualites they accorde, so that contraries by qualite, accorden by qualyte. Is hot yearth drie, and water that is nexte and bytwene therth is wete, drie and wete been contrary and mowen not accorde, and yet this discordaunce is bounde to accorde by cloudes, for bothe elements ben colde. Right so the eyre that is nexte the water is weate, and eke it is hot. This eyre by his heate contrarieth water that is colde, but thilke contrariouslye is oned by moisture, for both be they moist. Also the fyre that is nexte the yerth, and it encloseth al about, is drye, wher through it contrarieth yearth that is wete: and in hete they accorde, for both they ben hote. Thus by these acordaunces, discordauntes ben ioyned and in a maner of acordaunce they acorden by connection, that is knittinge togider, of that accorde cometh a maner of melodye that is right noble. Right so good and bad arne contrarie indoinges, by lackinge and praisinge: good is bothe lacked and praised of some, and badde is bothe lacked and praised of some: wherfore their contrariouslye acorde bothe by lacking and praising. Than foloweth it though good be neuer so mokel praised, oweth more to ben knit than the bad: or elles bad for the renome that he hath must be taken as wel as the good, and that oweth not." "No forsothe" (quod I). "Well" (quod she) "than is renome no waye to the knot: lo foole" (quod she) "how clerkes writen of soche glorie of renome. O glorye, glorye, thou art none other thinge to thousandes of folke, but a great sweller of eares. Manye one hath had ful great renome by false opinion of variaunt people: and what is fouler than folke wrongefully to been praised, or by malice of the people giltlesse lacked? nedes shame

foloweth thereof to hem that wyth wronge prayseth, and also to the desertes praised, and vylanye and reprofe of him that disclaundreth.

"Good childe" (quod she) "what echeth soche renome to the conscience of a wise man, that loketh and measureth his goodnesse, not by sleuelesse wordes of the people, but by sothfastnesse of conscience: by God nothinge. And if it be faire a mannes name be eched by moche folkes praising, and fouler thing that mo folke not praisen. I said to the a litel here beforne, that no folke in straunge countreies nought praisen, soch renom may not comen to their eares, bycause of vnknowing, and other obstacles, as I saide: wherfore more folke not praisen, and that is right foule to him that renome desireth, to wete lesse folke praisen than renome enhaunce. I trowe the thancke of a people is naught worth, in remembraunce to take, ne it procedeth of no wise iugement, neuer is it stedfast pardurable: it is veine and sleynge, with winde wasteth and encreaseth. Trewly soch glory ought to be hated. If gentillesse be a clere thynge, renome and glorie to enhaunce, as in reckening of thy linage, than is gentillesse of thy kinne, for why it semeth that gentillesse of thy kinne, is but praysinge and renome that come of thine auncestres desertes, and if so be that praisinge and renome of their desertes, make their clere gentilnesse, than mote they nedes ben gentill for their gentil dedes, and not thou: for of thyself cometh not soche maner gentillesse, praisinge of thy desertes. Than gentillesse of thine auncestres that foraine is to the, maketh the not gentil, but vngentil and reproued, and if thou continuest not their gentillesse. And therfore a wise man ones said: better is it thy kinne to been by the genteled, than thou to glorysye of thy kinnes gentillesse, and hast no desert thereof thy sefe.

"How passing is the beautie of fleshly bodyes: more flyttinge than mouable floures of sommer. And if thine eyen weren as good as the lynx, that may sene thorowe many stone walles, both and faire and foule in their entrailes, of no maner hew shulde apere to thy sight, that were a foule sight. Than is fairenesse by feblesse of eyen, but of no kind, wherefore thilke shuld be no way to the knot: whan thilke is went the knot wendeth after. Lo now at al proues, none of al these thinges mowe parfitly ben in vnderstanding, to ben waye to the durynge blisse of the knotte. But nowe to conclusion of these maters, herkeneth these words. Uery sommer is know from the winter: in shorter course draweth the dayes of December, than in the moneth of June: the springes of May faden and folowen in Octobre. These thinges be not vnbounden from their olde kind they haue not lost hir worke of their proper estate. Men of voluntarious wil withsitte that heuens gouerneth. Other thinges suffren thinges paciently to werche: man in what estate he be, yet wolde he ben chaunged. Thus by queint thynges blisse is desired, and the fruit that cometh of these springes, nis but anguis and bitter, all though it be a whil swete, it may not be with hold, hastely they departe: thus all daye faileth thinges that fooles wende. Right thus hast thou faileth in thy firste weninge. He that thinketh to saile, and draw after the course of that sterre, de polo antartico, shall he neuer come northward to the contrary sterre of polus articus, of whiche thinges if thou take kepe, thy first out waye goinge, prison and exil may be cleped. The grounde falsed vndermethe, and so haste thou fayled. No wight I wene blameth him that stinteth thin misgoing, and secheth redy way of his blisse. Nowe me thenketh" (quod she) "that it suffiseth in my shewing the wayes, by dignite, richesse, renome, and power, if thou loke clerely arne no wayes to the knotte."

"Euery argumente lady" (quod I tho) "that ye han maked in these fore nempned matters, me thinketh hem in my full wytte conceiued, shall I no more if God will in the contrarie be begiled: but faine wolde I and it were your will, blisse of the knotte to me wer declared, I might fele the better howe my herte might assente to poursue thende in seruice, as he hath begonne."—"O," (quod she) "there is a melodye in heauen, whiche clerkes clepen armony, but that is not in breaking of voice, but it is a maner swete thing of kindly werchinge, that causeth ioy out of nombre to recken, and that is ioined by reason and by wisedome, in a quantite of proporcion of knitting. God made all thing in reason and in witte of porporcion of melodye, we mowe not suffise to shewe. It is written by great clerkes and wise, that in erthly thinges lightly by studye, and by trauile, the knowinge may be getten: but of soche heuenly melodye, mokel trauaile woll bringe out in knowing right lytel. Swetnese of this paradyse hath you rauished, it semeth ye slepten, rested from al other diseases so kindely is your hertes therin ygrounded. Blisse of two hertes in full loue knitte, maye not aright ben imagined: euer is their contemplacion in ful of thoughty study to plesaunce, matter in bringing comforte euericne to other. And therfore of erthelye thinges, mokel matter lyghtly cometh in your lerning. Knowledge of vnderstanding that is nighe after ye, but not so nigh the couetise of knittinge in your hertes: more souerain desire hath euery wight in litel hering of heuenly conninge, than of mokell materiall purposes in yerth. Right so it is in propertie of my seruauntes, that they ben more affyched in steringe of lytel thinge in his desyre, than of mokel other matter, lasse in his conscience. This blisse is a maner of sowne delycious, in a queint voice touched, and no dynne of notes: there is none impression of breakinge laboure. I canne it not otherwise nempne, for wanting of priuie wordes, but paradyse terrestre ful of delicious melodye, withouten trauaile in sown perpetuell seruice, in ful ioye coueited to endure. Only kinde maketh hertes in vnderstandinge so to slepe, that otherwise may it not ben nempned, ne in other manere names for likynge swetnesse can I nat it declare, all sugre and honye, al minstralsy and melodie been but soote and galle in comparison, by no maner proporcion to reken, in respecte of this blisful ioye. This armonye, this melodye, this perdurable ioye may nat be in doinge, but betwene heuens and elementes, or twey kindely hertes, full knit in trouth of naturell vnderstandihg, withouten wening and disceit, as heuens and planettes, whiche thinges continually for kindely accordaunces, forieteth al contrarious meuinges, that in to passyue diseases maye sowne, euermore it thristeth after more werkinge. These thinges in proporcion be so wel ioyned, that it vndoth al thing, which in to badnes by any way may be accompted." "Certes" (quod I) "this is a thing precious and no-

ble. Alas that falsenesse euer or wantrust shuld euer be mainteined, this ioy to void. Alas that euer any wretch shulde thorow wrathe or enuy, iangling dare make to shone this medlody so farre abacke that openly dare it not ben vsed: surely wretches been fulfylled with enuy and wrathe, and no wight els. Flebring and tales in soche wretches dare appere openly in euery wightes eare what ful mouth so charged, mokel malyce moued many innocentes to shende, God wold their soule therwith were strangeled. Lo, trouth in this blisse is hid and ouer al vnder couer him hideth: he dare nat come a place for waiting of shrewes. Commenly badnes, goodnes amaistereth what myself and my soule this ioy wolde I bye, yf the goodnesse wer as moch as the nobli in melodi."—"O," (quod she) "what goodnesse may be a compted more in this material world, truly non that shalt thou vnderstande. Is not euery thing good that is contrariant and distroieng yuel:"—"how els" (quod I). "Enuye, wrathe, and falsenes ben generall" (quod she) "and that wot euery man beyng in his right mind, the knotte the which we haue in this blesse, is contrariaunt and distroieth soche maner yuelles. Ergo it is good, what hath caused anye wight to do anye good dede? Fynd me any good, but if this knot be the chefe cause: nedes mote it be good, that causeth so many good dedes. Euery cause is more, and worthier than thing caused, and in that mores possession, all thynges lesse been compted. As the kinge is more than his people, and hath in possession al his realme after: right so the knot is more than all other goodes, thou might recken al thinges lasse, and that to him longeth owethe in to his mores causes of worship and of wil do tourne, it is elles rebel and out of his mores defending to voyd. Ryght so of euery goodnesse in to the knot and in to the cause of his worship oweth to tourne. And trewly euery thinge that hath beynge profitablye is good, but nothing hath to ben more profitably than this knot: kynges it maintaineth, and hem their powers to maintaine: it makethe misse to bene amended, with good gouernaunce in doynge. It closeth hertes so togider, that rancour is out thresten. Who that it lengest kepeth, lengest is gladed."—"I trow" (quod I) "heretykes, and misse meaning people hence forward wol maintaine this knotte, for therthrough shull they ben maintained, and vtterly woll tourne, and leaue their olde yuel vnderstanding, and knitte this goodnes, and profer so ferre in seruice that name of seruauntes might they haue. Their iangles shal cease, me thinketh hem lacketh mater now to alege."—"Certes" (quod Loue) "if they of good will thus tourned as thou sayst wollen trewly perfourme, yet shull they be abled party of this blisse to haue: and they wol not, yet shul my seruauntes the werre wel susteyne in min helpe of mayntenaunce to the end. And they for theyr good trauaile shullen in rewarde so ben meded, that endelesse ioy body and soule togider in this shullen abyden, there is euer action of blisse withouten possible corrupcion, there is action perpetuel in werke without trauaile, there is euerlasting passyfe withouten any of labour: continuel plite without ceasing coueited to endure. No tonge may tell ne herte maye thinke the leeste pointe of this blisse."—"God bringe me thider" (quod I than). "Continueth wel" (quod she) "to the ende, and thou might not fail than, for though thou spede not heare, yet shal the passion of thy martred lyfe ben writen, and radde toforne the great Jupiter that God is of routhe, an highe in the holownesse of heuen, ther he sit in his tron and euer thou shalt forward ben holden amonge all these heuins for a knight, that mightest with no penaunce ben dicomfited. He is a verie martyr that liuingely goinge is gnawen to the bones."—"Certes" (quod I) "these ben good wordes of comforte, a litell mine herte is reioysed in a mery wise."—"Ye" (quod she) "and he that is in heuen feleth more ioye, than whan he firste herde therof speke."—"So it is" (quod I) "but wist I the soth, that after disease comforte wolde folowe with blisse, so as ye haue often declared, I wold wel suffre this passion with the better chere, but my thought ful sorow is endlesse, to thinke howe I am cast out of a welefare, and yet daineth not this yuel none herte none hede to me warde throwe, whiche thinges wold gretly me by wayes of comforte disporte, to weten in my selfe a litel with other me ben ymoned: and my sorowes peisen not in her balaunce the weight of a pease: slinges of her daunger, so heuily peysen, they drawe my causes so hye, that in her eyen they semen but light and right lytell.

"O, for" (quod she) "heuen with skies that foule cloudes maken and darke wethers, with great tempestes and huge maketh the mery dayes with softe shinninge sonnes. Also the yere with drayeth floures and beaute of herbes and of yearth. The same yeres maketh springes and iolyte in were so to renouel with peinted coloures, that earthe semed as gay as heuen. Sees that blasteth and with wawes throweth shippes, of which the liuing creatures for great peril of hem dreden: right so the same sees maketh smothe waters and golden sailing, and comforteth hem, with noble hauan that firste were so ferde. Haste you not" (quod she) "lerned in thy youth that Jupiter hath in his warderobe bothe garmentes of ioye and of sorowe? what wost thou howe soone he wol turne of thee that garmente of care, and clothe the in blisse? parde it is not ferre fro the. Lo an olde prouerbe aleged by many wise: whan bale is greatest, than is bote a pie bore. Wherof wylt thou dismaye? hope wel and serue well, and that shal the saue, with thy good byleue."—"Ye, ye" (quod I) "yet se I not by reason howe this blisse is comming, I wot it is contingent, it maye fal an other."—"O," (quod she) "I haue mokel to done to clere thine vnderstanding and voide these errours out of thy mynde, I woll proue it by reason thy wo maie not alway enduren. "Euery thinge kindely" (quod she) "is gouerned and ruled by the heuenly bodies, whiche hauen ful werching here on erth, and after course of these bodyes, all course of your doynges here ben gouerned and ruled by kind. Thou woste well by cours of planettes all your dayes proceden, and to euerich of singuler houres he enterchaunged stondemele about, by submitted worchyng naturelly to suffre, of whiche chaunges cometh these transitorie tymes, that maketh reuoluing of your yeres thus stoundmele, euery hath ful might of woorchinge, till all seuen han hadde hir cours about. Of whiche worchinges and possession of houres, the dayes of the weke haue take hir names, after denominacion in these seuen planettes. Lo your sonday ginneth at the firste houre after noone on the saturday, in whiche houre is than the Sonne in ful might of worching, of whom sonday taketh this name. Nex him foloweth Uenus, and after Mer-

curius, and than the Moone, so than Saturnus, after whom Jouis and than Mars and ayen than the Sonne, and so forthe be xxiiii. houres togider, in which houre ginning in the ii. day stante the Moon, as maister for that time to rule, of whom monday taketh his name, and this course foloweth of al other dayes generally in doinge. This course of nature of these bodyes chaunging, stinten at a certaine terme, limitted by their first kind, and of hem al gouernementes in this elemented world proceden, as in springes, constellacions, engendrures, and al that folowen kind and reason, wherfore the course that foloweth sorow and ioy, kindely moten entrechangen their tymes, so that alway on wele as alway on wo may not endure. Thus seest thou appertely thy sorowe into wele mote ben chaunged, wherfore in soche case to better side euermore enclin thou shuldest. Trewly nexte the ende of sorowe anon entreth ioye, by maner of necessite, it wol ne may non other betide, and so thy contigence is disprooued: if thou holde this opinion any more, thy wit is right leud. Wherfore in ful conclusion of al this, thilke Margarite thou desirest, hath ben to the derc in thy herte, and for her hast thou suffred many thoughtfull diseases, hereafter shall because of mokell myrth and ioy, and loke how glad canst thou bene, and cease al thy passed heuiness with manyfolde ioyes. And than wol I as blithly here the speaken thy myrthes in ioy, as I nowe haue yharde thy sorowes and thy complaintes. And if I mowe in aughte thy ioy encrease, by my trouthe on my side, shal nat be leaued for no maner trauaile, that I with al my mightes, right blithly wol helpe and euer ben redy you both to please." And than thanked I that lady with al goodly maner that I worthely coude, and trewly I was greatly reioysed in myne herte, of her faire behestes, and profered me to be slawe in all that she me wold ordein whyl my life lested.

"Me thinketh" (quod I) "that ye haue right wel declared, that way to the knot shuld not been in none of these disprouing thinges, and nowe order of our purpose this asketh, that ye shuld me shew if any way be thither, and which thilke way shuld ben, so that openly may be sey the very hye way in ful confusion of these other thinges."

"Thou shalt" (quod she) "vnderstande, that one of thre lyues (as I firste said) euery creature of mankind is sprongen, and so forth procedeth. These lyues ben thorow names departed in thre maner of kindes, as bestialliche, manlyche, and resonabliche, of whiche two ben vsed by fleshely body, and the thirde by his soule. Bestal amonge resonables is forboden in euery lawe and euery secte, bothe in christen and other, for euerye wight dispiseth hem that lyueth by lustes and delites, as him that is thral and bounden seruaunte to thinges right foule, soche been compted werse than men, he shal nat in their degree ben rekened, ne, for soche one alowed. Heritikes saine they chosen life bestial, that voluptuouslye lyuen, so that (as I first saide to the) in manly and resonable liuinges, our mater was to declare, but manly lyfe in lyuing after flesh, or els fleshly waies to chese may nat blisse in this knot be conquered, as by reason it is proued. Wherfore by resonable life he must nedes it haue sithe away is to this knotte, but nat by the first tway lyues, wherfore nedes mote it hen to the thrde and for to lyue in fleshe but nat after fleshe, is more resonablich than manlyche rekened by clerkes. Therfore how this way cometh in I wol it blithely declare.

"Se now" (quod she) "that these bodily goods of manliche liuinges, yelden sorowfully stoundes and smertande houres. Who so wel remembre him to their endes, in their worchinges they ben thoughtful and sorie. Right as a bee that hathe had his honie, anone at his flight beginneth to stinge: so thilke bodyly gooues at the laste mote away, and than sting they at hir goinge, wherthroughe entreth and clene vodeth al blisse of this knot."

"Forsothe" (quod I) "me thinketh I am wel serued, in shewing of these wordes. Although I hadde lyttell in respecte amonge other greate and worthy, yet had I a faire parcel, as me thought for the tyme, in forthering of my sustenaunce, whiche while it dured, I thought me hauing mokel hony to mine estate. I had richesse suffisauntly to weiue nede, I had dignite to be reuerenced in worship. Power me thought that I had to kepe fro min enemies, and me semed to shine in glory of renome, as manhode asketh in meane, for no wighte in myne administracyon, coude non yuels ne trechery by sothe cause on me putte. Lady your selue weten wel, that of tho confederacies maked by my souerains, I nas but a seruaunt, and yet mokel meane folke woll fully ayenste reason thilke maters mainteine, in which maintenaunce glorien them self, and as often ye hauen saide, therof ought nothing in vuel to be laide to me wardes, sithen as repentaunt I am tourned, and no more I thinke, neither tho thinges ne none soch other to sustene, but vtterly distroye without medling maner, in all my mightes. How am I now cast out of al swetenes of blisse, and mischeuously stongen my passed ioye? sorowfully must I bewaile, and liue as a wretche. Euery of tho ioyes, is turned into his contrary: for richesse, now haue I powertie, for dignitie now am I enprisoned, in stede of power, wretchednesse I suffre, and for glory of renome I am now dispised, and fouliche hated: thus hath farne fortune, that sodainly am I ouerthrowen, and out of all welth dispoiled. Truely me thinketh this waie in entree is right harde, God graunt me better grace er it be al passed, thother waie lady, me thought right swete."—"Now certes" (quod Loue) "me list for to chide. What aileth thy darcke dulnesse? Woll it not in clerenesse been sharped. Haue I not by many reasons to thee shewed, soch bodily gooddes failen to veue blesse, their might so ferforth woll not stretch? Shame" (quod she) "it is to saie thou liest in thy wordes. Thou ne hast wist but right few, that these bodily goodes hadde all at ones, commenlie thei dwellen hot togither. He that plentie hath in riches, of his kinne is a shamed: an other of linage right noble and well know, but powertie him handeleth, he were leuer vnknowe. An other hath these, but renome of peoples praising maie he not haue, ouer all he is hated, and defamed of thinges righte foule. An other is faire and semely, but dignitie him faileth: and he that hath dignite is croked or lame, or els mishapen, and fouly dispised. Thus partable these goodes dwellen, commonly in one housholde been thei but silde. Lo how wretched is your trust, on thing that woll not accord. Me thinketh thou clepest thilke plite thou wer in silines of fortune, and thou saiest for that that

selines is departed thou art a wretch. Than foloweth this vpon thy wordes, euery soule reasonable of man, maie not die, and if death endeth selines, and maketh wretches, as needes of fortune maketh it an end. Than soules after death of the body, in wretchednes should liuen. But we knowe many that han getten the blisse of Heauen after their death. Howe than maie this life maken men blissfull; that whan it passeth, it yeueth no wretchenesse, and many times blisse, if in this life he con liue as he should. And wolt thou accompt with fortune, that now at the first she hath doen the tene and sorowe: if thou loke to the maner of all glad things and sorowful, thou maist not naie it, that yet, and namely now thou standest in noble plite in a good ginning, with good forth going herafter. And if thou wen to be a wretch, for soch welth is passed, why than art thou not well fortunate, for badde thinges and anguis wretchednes been passed? Art thou now come first into the hostrie of this life, or els the both of this world, art thou now a sodain gest into this wretched exile? Wenest there be any thing in this yerth stable? Is not thy first arest passed, that brought thee in mortall sorow? Been these not mortall things agon, with ignorauncé of beastial wit, and hast receiued reason in knowing of vertue? what comforte is in thy herte? The knowing sikerly in my seruice be grounded. And wost thou not wel as I said, that death maketh ende of all fortune? What than, standest thou in noble plite, litle hede or recking to take, if thou let fortune passe ding, or els that she flie whan her list, now by thy liue. Parde a man hath nothyng so lefe as his life and for to holde that he doeth all his cure and diligent trauaile. Than saie I thou art blisfull and fortunate sely, if thou knowe thy goodes, that thou hast yet be loued, whiche nothing may doubt, that thei ne been more worthy than thy life?"—"What is that" (quod I) "good contemplacion" (quod she) "of well doyng in vertue, in tyme coming, bothe in pleasaunce of me, and of thy Margarite perle: hastly thyn herte in full blisse, with her shal be eased. Therfore dismay the not, fortune in hate greuously ayenst thy bodilie person, ne yet to great tempest hath she not sent to thee, sithen the holding cables and ankers of thy life, holden by knitting so faste, that thou discomforte the nought of time that is now, ne dispaire thee not of time to come, but yeuen the comfort in hope of well doing, and of getten again the double of thy lesing, with encreasing loue of thy Margarit perle therto. For this hiderto thou hast had al her full daunger, and so thou might amend al that is misse, and all defautes that somtime thou diddest, and that now in all thy time, to that ilke Margarite in full seruice of my lore, thine herte hath continued; wherfore she ought moche the rather, encline fro her daungerous seat. These thinges been yet knit, by the holding anker in thy liue, and holden mote thei: to God I praie al these thinges at ful been performed. For while this anker holdeth, I hope you shalte safly escape, and while thy true meaning seruice about bryng, in dispite of all false meaners, that thee of newe haten, for this true seruice, thou art now entered."

"CERTES" (quod I) "emong thynges I asked a question, which was the waie to the knot. Truelie ladie how so it be, I tempt you with questions and answeres, in speking of my first seruice, I am now in ful purpose in the prick of the herte, that thilk seruice was an enprisonment, and alwaie bad and naughtie, in no maner to be desired. Ne that in getting of the knot, maie it nothing auaile. A wise gentil herte loketh after vertue, and none other bodily ioies alone. And bicause toforn this, in tho waies I was set, I wot well my self I haue erred, and of the blisse failed, and so out of my waie hugely haue I ronne." "Certes" (quod she) "that is soth, and there thou hast miswente, eschue that pathe from hence forward I rede. Wonder I trulie, why the mortalle folke of this worlde, seche these waies outforthe, and it is priued in your self. Lo how ye been confounded with errour and follie. The knowing of uery cause and waie, is goodnes and vertue. Is there any thing to the more precious than thy self? Thou shalt hnue in thy power, that thou wouldest neuer lese, and that in no waie maie be taken fro thee, and thilk thing is that is cause of this knotte. And if death mowe it not reue, more than an yeathly creature, thilke thing than abideth with thy self soule. And so our conclusion, to make soch a knot thus getten, abideth with this thing, and with the soule, as longe as thei laste. A soule dieth neuer, vertue and goodnes euermore with the soule endureth, and this knotte is perfite blisse. Than this soul in this blisse, endlesse shall enduren. Thus shul hertes of a true knot been eased: thus shull their soules been pleased: thus perpetually in ioye shull thei sing."—"In good trouth" (quod I) "here is a good beginning, yeue vs more of this waie." (Quod she) "I saied to thee not long sithen, that reasonable life was one of three thinges, and it was proued to the soule. Euery soule of reason, hath two thinges of sterying life, one in vertue, and an other in the bodilie workyng: and whan the soule is the maister ouer the bodie, than is a manne maister of himself: and a man to be a master ouer himself, liueth in vertue and in goodnesse, and as reason of vertue teacheth. So the soule and the body worching vertue togider, liuen reasonable life, which clerkes clepen felicitie in liuing, and therein is the hie waie to this knot. These olde philosophers, that hadden no knowyng of diuine grace of kindely reason alone, wenden that of pure nature, without any help of grace, me might haue ishoned the other liuinges, reasonablie haue I liued: and for I thinke herafte, if God woll (and I haue space) thilk grace after my leude knowyng declare: I leue it as at this tyme. But (as I saied) he that out foorthe looketh after the waies of this knotte, connyng with whiche he shold knowe the waie infoorthe, slepeth for the tyme, wherefore he that woll this waie know, muste leaue the lookyng after fals waies outfoorthe, and open the iyen of his conscience, and vnclose his herte. Seest not he that hath trust in the bodily life, is so busie bodily woundes, to anoint in kepyng from smert (for all out maie thei not be healed) that of woundes in his true vnderstanding, he taketh no hede, the knowing euen forth slepeth so harde, but anone as in knowing awake, than ginneth the priuie medicines, for healyng of his true entente, inwardes lightlie healeth conscience, if it be well handled. Than must nedes these waies come out of the soule by steryng life of the bodie, and els maie no man come to perfite blisse of this knot: and thus by this meane, he shal come to the knot,

and to the perfite silinesse that he wende haue had in bodily goodes out forth:"—"Ye" (quod I) "shall he haue bothe knot, riches, power, dignitie, and renome, in this maner waie?"—"Ye" (quod she) "that shall I shewe thee. Is he not riche that hath suffisaunce, and hath the power that no man maie amaistrien? Is not greate dignitie to haue worship and reuerence? And hath he not glory of renome, whose name perpetuall is during, and out of nomber in comparacion?"—"These be the things that men wenen to getten outforthe" (quod I). "Ye" (quod she) "thei that loken after a thing that nought is, thereof in all ne in partie, longe mowe thei gapen after:"—"that is sothe" (quod I:) "therefore" (quod she) "thei that seechen gold in grene trees, and wene to gader precious stones emong vines and laine hir nettes in mountaines to fish, and thinken to hunt in depe seas after hart and hind, and sechen in yearth thilke thinges that surmounteth Heauen. What maie I of hem saie? But folishe ignoraunce, misledeth wandring wretches by vncouth wayes, that shullen be forleten, and maketh hem blind fro the right pathe of true waie, that should been vsed. Therefore in generall errour in mankinde, departeth thilke goodes by misse seching, which he should haue hole and he sought by reason. Thus goeth he begiled of that he sought, in his hode men haue blowe a iape."—"Now" (quod I) "if a man be vertuous, and al in vertue liueth, how hath he al these thinges?"—"That shall I prouen" (quod she) "What power hath any man, to let an other of liuing in vertue? For prisonment or any other disease, he take it paciently, discomfiteth he not, the tiraunte ouer his soule, no power maie haue? Than hath the man so tourmented soche power, that he nill be discomfite, ne ouercome maie he not been sithen pacience in his soule ouercometh, and as not ouercomen. Soche thing that maie not be a maistred, he hath nede to nothyng, for he hath suffisaunce inow to help himself. And thilke thing that thus hath power and suffisaunce, and no tiraunte maie it reue, and hath dignitie to set at naught all thinges, here it is a great dignitie that death maie a maistrie. Wherfore thilke power suffisance so enclosed with dignitie, by all reason reuome must haue. This is thilk riches with suffisaunce ye should loke after: this is thilk worshipful dignitie ye shuld coueit: this is thilke power of might, in which ye shuld trust: this is thilke renome of glory, that endlesse endureth, and al nis but substaunce in vertuous liuing."—"Certes" (quod I) "all this is sothe, and so I se well that vertue with ful gripe, encloseth al these things. Wherfore in soth I maie saie, by my troth, vertue of my Margarite, brought me first into your seruice, to haue knitting with that iewell, not sodain longinges ne folkes smalewordes, but onely our conuersacion togider: and than I seing thentent of her true meaning, with florishing vertue of pacience, that she vsed nothing in euill, to quite the wicked leasynges, that false tonges oft in her haue laied, I haue sey it my self, goodly foryeuenesse hath sponge out of her herte, vnitie and accorde aboue al other things, she desireth in a good meeke maner, and suffreth many wicked tales.

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"TRUELIE ladie, to you it were a great worship, that soch things by due *chastisment* were amended."—"Ye" (quod she) "I haue the excused, all soche thinges as yet mow not be redressed: thy Margarites vertue, I commende well the more, that paciently soche anoies suffreth. Dauid king was meke and suffred mokell hate, and many euil speaches: no dispite ne shame, that his enemies him deden, might not moue pacience out of his herte, but euer in one plite mercie he vsed. Wherefore God himself toke reward to the thinges, and thereon soche punishment let fal. Truely by reason it ought be ensample of drede, to al maner peoples mirthe. A manne vengeable in wrath, no gouernance in punishment ought to haue. Plato had a cause his seruaunte to scourge, and yet cleped he his neighboure, to performe the doing, himself would not, lest wrath had made him a maistred, and so might he haue laid on to moche: euermore grounded vertue sheweth the entent fro within. And truly I wot well for her goodnes and vertue, thou hast desired my seruice, to her pleasant well the more, and thy self therto fully hast profered."—"Good ladie" (quod I) "is vertue the hie waie to this knot, that long we haue ihandled?"—"Ye forsoth" (quod she) "and without vertue, goodly this knotte maie not be gotten."—"Ah now I see" (quod I) "how vertue in me faileth, and I as a sere tree, without burioning or frut alwaie welke, and so I stonde in dispaire of this noble knotte, for vertue in me hath no maner working. A wide where about haue I traueiled."—"Peace" (quod she) "of thy firste waie thy traunile is in idell, and as touching the seconde waie, I se well thy meanyng. Thou woldest conclude me if thou coudest, bicause I brought thee to seruice, and euery of my seruauntes I helpe to come to this blisse, as I said here beforne: and thou saidest thy self, thou mightest not be holpen as thou wenest bicause that vertue in the faileth. And this blisse perfitly without vertue, maie not be gotten, thou wenest of these wordes, contradiccion to folowe. Parde at the hardest I haue no seruant, but he be vertuous in dede and thought. I brought thee in my seruice, yet art you not my seruaunt: but I saie, thou might so werch in vertue hereafter, that than shalt thou be my seruaunt, and as for my seruaunt accompted. For habite maketh no monke, ne wearing of gilt spurres, maketh no knight. Neuer the later, in comfort of thine herte, yet wol I otherwise answere."—"Certes ladie" (quod I tho) "so ye muste needes, or els I had nigh caught soche a cordiacle for sorowe, I wot it well I shuld it neuer haue recouered. And therfore now I praie to enforme me in this, or els I hold me without recouerie. I maie not long endure, till this lesson be learned, and of this mischief the remedie knowen."—"Now" (quod she) "be not wrothe, for there is no man on liue, that maie come to a precious thyng, longe coueited, but he somtime suffre tenefull diseases, and wenest thy self to been vnliche to al other? That maie not been: and with the more sorowe that a thynge is getten, the more he hath ioye, the ilke thyng afterwardes to kepe, as it fareth by children in schole, that for learnyng arne beaten, whan their lesson thei foryetten, commonly after a good disciplinyng with a yerde, thei keepe right well doctrine of their schole."

RIGHT with these woordes, on this ladie I threwe vp mine iyen, to see her countenaunce and her cheare, and she apercciuing this fantasie in ming

herte, ganne her semblaunte goodlie on me cast, and said in this wise.

" It is well knowe, bothe to reason and experience in dooyng, euery actiue woorcheth on his passiue, and whan thei been togither, actiue and passiue, been icleaped by these philosophers, if fire bee in place, chafyng thyng able to bee chafed or heate, and the ilke thynges been sette in soche a distaunce, that the one may werche, the other shall suffre. The ilke Margarite thou desirest, is full of vertue, and able to bee actiue in goodnesse: but euery herbe sheweth his vertue, out forth from within, the Sonne yeueth light, that thinges maie bee seye.

" Euery fire heateth the ilke thyng that it neighed, and it be able to be heat, vertue of this Margarite out foorthe wrethe, and nothynge is more able to suffer woorchyng, or woorke catche of the actife, but passife of the same actife, and no passife to vertues of this Margarite, but thee in all my donet canne I finde, so that her vertewe muste needes on thee werche, in what place euer thou bee, within distaunce of her worthinesse, as her very passife thou art closed: but vertue maie thee nothyng profite, but thy desire bee performed, and all thy sorowes ceased. Ergo through werchyng of her vertue, thou shalt easelie been holpen, and driuen out of all care, and welcome to this long by thee desired."

" Ladie" (quod I) " this is a good lesson, in ginnyng of my ioye: but wete ye well forsoth, though I suppose she haue moche vertue, I would my spousale wer proued, and than maie I liue out of doubte, and rejoice me greatlie, in thinkyng of tho vertues so shewed."—" I heard thee saie" (quod she) " at my beginning, whan I receiued thee first for to serue that thy iewell, thilke Margarite thou desirest, was closed in a muskle, with a blewe shell."—" Ye forsothe" (quod I) " so I said, and so it is."—" Well" (quod she) " euery thyng kindelie, sheweth it self, this iewell closed in a blewe shell, excellence of colours, sheweth vertue from within, and so euery wight should rather looke, to the proper vertue of thynges, than to his foraine gooddes. If a thyng bee engendred of good matter, comonlie and for the more parte it followeth, after the congelemente vertue of the first matter, and it be not corrupte with vices, to proceade with encrease of good vertues: eke right so it fareth of badde. Truely greate excellence in vertue of linage, for the more part discendeth by kind to the succession in vertues to folowe. Wherfore I saie, the colours of euery Margarite, sheweth from within the finesse in vertue.

" Kindely heauen, whan merie weather is alofte, appereth in mannes iye of colour in blewe, stedfastnesse in peace, betokenyng within and without: Margarite is engendred by heauenlie dewe, and sheweth in it self, by finenesse of colour, whether the engendrure, wer maked on morowe or on eue: thus saieth kinde of this peerle. This precious Margarite that thou seruest, sheweth it self discended by nobley of vertue, from his heauenliche dewe, nourished and congeled in mekenesse, that mother is of all vertues, and by werkes that men, seen withouten the significacion of the coloures, been shewed mercie and pitie in the herte, with peace to al other, and al this is iclosed in a muskle, who so readilie these vertues loken. All thyng that hath soule, is reduced into good by meane thynges, as thus: into God manne is reduced by soules reasonable, and so foorthe beastes, or bodies that mowe not mouen, after place been reduced into man, by beastes meue that mouen from place to place: so that thilke bodies that han felyng soules, and moue not from places, holden the lowest degree of solyng thynges in felyng, and soche been reduced into man by meanes. So it foloweth, the muskle as mother of all vertues, halte the place of mekenesse, to his lowest degree discendeth doune of Heuen, and there by a maner of virgin engendrure, arne these Margarites engendred, and afterward congeled. Made not mekenesse so lowe, the hie Heauen, to enclose and catchout thereof so noble a dewe, that after congelement a Margarite, with endles vertue and euerlasting ioy, was with ful vessel of grace yeuen to euery creature, that goodly would it receiue."—" Certes" (quod I) " these thinges been right noble, I haue er this herde these same sawes."—" Than" (quod she) " thou woste well these thynges been sothe?"—" Ye forsothe" (quod I) " at the full."—" Now (quod she) " that this Margarite is ful of vertue, it is well proued, wherefore some grace, some mercie emong other vertues, I wotte right well on thee shall discende?"—" Ye" (quod I) " yet would I haue better declared vertues in this Margarite, kindelie to been grounded."—" That shall I shewe thee" (quod she) " and thou wouldest it learne?"—" Learne" (quod I) " what nedeth soche woordes: wete ye not well ladie your self, that all my cure, all my diligence, and all my miglit, haue tourned by yonr counsaile, in pleasance of that perle, al my thought and all my study, with your helpe desireth, in worshippe the ilke iewell, to encrease al my trauaill, and all my businesse in your seruice, this Margarite to glad in somehalue: me were leuer her honour, her pleasaunce, and her good cheare, thorowe me for to be maintained and kept, and I of soche thynge in her likyng to bee cause, than all the wealthe of bodily goodes ye could recken. And would neuer God, but I put my self in greate ieopardie of al that I would, that is now no more but my life alone, rather than I should suffer thilke iewel in any poincte been blemished, as ferre as I maie suffre, and with my mightes stretche."—" Soche thing" (quod she) " maie mokel further thy grace, and thee in my seruice auaunce."—" Bnt now" (quod Loue) " wilt thou graunte me thilke Margarite to been good?"—" O good good" (quod I) " why tempt ye me and tene with soche maner speache: I would graunte that, though I should anone die, and by my trouth fight in the quarell, if any wighte would counterpleade."—" It is so moche the lighter" (quod Loue) " to proue our entent."—" Ye" (quod I) " but yet would I heare, how ye would proue, that she were good by reasonable skill, that it mowe not been denied, for although I knowe, and so doeth many other, manyfolde goodnes and vertue, in this Margarite been printed, yet some menne there been, that no goodnesse spreaken: and where euer your wordes been heard, and your reasons been shewed, soche euill speakers ladie, by aucthorite of your excellence, shulden been stopped and ashamed. And more thei that han none acquaintaunce in her persone, yet mowe thei know her vertues, and been the more enformed in what wise thei mowe set their hertes, whan hem

list into your seruice any entree make: for truely all this to begin, I wote well my self, that thilke iewell is so precious perle, as a womanly woman in her kinde, in whom of goodnesse, of vertue, and also of aunswering, shappe of limmes, and fetures so well in all poinctes accordyng, nothing faileth: I leue that kinde her made with greate studie, for kinde in her persone nothyng hath for-yet, and that is well seen. In euery good wightes herte, she hath grace of commendyng, and of vertuous praisyng. Alas that euer kinde made her deadlie, saue onelie in that I wot well, that nature in formyng of her in nothyng hath erred."

"CERTES" (quod Lone) "thou haste well begonne, and I aske thee this question: Is not in generalle euery thyng good?"—"I not" (quod I). "No" (quod she) "saue not God euerie thing that he made, and werne righte good."—"Than is wonder" (quod I) "howe euillthynges commen a place, sithen that all thinges weren right good."—"Thus" (quod she) "I woll declare euericne qualitie, and euery accion, and euery thing that hath any maner of beyng, it is of God, and God it made, of whom is all goodnesse, and all beyng, of hym is no badnesse: badde to bee is naught: good to be is somewhat, and therfore good and beeyng, is in one in vnderstanding."—"How maie this bee" (quod I) "for often han shrewes me assailed, and mokell badnesse therein haue I founden, and so me semeth bad, to bee somewhat in kinde."—"Thou shalt" (quod she) "vnderstande that soche maner badnesse, which is vsed to purifie wrong doers is somewhat, and God it made, and beeyng hath, and that is good: other badness no beyng hath vtterlie, it is in the negatiue of somewhat and that is naughte, and nothinge beyng. The parties essenciall of beyng, arne saied in double wise, as that it is, and these parties been found in euery creature, for all thing a this halfe the firste beyng, is beyng through participacion, taking partie of being, so that euery creature is difference, betwen beyng, and of him through whom it is and his owne beyng: right as euery good is a maner of beyng, so is it good through beyng, for it is naught other to be: and euery thing though it be good, it is not of hymself good, but it is good by that, it is ordinable to the greate goodnes. This dualitie after clerkes determission, is founden in euery creature, bee it neuer so single of onhed."—"Ye" (quod I) "but there as it is isaied, that God saue euery thyng of his makyng, and were right good, as your self said to me, not long tyme sithen. I aske whether euery creature is isaid good, through goodnesse vnformed, either els formed, and afterwarde if it be aecepte vtterly good?"—"I shall saie thee" (quod she) "these greate passed clerkes, han deuided good, in to good being alone, and that is nothing but good, for nothyng is good in that wise, but God. Also in good by participacion, and that is cleaped good, for farre fette, and representatiue of goodlie goodnesse, and after this manifolde good is said, that is to saie, good in kinde, and good in gendre, and good of grace, and good of ioye.

"Of good in kind Augustine saith, all that been, been good: but peraunter thou wouldest wete, whether of hemself it bee good, or els of an others goodnes, for naturell goodnesse of euery substaunce, is nothing els than his substaunciall beyng, whiche is icleaped goodnesse, after comparison that he hath to his first goodnesse, so as it is inductatife, by meanes into the firste goodnesse. Boece sheweth this thing at the full, that this name good, is in generall name in kinde, as it is comparisoned generally to his principalle ende, whiche is God, knotte of all goodnes. Euery creature crieth God vs made, and so thei han full apeted to thilke God by affeccion, soche as to hem belongeth: and in this wise all thynges been good, of the greate God, whiche is good alone."—"This wonder thing" (quod I) "how ye haue by many reasons proued, my first waie to bee errour and misgoyng, and cause of badnesse and feble meanyng, in the ground ye aledged to be rooted: whence is it, that soche badnesse hath springes, sithen all thinges thus in generall ben good, and badnesse hath no beyng, as ye haue declared: I wene if all thynges been good, I might than with the firste waie, in that good haue ended, and so by goodnesse haue comen to blisse in your seruice desired."—"All thing" (quod she) is good by beyng in participacion, out of the first goodnesse, which goodnesse is corrupte by badnesse, and bad meanyng maners: God hath in good thynges, that thei been good by beyng, and not in euil, for there is absence of rightfull loue, for badnesse is nothing only but enil wil of the vser, and through giltes of the doer, wherefore at the ginning of the worlde, euery thing by himself was good, and in vniuersall thei werne right good. An iye or a hande is fairer, and better in a bodie sette in his kindlie place, than from the bodie disceuered. Euery thing in his kindlie place beyng kindlie, good doth werche, and out of that place voided it dissolueth and is defouled hym selue. Our noble God in gliterande wise by armonie this worlde ordeined, as in purtreitures, storied with colours medled, in whiche blacke, and other darcke colours, commenden the golden and the assured painture, euery put in kindely place, one beside an other, more for other glitereth: right so little faire, maketh right faire more glorious, and right so of goodnes, and of other thynges in vertue. Wherefore other bad, and not so good perles as this Margarite, that we han of this matter, yeuen by the aire little goodnesse, and little vertue, righte mokell goodnesse and vertue in thy Margarite to been proued, in shining wise to be found and shewed. How shuld euer goodnes of peace haue ben knowe, but if vnpeace somtime reigne, and mokell euill wrothe? How should mercie been proued, and no trespasse were, by due iustificacion to be punished? Therefore grace and goodnesse of a wighte is founde, the sorowful hertes in good meaning to endure, been comforted, vnite, and accorde betwene hertes knitte in ioye to abide.

"What wenest thou that I reioce, or els accoumpte hym emong my seruauntes, that pleaseth Pallas, in vndoyng of Mercurie, all be it that to Pallas he be knitte by title of lawe, not accordyng to the reasonable conscience: and Mercurie in dooyng, haue grace to been suffered: or els hym that weneth the Moone, for fairenesse of the eue sterre. Lo, otherwhile by nightes light of the Moone, greatlie comforteth in darcke thoughtes and blinde. Understandyng of loue, yeueth greate gladnesse: who so liste no bileue, whan a soth tale is shewed adewe and a deblis his name is entred. Wise folke and worthie in gentillesse, bothe of vertue and of liuyng, yeuen full credence in sothenes of loue.

with a good herte, there as good euidence or experience in doinge, shewethe not the contrarie. Thus mightest thou haue ful prefe in thy Margarites goodnesse, by commendement of other iewels badnesse, and yuelnesse in doinge. Stoundemele diseases yeueth seuerall houres in ioye."

"Nowe by my trouthe" (quod I) "this is wel declared that my Margarite is good, for sythen other been good, and she passeth many other in goodnes and vertue, wherthrough by maner necessarye she muste be good: and goodnesse of this Margarite is nothinge elles but vertue, wherfore she is vertuous, and if there failed anye vertue in anye side, there were lacke of vertue: badde nothinge els is ne maye bee: but lacke and wante of good and goodnesse, and so shoulde she haue that same lacke, that is to sayne badde, and that maye not be, for she is good, and that is good me thinketh all good: and so by consequence me semeth vertuous, and no lacke of vertue to haue. But the Sonne is not know but he shine, ne vertuous herbes but they haue hir kinde werchinge, ne vertue but it stretche in goodnesse or profite to another, is no vertue. Than by al waies of reason, sithen mercie and pite ben moste commended amonge other vertues, and they might neuer been shewed refreshement of helpe and of comforte, but nowe at my moste nede, and that is the kinde werkinge of these vertues: trewly I wene I shall not varie from these helpes.

"Fyre and if he yeue none heate, for fire is not demed. The Sonne but he shine, for sonne is not accompted. Water but it wete, the name shal ben chaunged. Uertue but it werche, of goodnes dothe it faile, and in to his contrarie the name shal be reuersed, and these been impossible: wherfore the contradictory that is neeessarie, nedes must I leue."—"Certes" (quod she) "in thy person and out of thy mouth these wordes lien well to ben sáid, and in thine vnderstandinge to be leued, as in entent of this Margarite alone: and here now my spech in conclusion of these wordes.

"In these thynges" (quod she) "that me list nowe to shewe openly, shal be founde the matter of thy sickeness, and what shal been the medicin that maye be thy sorowes lisse and comfort, as well thee as all other that amisse haue erred, and out of the waye walked, so that any drop of good will in amendement ben dwelled in their hertes. Prouerbes of Salomon openly teacheth, how somtime an innocent walkid by the waye in blindenesse of a derke night, whome mette a woman (if it be lefely to saye) as a strumpete araied redily pureied in turning of thoughtes with veine ianglinges, and of reste iupacient dissimulacion of my termes, saiyng in this wise: come and be we dronken of our swete pappes, vse we coueitous collinges. And thus drewen was this innocente, as an oxe to the larder."—"Lady" (quod I) "to me this is a queinte thinge to vnderstande: I praye you of this parable declare me the entente." "This innocente" (quod she) "is a scholer lerninge of my lore, in seching of my blisse, in which thinge the daye of his thought turninge encline th in to eue, and the sonne of verye light failinge, maketh darke night in his conninge. Thus in derkenesse of manye doutes he walketh, and for blindenesse of vnderstanding, he ne wote in what way he is in: forsothe soche one may lightly ben begiled. To whome came loue fained, not clothed of my liuery, but vnleful lustie habite, with softe speche and mery, and with faire honied wordes heretikes and misse mening people, skleren and wimplen their errours. Austen withnesseth of an heretike that in his firste beginninge, he was a man right experte in reasons, and swete in his wordes and the werkes miscorden. Thus fareth fayned loue in her first werchinges: thou knowest these thinges for trewe, thou hast hem proued by experience. Somtime in doinge to thin owne person, in whiche thing thou haste founde matter of mokel disease. Was not fained loue redily purueied, thy wittes to cath and tourne thy good thoughtes? trewly she hath wounded the conscience of manye, with florishinge of mokell ianglinge wordes: and good worthe thanked I it for no glose, I am gladde of my prudence thou haste so manly her veined. To me arte thou moche holden, that in thy kinde course of good meaninge I returne thy minde: I trowe ne had I shewed the thy Margarite, thou haddest neuer returned. Of firste in good perfite ioye was euer fayned loue impacient, as the water of Syloe, which euer more floweth with stilnesse and priui noise tyl it come nyghe the brinke, and than ginneth it so out of measure to bolne, with nouelleries of chaungynge stormes, that in course of euery renninge, it is in pointe to spil al his circuit of cankes. Thus fained loue priuely at the fullest of his flowinge, newe stormes debate to araise. And al be it that Mercurius often with hole vnderstanding, knowen soche perillous matters, yet veneriens so lustie ben and so leude in their wyttes, that in soche thinges right litel or naught don they fele, and writen and cryen to their felowes: here is blisse, here is ioye, and thus in to one same errour, mokel folke they drawen. Come they saine, and be we dronken of our pappes, that ben fallas and liyng glose, of whiche nowe they not souke mylke of helthe, but deedly venym and poison, corrupcion of sorowe. Mylke of fallas, is venym of disceite: mylke of liynge glose is venym of corrupciou. Lo what thinge cometh out of these pappes: vse we coueited collinges, desire we and meddle we false wordes with sote, and sote with false, truely this is the sorinesse of fained loue, nedes of these surfettes, sikenesse must folow. Thus as an oxe to thy langoryng deth wer thou drawen, the sote of the smoke hath the al defased. Euer the deper thou somtime wadest, the soner thou it founde: yf it had thee killed it had be litell wonder. But on that other side my trewe seruaunt not faynen ne disceiue conne, sothly their doing is open, my foundement endureth, be the burthen neuer so greate, euer in one it lasteth: it yeueth lyfe and blisfull goodnesse in the last endes, though the ginninges ben sharpe. Thus of two contraries, contrarie ben the effectes. And so thilke Margarite thou seruest, shal sene the by her seruice, out of perillous tribulacion delyuered, bycause of her seruice in to newe disease fallen, by hope of amendemente in the laste ende, with ioye to be gladded, wherfore of kinde pure, her mercy with grace of good helpe, shall she graunt, and elles I shal her so straine, that with pite shall she ben amaistred. Remembre in thine herte howe horrible somtyme to thine Margarite thou trespasest, and in a great wise ayenst her thou forfeitest: clepe ayen thy minde, and knowe thine owne gyltes. What goodnes, what bountie, with mokell folowing pyte founde thou in that tyme?

where thou not goodly accepted in to grace? By my pluckynge was she to forȝeuenesse enclined. And after I her stired to drawe the to house, and yet wendest thou vtterlie for euer haue ben refused. But wel thou woste, sithen that I in soche sharpe disease might so greatelye auayle, what thinkeste in thy wyt? Howe ferre maye my witte stretche? and thou lach not on thy side I wol make the knotte: certes in thy good bering I woll accorde with the psauter. I haue founde Dauid in my seruice true, and with holy oyle of peace and of rest longe by him desired, vtterly he shal be anoynted. Truste wel to me, and I wol thee not faile. The lening of the first way wyth good herte of continuaunce, that I se in the grounded, this purpose to parfourme, draweth my by maner of constrainynge, that nedes must I ben thine helper: athough mirthe a whyle be taryed, it shal come at soche ceason, that thy thought shall been ioyed; and wolde neuer God, sithen thyne herte to my reasones arne assented, and openly haste confessed thyne amisse goynge, and nowe criest after mercy but yf mercy folowed: thy blisse shall ben redy ywis; thou ne wost how sone.

"Nowe be a good chylde I rede. The kind of vertues in thy Margaryte rehersed, by strength of me in thy persone shul werche. Comfort the in thys, for thou mayst not miscarie." And these wordes said, she streight her on length and rested a while.

THUS ENDETH THE SECONDE BOOKE, AND HERE AFTER FOLOWETH THE THIRDE BOOKE.

BOOK III.

Of nombre saine these clerkes that it is naturel some of discret thinges, as in tellinge one two, thre, and so forth: but among all nombres thre is determined for moste certain. Wherfore in nombre certaine this werke of my besye leudenesse, I thynke to ende and parfourme.

Ensample by this worlde in thre tymes is deuided: of whiche the firste is cleaped Demacian, that is to say, going out of trew waye, and all that tho dieden, in Hell were thy punished for a mannes sinne, tyl grace and mercy fette hem thence, and there ended the first time. The second time lasteth from the comming of merciable grace, vntyl the ende of transitorie time, in which is shewed the true way in fordoinge of the badde, and that is yeleped tyme of grace: and that thinge is not yeuen by deserte of yeldinge, one benefite for another, but onely through goodnesse of the yeuer of grace in thilke tyme. Who so can wel vnderstand, is shapen to be saued in souled blysse. The thirde tyme shal gine whan transitorie thinges of worldes han made their ende, and that shal been in ioye, glory, and rede both body and soule, that wel han deserued in the time of grace. And thus in that Heuen togither shul they dwel perpetuelli, without any ymaginatife yuel in any halue. These ȝimes are figured by tho thre dayes, that our God was closed in yerthe, and in the thirde arose shewinge our resurrection, to ioy and blisse of tho that it deseruen, by his merciable grace. So this leude booke in thre matters accordaunt to tho tymes, lightely by a good inseer maye been vnderstande, as in the firste erroure of misse going is shewed with sorowful pine, punished is cried after mercie. In the seconde is grace in good waye proued, which is failing without deserte, thilke first misse amending in correction of tho errours and euen waye to bringe with comforte of welfare, in to amendemente wexinge. And in the thirde ioye and blisse, graunted to him that wel canne deserue it, and hath sauour of vnderstanding in the tyme of grace. Thus in ioye of my thirde booke shall the matter be till it ende. But speciall cause I haue in my herte to make this processe of a Margarit perle, that is so precious a gemme with clere and litell of whiche stones or iewel, the tonges of vs English people tourneth the right names, and clepeth hem Margeryte perles: thus varieth our spech from many other langages. For trewely Latin, Frenche, and many mo other langages cleapeth hem Margery perles, the name Margarite or Margrit peerles: wherfore in that denominacion I woll me accorde to other mens tonges, in that name cleping. These clerkes that treaten of kindes, and studien out the propertie ther of thinges, saine the Margarit is a lytel white perle, throughout holow and rounde, and vertuous, and on the see sides in the more Britain in muskle shelles of the heuenly dewe the best ben engendred: in which by experience ben founde thre faire vertues. One is it, yeueth comforte to the felynge spirites in bodily persones of reason. Another is good, it is profitable helth ayenst passions of sorie mens hertes. And the thirde it is nedefull and noble in staunchinge of bloode, there elles to moche wolde out ren. To which perle and vertues me list to liken at this tyme philosophie, hye with her thre speces, that is naturell and moral, and resonable: of which thinges hereth what sain these great clerkes. Philosophie is knowinge of deuinly and manly thinges ioyned with studie of good liuing, and this stante in two thinges, that is conninge and opinion: conninge is whan a thing by certaine reason is conceiued. But wretches, and fooles and leude men, many wil conceiue a thing and maintain it as for a sothe, though reason be in the contrarie, wherfore conninge is a straunger. Opinion is while a thing is in non certaine, and hidde frome mens very knowleginge, and by no parfite reason fully declared, as thus: if the Sonne be so mokel as men wenen, or els if it be more than the Erthe. For in sothnes the certaine quantite of that planet is wnknowen to erthly dwellers, and yet by opinion of some menne it is holden for more than midde erth. The firste spece of philosophye is naturel, which in kindely thingnes treaten, and sheweth causes of Heuen, and strength of kindely course: as by arsmetrike, geometry, musike, and by astronomye, techeth waies and course of Heuens, of planetes and of sterres aboute Heuen and Erthe, and other elementes. The seconde spece is morall, whiche in order of liuing maners teacheth, and by reason proueth vertues of soule moste worthy in our liuing, whiche been prudence, iustice, temperaunce, and strength. Prudence is goodly wisedome in knowinge of thinges. Strength voydeth al aduersitees aliche euen. Temperaunce distroieth bestiall lyuing with easie bearing. And iustice right fully iudgeth, and iudginge departeth to euery wight that that is his owne. The thirde spece tourneth in to reason of vnderstanding, al thinges to be said soth and discussed, and that in two thinges is

deuided: one is art, another is rhetorique, in which two al lawes of mans reason been grounded or els maintained. And for this booke is all of loue, and therafter beareth his name, and philosophie and law must here to accorden by their clergial discripcions: as philosophie for loue of wisedome is declared: lawe for maintainaunce of peace is holde, and these with loue muste nedes acorden, therfore of hem in this place haue I touched. Ordre of homly thinges and honest maner of liuing in vertue, with rightfull iudgement in causes, and profitable administracion in comunalties of realmes and cities, by euenhede profitably to raine, nat by singuler auauntage, ne by priuy enuy, ne by solein purpose in couetise of worship or of goodes, ben disposed in open rule shewed, by loue, philosophie, and law, and yet loue toforn al other. Wherfore as susterne in vnitie they acorden and one ende that is peace and rest, they causen norisshinge, and in the ioye mainteinen to endure. Nowe than, as I haue declared: my boke acordeth with discripcion of thre thinges, and the Margarit in vertue is likened to philosophie, with the three speces. In whiche matters euer twei ben acordaunt with bodily reson, and the thirde with the soule: but in conclusion of my booke and of this Margarit peerle, in knitting togider law by thre sondry maners shal be lykened, that is to saye, lawe, right, and custome, which I wol declare al that is law, cometh of Goddes ordinaunce by kindly worching, and thilke thinges ordained by mans wittes arne icleped right, whiche is ordayned by many maners and in constitution writen: but custome is a thinge that is accepted for right or for law, ther as lawe and right failen, and there is no difference, whether it come of scripture or of reason. Wherfore it sheweth that law is kindly gouernaunce: right cometh out of maunes probable reason: and custome is of comen vsage by length of time vsed, and custome nat write is vsage, and if it be writte constitution it is ywriten and ycleped: but lawe of kinde is comen to euery nation, as coniunction of man and woman in loue, succession of children in heritance, restituicion of thinge by strength taken or lent, and this lawe among al other halte the souereinest gree in wurship, whiche lawe began at the beginning of reasonable creature, it varyed yet neuer for no chaunging of time, cause for sothe in ordaining of lawe, was to constraine mens hardinesse in to peace, and withdrawinge his yuel wil, and turning malice in to goodnesse, and that innocence sikerly withouten teneful anoy amonge shrewes safely might inhabyte by protexcion of safe conducte, so that shrewes harme for harme by bridele of ferdenesse shulden restraine. But forsothe in kindly law nothinge is commended, but soche as Goddes wil hath confirmed, ne nothinge denied but contraryoustie of Goddes will in Heuen: eke than all lawes or custome, or els constitution by vsage, or wryting, that contrarien law of kinde, vtterly ben repugnaunt and aduersary to our Godds wil of Heuen. Trewly lawe of kind for Goddes own lusty will is verily to maintaine, vnder whiche lawe (and vnworthy) bothe professe and reguler arn obedieneer an bounden to this Margarit perle, and by knotte of loues statutes and stablishement in kinde, which that goodly maye not been withsetten. Lo vnder ths bonde am I constrained to abyde and man vnder lyuinge lawe ruled, by that lawe oweth after desertes to ben rewarded by pain or by mede, but if mercie weyue the paine: so than be parte, reasonfulli maye be sey, that mercy both right and lawe passeth, thentent of al these matters, is the lest clere vnderstanding, to weten at thende of thys thirde booke ful knowinge thorow Goddes grace, I thinke to mak neuerthelater, yet if these thinges han a good and a sleght inseer whiche that canne souke hony of the hard stone, oyle of the drie rocke, may lyghty fele nobley of matter in my leude ymaginacion closed.

" But for my booke shall be of ioye (as I said) and I so ferre set fro thylke place, fro whens gladnes should come, my corde is to short to let my boket ought catche of that water, and fewe menne bee abouten my corde to eche and many in ful purpose ben redy it shorter to make, and to enclose thenter, that my boket of ioye nothinge shuld catch, but empty returne, my carefull sorowes to encrease, and if I die for pain, that wer gladnes at their hertes. Good lord send me water into the cop of these mountaines, and I shall drinke therof my thrustes to stanch: and sey these be comfortable welles in to helth of goodnes of my sauiour am I holpen. And yet I say more, the house of ioy to me is not opened. How dare my sorowful goost than in any mater of gladnesse thynken to trete? for euer sobbynges and complaintes be redy refrete in his meditacions, as werbles in many folde stoundes comming about I not than. And therfore what maner of ioy coude endite, but yet at dore shal I knocke, if the key of Dauid wolde the locke vnshyt and he bring me in, whiche that childrens tonges bothe openeth and closeth. Whose spirite, where he wel worcheth, departinge goodly as him lyketh. Now to Goddes laude and reuerence, profite of the reders, amendement of maners of the herers, encresing of worship among loues seruauntes, releuing of my herte in to grace of my iewel, and frenship plesaunce of this perle. I am stered in this making, and for nothing els: and yf any good thing to mennes liking in this scripture to be founde, thanketh the maister of grace which that of that good and al other is authour, and principal doer. And if any thing be insufficient or els mysliking, with that that the leudnesse of myne vnable conning, for body in disease anoyeth the vnderstanding in soule. A disesely habytacion letteth the wittes many thinges, and namely in sorow. The custome neuer the later of loue, be longe time of seruice in termes I thinke to pursue, whiche ben liuely to yeue vnderstandinge in other thynges. But nowe to enforme the of this Margarites goodnes, I may her not halfe praise. Wherfore not she for my booke, but this booke for her is worthy to be commended, tho my booke be leude: right as thinges nat for places, but places for thinges ought to be desired and praised.

" Now" (quod Loue) " trewely thy wordes I haue well vnderstonde. Certes me thinketh hym ryght good, and me wondreth why you so lightli passest in the law,"—" Sothly" (quod I) "my wyt is leude and I am right blind and that mater depe, how shuld I than haue waded, lightly might I haue drenched and spilt ther my self:"—" Yea" (quod she) " I shal helpe the to swime. For right as lawe punisheth brekers of preceptes, and the contrary doers of the writen constitucions: right so ayenward, law rewardeth and yeueth mede to hem that law strenghten. By one law this rebel

is punished, and this innocent is mede, the shrewe is emprisoned and this rightfull is corowned. The same lawe that ioyneth by wedloke wythout forsaking, the same law yeueth libel of deparficion bycause of deuorse, both demed and declared."—"Ye ye" (quod I) "I finde in no lawe to mede and rewarde in goodnes, the giltie of desertes."—"Fole" (quod she) "giltie conuerted in your law, mykel merite deserueth. Also Pauly of Rome was corowned, that by him the mainteiners of Pompeus weren knowen and distroied: and yet toforn was this Paulin chefe of Pompeus counsaile. This lawe in Rome hath yet his name of mesuring in mede, the bewrayng of the conspiracy, ordained by tho senatours the death. Iulius Cesar is acompted in to Cotons rightwisnesse, for euer in trouthe florisheth his name amonge the knowers of reason. Perdicas was corowned in the heritage of Alexander the great, for telling of a priuy hate the king Porrus to Alexander hadde. Wherfore euery wight by reason of law after his rightwisenes apertly his mede maye chalenge: and so thou that maintainest lawe of kinde, and therfore disease hast suffred in the law, reward is worthy to be rewarded and ordained, and apertly thy mede might thou chalenge."—"Certes" (quod I) "this haue I well lerned, and euer hensforward I shal draw me therafter in one hed of will to abide this lawe both maintain and kepe, and so hope I best entre in to your grace, wel deseruing in o worship of a wight, without nedeful compulsion ought medefully to be rewarded."—"Truly" (quod Loue) "that is soth, and tho by constitucion good seruice in to profite and auantage stretch, vtterly many men it demen to haue more desert of mede, than good wil nat compelled."—"Se now" (quod I) "how may men holden of this the contrary. And what is good seruice? Of you wolde I here this question declared."—"I shal say the" (quod she) "in a few wordes, resonable workinges in plesaunce and profite of thy soueraine."—"How shuld I this performe" (quod I)—"right well" (quod she) "and here me nowe a lytell: it is hardely" (quod she) "to vnderstande that right as mater by due ouerchaunginges foloweth his perfection and his forme: right so euery man by rightful werkinges ought to folow that leful desires in his herte, and se toforne to what ende he deserueth, for many times he that loketh nat after thendes, but vttery therof is vnknowen, befalleth often many yuels to don, wherthrough er he be ware shamfulli he is confounded, thend therof neden to be befor loked to euery desire of soch forsight in good seruice thre thinges specially nedeth to be rulers in his workes. First that he do good, next that he do by election in his owne herte, and the thirde that he do godly withouten any surquedry in thoughtes. That your werkes shulden be good in seruice, or in any other actes, authorites many may be aleged, neuer the latter, by reson thus may it be shewed. Al your workes be cleped second and mouen in vertue of the first wercher, which in good works wrought you to procede, and right so your werkes mouen in to vertue of the last ende, and right in the first working wer nat, no man shuld in the second werche. Right so but ye feled to what ende, and sen their goodnes closed, ye shulde no more retch what ye wrought but the ginning gan with good, and there shal it cease in the last ende, if it be wel considred. Wherfore the mydle, if other wayes it draw than acordaunt, to thendes, there stinteth the course of good, and another mater course entreth, and so it is a party by him selue, and euery part be nat accordant to his al, is foule and ought to be eschewe, wherfore euery thing that is wrought and be nat good, is nat accordant to thendes of his al hole, it is foule, and ought to be withdraw. Thus the persons that neither don good ne harme, shamen foule their making: wherfore without working of good actes in good seruice, may no man ben accepted. Trewly the like that han might to do good, and done it not, the crowne of worshyp shal be take from hem, and with shame shul they be anulled. And so to make one werke accordant with his endes, euerye good seruaunt by reason of consequence must do good nedes. Certes it suffiseth not alone to do good, but goodly withal folow, the thanke of goodnes els in nought he deserueth: for right as al your being, come from the greatest good, in whom al goodnes is closed. Right so your endes ben directe to the same good. Aristotell determineth that ende and good been one, and conuertable in vnderstanding, and he that in wil doth away good, and he that loketh not to thend loketh not to good, but he that doth good and doth not goodlye, draweth awaye the dyrection of thende not goodly, must nedes bee bad. Lo badde is nothing els but absence or negatiue of good, as derkenes is absence or negatiue of light. Than he that doth goodly directeth thilke good into thende of badde. So must thing not good folow, eke badnes to soch folk ofte foloweth. The contrariaunt workers of thende that is good, ben worthy that contrary of thende that is good, to haue."—"How" (quod I) "may any good dede be done, but if goodly it helpe."—"Yes" (quod Loue) "the deuill doth many good dedes, but goodly he leueth behinde, for euen badly and in indesceiuable wise he worketh. Wherefore the contrary of thend him foloweth. And do he neuer so many god dedes, bicause goodly is away, his goodnes is not rekened. Lo than tho a man do good, but he do goodlye thende in goodnesse wol not folowe, and thus in good seruice both good dede and goodly don musten ioyne togider, and that it be done with free choise in herte: and els deserueth he nat the merite in goodes, that woll I proue. For if you do any thing good by chaunce or by happe in what thing art thou therof worthy to be commended? for nothing by reason of that, turneth into thy praisinge ne lacking. Lo thilke thinge done by hap by thy wil is nat caused, and therby shulde I thanke or lake deserue: and sithen that fayleth, thende which that wel shuld reward, must nedes faile. Clerkes saine, no man but willing is blessed, a good dede that he hath done is not done of free choise willing, without whiche blissednes may nat folow. Ergo nether thanke of goodnesse ne seruice in that is contrary of the good ende, so than to good seruice longeth good dede goodly don, thorow fre choise in herte."—"Truely" (quod I) "this haue I wel vnderstand."—"Wel" (quod she) "euery thing thus done sufficiently by law that is cleped iustice, after rewarde claime. For law and iustice was ordained in this wise soche desertes in goodnes after quantite in doinge, by mede to rewarde, and of necessite of soch iustice, that is to say, rightwisenes was fre choise in deseruing of wel or of yuel graunted to resonable creatures. Euery man

hath free arbitrement to chose good or yuel to performe"—"Now" (quod I) "tho if I by my good wil deserue this Margarit perle, and am therto compelled, and haue free choise to do what me liketh: she is than holden as me thinketh to reward thentent of my good will."—"Goddes forbode els" (quod Loue) "no wight meaneth otherwise I trow, fre wil of good herte after mede deserueth."—"Hath euery man" (quod I) "fre choise by necessary maner of wil in euery of his doinges, that him liketh by Gods proper pureueiaunce? I wolde se that well declared to my leude vnderstanding, for necessary and necessite been wordes of mokel intencion, closing (as to say) so mote it be nedes, and othewise maye it nat betide."—"This shalt thou lerne" (quod she) "so thou take hede in my spech. If it wer nat in mannes own libertie of fre wil to do good or bad but to the one teied by bonde of goodes preordinaunce: than do he neuer so wel it were by nedeful compulcion of thilke bonde and nat by fre choise, wherby nothing he desireth, and do he neuer so yuel it wer nat man for to wite, but onelich to him that soch thing ordained hem to don. Whefore he ne ought for bad be punishe, ne for no good deede be rewarded, but of necessite of rightwisnes was therefore free choice of arbitrement, put in mannes proper disposicion: truly if it were otherwise, it contraried Gods charitie, that badnes and goodnes, rewardeth after deserte of pain or of mede."—"Me thinketh this wonder" (quod I) "for God by necessitie forwote al thinges coming, and so mote it nedes be: and thilke things that been doen, be our free choice comen nothing of necessitie, but onely by wil: how maie this stande togider? and so me thinketh truly, that free choice fully repugneth Goddes forweting. Truly ladie me semeth thei mowe not stande togither."

Than gan loue nigh me nere, and with a noble countenaunce of visage and limmes, dressed her nighe my sittyng place. "Take forthe" (quod she) "thy penne, and redily write these woordes, for if God woll, I shall hem so enforme to thee, that thy leudenesse, whiche I haue understand in that matter, shall openly be clered, and thy sight in full loking therin amended. First, if thou thinke that Goddes prescience, repugne libertie of arbitrement, it is impossible that thei should accord in onhed of sothe to vnderstandyng."—"Ye" (quod I) "forsoth so I it conceiue."—"Well" (quod she) "if thilke impossible were awaie, the repugnaunce that semeth to be therein, wer vtterly remoued."—"Shew me thabsence of that impossibilitie" (quod I). "So" (quod she) "I shall. Now I suppose that thei mowe stande togither, prescience of God, whom foloweth necessitie of things coming, and libertie of arbitrement, through whiche thou beleuest many thynges, to bee without necessitie."—"Bothe these proporcions be sothe" (quod I) "and well mowe stande togider, wherefore this case as possible I admit."—"Truely" (quod she) "and this case is impossible."—"How so" (quod I.) "For hereof" (quod she) foloweth and wexeth an other impossible." "Proue me that" (quod I). "That I shall" (quod she) "for some thing is comyng without necessitie, and God wote that toforne, for all thing comyng he before wot, and that he beforne wot of necessitie is coming: as he beforn wot, be the case by necessary maner than, or els thorowe necessitie, is somthing to be without necessitie; and whiderto euery wight that hath good vnderstandyng, is seen these thinges to be repugnaunt. Prescience of God, which that foloweth necessitie, and libertie of arbitrement, fro which is remoued necessitie, for truly it is necessarie, that God haue forweten of thinge, withouten any necessitie comming."—"Ye" (quod I) "but yet remeue ye not awaie fro mine vnderstanding, the necessitie followyng Goddes before weting, as thus. God beforne wote me in seruice of loue to bee bounden to this Margarite perle, and therefore by necessitie, thus to loue am I bound, and if I not had loued, through necessitie had I been kept from all loue dedes."—"Certes" (quod Loue) "bicause this matter is good and necessary to declare, I think herein wel to abide, and not lightlie to passe. Thou shalt not" (quod she) "saie all onely God beforne wote, me to be a louer, or no louer, but thus: God beforne wote me to be a louer, without necessitie. And so it followeth, whether thou loue, or not loue, euery of hem is and shal be. But now thou seest the impossibilitie of the case, and the possibilitie of thilke that thou wendest had been impossible, wherefore the repugnaunce is adnulled."—"Ye" (quod I) "and yet doe ye not awaie the strength of necessitie, whan it is said, though necessitie it is me in loue to abide, or not to loue without necessitie, for God beforn wote it. This maner of necessitie forsothe, semeth to some men into coaccion, that is to saine, constrainyng, or els prohibicion that is defendyng, wherefore necessitie is me to loue of wil. I vnderstande me to be constrained, by some priuie strengthe, to the will of louyng, and if no loue to be defended from the will of louing, and so through necessitie me semeth to loue for I loue, or els not to loue, if I not loue, wherethrough neither thanke ne maugre, in tho thynges maie I deserue."

"Now" (quod she) "thou shalte well vnderstande that often wee saine thyng, through necessitie to bee, that by no strengthe to bee neither is coarted, ne constrained, and thorowe necessitie not to bee, that with no defendyng is remoued, for wee saine, it is thorowe necessitie, God to bee immortalle nought dedliche, and it is necessitie, God to bee rightfull, but not that any strengthe of violente maner constraineth hym to be immortall, or defendeth hym to be vnrightful for nothing maie make him dedly or vnrightfull. Right so if I saie through necessititie is the to be a louer or els none, only thorow will as God beforne wete. It is not to vnderstande, that any thing defendeth or forbit thee thy wil, which shal not be, or els constraineth it to be, which shal be: that same thing forsoth God before wot, which he beforne seeth, any thyng commende of onely wille, that will neither is constrained ne defended through any other thinge. And so through libertie of arbitrement it is doe, that is doen of wil. And truely my good child, if these thynges be wel vnderstand, I wene that none inconuenient shalt thou finde, betwene Goddes forweting, and libertie of arbitrement, wherefore, I wote well thei maie stande togider. Also farthermore, who that vnderstandyng of prescienee, properliche considereth, through the same wise, that any thing be afore wist, is saied for to be comyng, it is pronounced, there is nothing toforne wist, but thyng commyng, fore wetyng is but of trouth, doubt maie not be wist; wherefore, whan I sey, that God to forn wot any thyng, through necessitie is thilke thing to be comming, all is one if I sey, if it

shal be, but this necessitie neither constraineth, ne defendeth any thing to be, or not to be. Therfore sothly if loue is put to be, it is said of necessitie to be, or els for it is put not to be, it is affirmed not to be of necessitie: not for that necessitie constraineth or defendeth, loue to bee, or not to be. For whan I saie if loue shal be of necessitie it shal be, here foloweth necessitie. The thing toforne put it is as moche to saie, as if it were thus pronounced, that thing shall bee: none other thing signifieth this necessitie but onely thus, that shall bee maie not togider be and not bee. Euenliche also it is soth, loue was and is, and shal be, not of necessitie, and nede is to haue be all that was, and nedefull is to bee all that is, and coming to all that shall be: and it is not the same to saie, loue to be passed, and loue passed to be passed, or loue present to be present and loue to be present, or els loue to be commyng, and loue comming to be commyng: diuersitie in setting of wordes, maketh diuersitie in vnderstanding, altho in the same sentenee, thei accorden of significacion, right as it is not all one: loue swete to be swete, and loue to be swete: for moch loue is bitter and sorowfull ere hertes been eased, and yet it gladdeth thilk sorowfull herte on soch loue to thinke."—"Forsoth" (quod I) "otherwhile I haue had mokell blisse in herte of loue, that stoundmele hath me sorily anoied: and certes lady for I see my self thus knit, with this Margarite perle, as by bonde of your seruice, and of no libertie of will, my herte will now not accorde this seruice to loue. I can demin in my self none otherwise, but through necessitie am I constrained, in this seruice to abide. But alas than, if I through needefull compulsion, maugre me be with holde, little thanke for all my great trauaile, haue I than deserued"—"Now" (quod this ladie) "I saie as I saied: me liketh this matter to declare at the full, and why: for many men haue had diuers fantasies and reasons, bothe on one side therof, and in the other. Of which right sone I trowe, if thou wilt vnderstand, thou shalt con yeue the sentence, to the partie more probable by reason, and in sothe knowing, by that I haue of this matter maked an ende."—"Certes" (quod I) "of these things, long haue I had greate luste to be learned, for yet I wene Goddes will and his prescience, accordeth with my seruice, in louynge of this precious Margarite perle. After whom euer in my herte, with thursting desire weete I doe brenne, vnwastyng I langour and fade and the daie of my destinie, in death or in loye I vnbide, but yet in the ende I am comforted bee my supposaile in blisse, and in ioye to determine after my desires."—"That thyng" (quod Loue) "hastelie to thee neigh. God graunt of his grace and mercie, and this shal be my praier, till thou be likened in herte at thine own wil."—"But now to enforme thee in this matter" (quod this ladie) "thou woste where I left, that was loue to be swete, and loue swete to bee swete, is not all one for to saie: for a tree is not alwaie by necessitie white, somtime er it wer white, it might haue bee not white: and after time it is white, it maie be not white: but a white tree euermore nedefull is to be white: for neither toforne ne after it was white, might it be togider white and not white. Also loue by necessitie is not present as now in thee; for er it wer present it might haue be, that it should now not haue be, and yet it may be, that it shal not be present: but thy loue present, whiche to ber Margarite that hath bound, nedefull is to be present. Truly some doing of accion, not by necessitie is coming farre toforn it be, it maie be that it shal not be coming: thing forsoth coming nedefull is to be coming, for it maie not be that coming shall not be coming. And right as I haue saied of present and of future tymes, the same sentence in sothnesse is of the preterit, that is to say, time passed, for thing passed must nedes be passed, and er it were it might haue not be, wherefore it should not haue passed. Right so whan loue comyng, is saied of loue that is to come, needefull is to be that is said, for thing comming neuer is not commyng, and so ofte the same thyng, we saine of the same, as whan we saine euery man is a man, or euery louer is a louer, so must it bee nedes, in no waie maie he bee man, and no man togither. And if it be not by necessitie, that is to say, nedeful al thing comming to be comming, than some thyng comming is not comming, and that is impossible, right as these termes nedefull, necessitie, and necessarie, betoken and signifiyng nedes to be, and it maie not otherwise be. Right these termes, impossible signifieth, that thing is not, and by no waie maie it be than through perte necessite, all thing comming is comming, but that is by necessitie, foloweth with nothing to bee constrained. Lo whan that commyng is saied of thyng, not alwaie thinge through necessitie is, altho it bee comyng. For if I saie to morowe, loue is comyng in this Margarites herte, not therefore through necessitie shall thilke loue be, yet it maie be that it shall not be, altho it were comyng. Neuerthelater, sometyme it is sothe, that some thyng be of necessitie, that is saied to come: an if I saie to morrowe be commyng the risyng of the Sonne. If therfore with necessitie, I pronounce commyng of thyng to come, in this maner loue to morne commyng in thine Margarite, to thee warde by necessitie is commyng, or els the risyng of the Sonne to morn comming through necessitie is commyng. Loue sothlie, whiche maie not bee of necessitee alone followyng, through necessitee commyng it is made certain. For futur of future is said, that is to saine, commyng of commyng is said: as if to morowe commyng, is through necessitee coming it is. Arising of the Sonne through twoo necessities in commyng, it is to vnderstande, that one is to forgoyng necessitee, whiche maketh thing to bee, therefore it shall be, for nedefull is that it be. Another is folowing necessitie which nothing constraineth to bee, and so by necessitie it is to come, why: for it is come.

"Now than, whan we saine, that God beforne, wote thyng commyng nedefull, is to be commyng, yet therefore make we not in certaine, euermore thyng to be through necessitie commyng. Sothly thing commyng maie not bee, not commyng by no waie, for it is the same sentence of vnderstandyng: as if wee saie thus. If God beforne wotte any thing, nedefull is that to be comming. But yet therfore foloweth not that prescience of God, thing through necessitie to be coming: for altho God toforne wot all thinges comming, yet not therfore he beforn wot euery thing coming thorow necessitie. Sum thinges he beforn wot coming of frewill, out of reasonable creature."—"Certes" (quod I) "these termes, nede and necessitie, haue a queint maner of vnderstandyng, thei woulden dullen many mennes wittes."—"Therefore" (quod she) "I wol hem openly declare, and more clerely

than I haue toforne er I depart hense. Here of this matter" (quod she) "thou shalte vnderstande, that right as it is not nedeful, God to wiln that he wil, no more in many things is not nede full, a man to wilne that he woll. And euer right as needefull is to bee, what that God woll, right so to bee it is nedefull, that man woll in tho thinges, whiche that God hath put into mannes subieccion of willyng: as if a man wol loue, that he loue: and if he ne woll loue, that he loue not, and of soche other things in mans disposicion. For why: now than that God woll maie not be, whan he woll the will of man thorow no necessitie to be constrained, or els defended for to wiln and he woll theffect to folowe the will, than is it nedefull wil of man to be free, and also to be that he woll. In this maner it is soth that thorow necessitie is mans werke in louing, that he woll dooe altho he woll it not with necessitie." (quod I than) "how stant it in loue of thilke will, sithen men louen willyng of free choise in herte. Wherfore if it be thorow necessitie, I praie you ladie of an answere this question to asoile."—"I woll" (quod she) "answer thee bliuely: right as men will not thorow necessitie, right so is not loue of wil thorowe necessitie, ne thorowe necessitie wrought the ilke same will, for if he would it not with good will, it should not haue been wrought, although that he doeth it is nedefull to bee doen. But if a man do sinne, it is nothing els but to will, that he should not: right so syn of will, is not to be maner necessary dooen, no more than wil is necessary. Neuer the later this is soth, if a man woll sinne, it is necessary him to sinne, but though thilk necessitie, nothing is constrained ne defended in the will, right so thilk thing that frewill woll and maie, and not maie, not wiln, and nedefull is that to wilne he maie not wilne, but thilke to wilne nede full is, for impossible to hym it is one thing, and the same to wilne, he maie not wilne, but thilk to wilne nedefull is: for impossible to hym it is one thing and the same to wilne, and not to wilne.

"The werke forsothe of wille, to whom it is yeue, that it be that he hath in will, and that he woll not, voluntarie of spontanie it is, for by spontanie will it is dooe, that is to saie, with good wil, not constrained: than by will not constrained, it is constrained to bee, and that is it maie not togither bee. If this necessitie maketh libertie of will, whiche that aforne thei weren, thei might haue been eschued and shonned: God than, which that knoweth all truthe, and nothyng but truth, all these thinges, as thei arne spontanie, or necessarie sight, and as he seeth so thei been: and so with these things well considered, it is open at the fulle, that without all maner repugnaunce, God beforne wote al maner things been doen by frewill, whiche aforne thei weren, might haue been neuer thei should be, and yet been thei thorow a maner necessitie, from frewill discendeth.

"Hereby maie" (quod she) "lightly been knowe that not all things to bee is of necessitie, though God haue hem in his prescience, for somthinges to be, is of libertie of will: and to make thee to haue full knowyng, of goddes beforne weting, heare me" quod she) "what I shal saie."—"Blithly lady" (quod I) "me list this matter entirely to vnderstande."—"Thou shalte" (quod she) "vnderstande, that in Heauen is Goddes being, although he be ouer al by power, yet there is abiding of diuine persone, in which Heauen is euerlastyng presence, withouten any mouable tyme there, foole haue I not saied toforne this, as tyme hurteth, right so ayenwarde, tyme healeth and rewardeth: and a tree oft failed, is holde more in deintie, whan it fruict forthe bringeth.

"A marchaunte that for ones lesyng in the sea, no more to auenture thinketh, he shall neuer with auenture come to richesse: so oft must menne on the oke smite, till the happie dente haue entred, whiche with the okes owne swaie, maketh it to come all at ones. So oft falleth the lethy water on the harde rocke, till it haue through persed it. The euen draught of the wier drawer, maketh the wier to been euen, and supplie werchyng, and if he stinted in his draught, the wier breaketh a sonder. Euery tree well springeth, whan it is well grounded, and not often remoued."—"What shall this fruiete bee" (quod I) "now it ginneth ripe?"—"Grace" (quod she) "in parfite ioye to endure, and therewith thou begon."—"Grace" (quod I) "me thinketh, I should haue a rewarde for my long trauaile?"—"I shall tell thee" (quod she) "tribucion of thy good willes, to haue of thy Margarite perle, it beareth not the name of mede, but onely of good grace, and that cometh not of thy desert, but of thy Margarites goodnesse, and vertue alone." (Quod I) "should all my long trauaile haue no rewarde, but through grace, and sometyme your seluen saied, rightwisenesse euenliche rewardeth to quite one benefite for an other."—"That is sothe" (quod Loue) "euer as I saied, as to hym that doeth good, whiche to doen he were neither holden, ne yet constrained."—"That is sothe" (quod I). "Truely" (quod she) "all that euer thou doest thyne Margarite perle of will, of loue, and of reason thou owest to doen it, yet is it nothyng els but yeldyng of thy debte, in quiting of thy grace, which she thee lente, whan ye first mette."—"I wene" (quod I) "right little grace to me she deliuered. Certes it was harde grace, it hath nigh me astrangled."—"That it was good grace I wotte well thou wilt it graunte, ere thou departe hence. If any man yeue to an other wight, to whom that he ought not, and whiche that of himself nothyng maie haue, a garmente or a coate, though he weare the coate, or els thilke clothyng, it is not to put to him that was naked, the cause of his clothyng, but onelie to him that was yeuer of the garment. Wherefore I saie, thou that were naked of loue, and of thyself none haue mighteste, it is not to put to thyne owne persone, sithen thy loue came through thy Margarit perle. Ergo she was yeuer of the loue, althoughe thou it vse, and there sente she thee grace, thy seruice to beginne. She is worthie the thanke of this grace, for she was the yeuer.

"All the thoughtes, busie dooynges, and pleasaunce in thy might, and in thy woordes, that thou canste deuise, been but right little, in quityng of thy debte: had she not been, soche thyng had not been studied. So all these matters kindlie drawenhomward to this Margarite peerle, for from thence were thei borowed, all is hollie her to witte the loue that thou hauest, and thus quitest thou thy debt, in that thou stedfastlie seruest. And kepe well that loue, I thee rede, that of her thou hast borowed, and vse it in her seruice, thy debte to quite, and than art thou able right sone to haue grace, wherefore after mede, in none halue maiest thou looke.

"Thus thy ginnyng and endyng, is but grace alone, and in thy good deseruyng, thy debte thou aquiteste: without grace is nothynge worthe, what so euer thou werche. Thanke thy Margarite of her greate grace that hetherto thee hath guided, and praie her of continuaunce, foorthe in thy werkes hereafter, and that for no mishap thy grace ouerthwartlie tourne. Grace, glorie, and ioye, is comyng through good folkes desertes, and by gettyng of grace therein shullen ende. And what is more glorie, or more ioie than wisedome, and loue in perfite charitie whiche God hath graunted to all tho that well can deserue." And with that this lady all at ones starte into myne herte: "here wol I onbide" (quod she) "for euer, and neuer woll I gone hence, and I woll kepe thee from medlynge; while me liste here onbide: thyne entremetyng maners, into stedfastnes shullen be chaunged."

SODERLICHE tho threwe I vp myne iyen, and hugelie tho was I astonied of this sodain aduenture, and faine would I haue learned how vertues shulden been knowen, in which thynges I hope to God, hereafter she shall me enformen, and namely sithen her resting place is now so nigh at my will: and anone all these thynges that this ladie saied, I remembred me by my self, and reuolued the liues of myne vnderstandyng wittes.

Tho found I fully all these matters, perfitelie there written, how misse rule by fained loue, bothe realmes and cities hath gouerned a greate throwe. Howe lightlie me might the fautes espie, howe rules in loue should been vsed, howe sometyme with fained loue, foule I was begiled, how I should loue haue knowe, and howe I shall in loue with my seruice procede.

Also furthermore, I found of perdurable letters, wonderlie there grauen, these matters, whiche I shall nempne. Certes none age, ne other thing in yearth, maie the least sillable of this in no poinct deface, but clerly as the Sonne, in myne vnderstandyng soule thei shinen. This maie neuer out of my minde, how I maie not my loue keepe, but through willyng in herte: wilne to loue maie I not, but I louyng haue. Loue haue I none, but through grace of this Margarite perle. It is no maner doubte, that will woll not loue, but for it is louyng, as wille woll not rightfully, but for it is rightfull it selue. Also will is not louyng for he woll loue, but he woll loue for he is louyng: it is all one to will to be louing, and louyngs in possession to haue. Right so will woll not loue, for of loue hath he no partie, and yet I deme not louyng, will wilne more loue to haue, which that he hath not, whan he wold more than he hath, but I say he maie no loue wilne, if he no loue haue, through whiche thilk loue he should wilne: but to haue this louyng will, maie no manne of hym self, but onely through grace tofore gooyng: right so maie no man it keepe, but by grace folowing. Consider now euery man aright and lette seen if that any wight of himself, mowe this loning well get, and he thereof first nothing haue: for if it should of himself spryng, either it must be willing, or not willynge. Willyng by hymself maie he it not haue, sithen him faileth the matter, that shuld it forth bring, the matter *him faileth*: why? he maie thereof haue no knowing, till whan grace put it in his herte. Thus willyng by himself, maie he it not haue, and, not willing maie he it not haue. Parde euery conceipte of euery reasonable creature, otherwise wil not graunt: will in affirmatife with not willing by no waie mow accord. And although this louing woll come in mine herte by frenesse of arbitrement, as in this booke fullie is shewed, yet owe I not therfore as moche alowe my frewill, as grace of that Margarite, to me leaned, for neither might I without grace to forne goyng, and afterwarde folowing, thilk grace get ne kepe, and lese shal I it neuer but if frewill it make, as in willing otherwise than grace hath me graunted. For right as whan any persone taketh, willing to be sober, and throweth that awaie willing to bee dronke, or els taketh will of drinking out of measure: which thing anon as it is doen, maketh through his own gilt by frewill, that leseth his grace. In which thing therefore, vpon the nobley of grace I mote trusten, and my busie eure set the ilke grace to kepe, that my free-will otherwise than by reason it should werche, cause not my grace to voide: for thus must I bothe loke to frewill and to grace. For right as naturell vsage, in engendering of children, maie not been without father, ne also but with the mother, for neither father ne mother, in begetting may it lacke: right so grace and frewill accorden, and without hem both maie not louyng, will in no partie been getten. But yet is not freewill, in gettyng of that thyng, so mokell thanke worthie as is grace, ne in the keepyng thereof, so moche thanke deserueth, and yet in gettyng and keepyng bothe doen thei accorde. Truelie often time grace, frewill helpeth in fordooyng of contrary thynges, that to willyng loue not accorden, and strength will aduersities to withsit, wherefore al together to grace oweth to been accepted, that my willyng deserueth: frewill to louyng in this wise is accorded. I remember me well how all this booke (who so heede taketh) considereth all thynges, to werchinges of mankinde euenly accordeth, as in turning of this word loue, into troth, or els rightwisenesse, whether that it like. For what thing that falleth to man, in helpyng of free arbitrement, thilke rightwisenesse to take, or els to kepe, through whiche a man shall bee saued, of whiche thyng all this booke mencion hath maked, in euerie poinct thereof, grace oweth to be thanked.

Wherefore I saie, euery wight hauynge this rightwisenesse, rightfull is, and yet therefore I feele not in my conscience, that to all rightfull is behoten the blisse euerlasting, but to hem that been rightfull, withouten any vnrightfulnesse. Some man after some degree, maie rightfully been accompted: as chaste men in liuyng, and yet been thei ianglers, and full of enuie pressed: to hem shall this blisse neuer been deliuered. For right as very blesse, is without al maner mede, right so to no man shall it bee yeuen, but to the rightfull, voide from al maner vnrightfulnesse founde, so no man to hir blisse shall been folowed, but he be rightfull, and with vnrightfulnesse not bounde, and in that degree fullie bee knowe. This rightfulnesse in as moche as in hymself is, of none euill it is cause, and of all maner goodnesse, truely it is mother. This helpeth the spirite, to withsitte the leude lustes of fleshlie likyng: this strengtheth and mainteineth the lawe of kind, and if that other while, me weneth harme of this precious thinge to followe, there through is nothyng the cause, of somwhat els cometh it aboute, who so taketh hede. By rightfulnesse forsoth, were many holie saincte;

good sauour in swetenesse to God almightie, but that to some folkes, thei weren sauour of death into dedly ende, that come not of the sainctes rightwisnesse, but of other wicked mennes badnesse hath proceded. Truely the ilke will, whiche that the ladie of Loue me learned, affeccion of wille to nempne, whiche is in willing of profitable thinges, euill is it not, but whan to fleshly lustes it consenteth, ayenst reason of soule: but that this thing more clearely be vnderstande, it is for to knowe, whence, and how the ilke will *is* so vicious and so readie, euil deedes to performe.

Grace at the ginning, ordeined thilk wil in goodnesse, euer to haue endured, and neuer to badnesse haue assented: menne should not bileue, that God thilke wil maked to be vicious. Our firste father as Adam and Eue, for vicious appetites, and vicious wille to soche appetites consentyng, been not on thing in kinde, other thyng is dooen for the other. And how this will first into manne, first assented, I holde it profitable to shewe: but if the first condicion of reasonable creature, woll be considered and appertly loked, lightly the cause of soche wille maie been shewed. Intencion of God was, that rightfully and blessed, should reasonable nature been maked, himself for to kepe, but neither blisfull ne rightfull, might it not be, withouten will in them bothe. Will of rightfulnesse is the ilke same rightfulnesse, as here toforne is shewed: but wil of blisse is not the ilke blisse, for euery manne hath not thilke blisse, in whom the will thereof is abiding. In this blisse after euery vnderstandyng, is suffisaunce of couenable comoditees, without any maner nede, whether it bee blisse of angels or els the ilke, that grace first in paradise suffred Adam to haue. For although angels blisse bee more than Adams was in Paradise, yet maie it not be denied, that Adam in Paradise, ne had suffisaunce of blisse: for right as greate herte is without al maner of coldnesse, and yet maie an other herte more heate haue, right so nothing defended Adam in Paradise to been blissed, without all maner nede.

Although angels blisse bee moche more, forsothe it foloweth not lasse than an other to haue therefore hym needeth, but for to wante a thynge, whiche that behoueth to been had, that maie neede been cleaped, and that was not in Adam, at the first ginning God and the Margarite weten what I mean. Forsothe where as is neede, there is wretchednesse, good without cause to fornegoyng, made not reasonable creature wretched, for him to vnderstande and loue hadde he first maked. God made therfore man blissed without all maner indigence, togither and at ones toke reasonable creature blysse, and of wil of blissednesse, and will of rightfulnes, whiche is rightfulnes it selue, and libertie of arbitrement, that is fre wil, with which thilke righfulnes may he kepe and lese. So and in that wise ordained thilke two, that wil whiche that instrumente is cleaped, as here toforne mencion is maked, shulde vse thilke rightfulnes, by teachinge of his soule to good maner of gouernaunce, in thought and in wordes, and that it shoulde vse the blisse in obedient maner, withouten anie incommodite. Blisse forsothe in to mans profite, and rightwisnes in to his worship God deliuered at ones: but rightfulnesse so was yeuen that man might it lese, whiche yf he not loste had not, but continuelly haue it kept, he should haue deserued the auauncement in to the felowshippe of angels, in whiche thing if he that loste, neuer by himselfe forwarde shulde he it mow ayenward recouer: and as wel the blisse that he was in, as aungeles blisse that to him wardes was coming, shuld be nome at ones, and he depriued of them bothe. And thus fyl man vnto likenesse of vnreasonable beestes, and with hem to corrupcion and vnlustes apetites was he vnder throwne, but yet wil of blisse dwelleth, that by indigence of good, which that he lost through great wretchednes, by right shulde he ben punished. And therefor he weiued rightfulnes, loste hath he his blisse: but faile of his desire in his owne commodite maye he not, and were commodites to his reasonable nature, whiche he hath loste may he not haue. To false lustes, whiche ben bestial appetites he is turned: folye of vnconning hath him begiled, in wening that thilk ben the comodites that owen to ben desired. This affection of will by liberte of arbitrement is enduced to wiln thus thing that he shulde not, and so is wil not maked yuel but vnrightfull, by absence of rightfulnes, which thing by reason euer shulde he haue. And frenesse of arbytrement may he not wilne whan he it not haueth, for while he it had, thilke helpe it not to kepe: so that without grace may it not ben recouered. Wil of comedite, in as moche as vnrightful it is maked, by willing of yuel lustes, willing of goodnesse may he not wilne for wil of instrument to affection of wil is thralled, sithen that other thing may not it wilne, for wil of instrument to affeccion desireth, and yet ben bothe they wil cleped: for that instrument woll, through affection it wylneth, and affection desireth thilke thing wherto instrument him ledeth. And so frewel to vnlusty affecion ful seruaunt is maked, for vnrightfulnes maye he not releue, and without rightfulnes ful fredome may it neuer haue. For kindly liberty of arbitrement without it, veine and ydel is forsoth. Wherfore yet I say, as often haue I said the same, whan instrument of will loste hath righfulnes, in no maner but by grace may he ayen retourne righthfulnes to wilne. For sithen nothinge but rightfulnes alone shuld he wilne, what that euer he wilneth without rightfulnes, vnrighfully he it wilneth. These than vnrighful appetites and vnthrifty lustes which the flies desireth, in as mokel as they ben in kinde, ben they not bad, but they ben vnrightful and badde, for they ben in resonable creature, wher as they beynge in no way shuld ben suffred. In vnreasonable beestes neither ben they yuel ne vnrighful, for there is their kinde beyng.

KNOWEN may it wel ben now, of these thinges toforne declared, that man hath not alwai thilk rightfulnes, which by dute of right euermore hauen he shuld, and by not way by himself maye he it get ne kepe, and after he it hath if he it lese, recouer shall he it neuer, without especial grace; wherfore the comune sentence of the people in opinion, that euerye thinge after destenie is ruled, false and wicked is to beleue: for thoughe predestinacion be as wel of good as of badde, sithen that it is said God badnest made, whiche he neuer ne wrought, but for he suffreth hem to be maked, as that he hardeth whan he nought missaieth, or ledde into temptacion whan he not deliuereth, wherfore it is none inconuenient if in that maner be said, God toforne haue destenied both badde, ande hir

badde werkes, whan hem ne their yuel dedes neither amendeth ne therto hem grace leueth. But specyallyche predestinacion of goodnes, alone is saide by these great clerkes, for in him God doth that they ben, and that is goodnes they werchen. But the negatife herof in badnesse is holden, as the lady of Loue hath me lerned, who so aright in this booke loketh. And vtterly it is to weten, that predestinacion properly in God maye not been demed, no more than beforne weting. For in the chapitre of Goddes beforne weting, as Loue me rehersed, al these maters apertely maye ben founden. Al thinges to God been nowe togither and in presence duringe. Trewly presence and predestinacion in nothing disacorden, wherfore as I was lerned, howe Goddes before wetyng and fre choice of will mowe stonden togither, me thinketh the same reason me leadeth, that destenie and frewil acorden, so that neither of hem both to other in nothinge contrarieth. And reasonabliche may it not ben demed, as often as any thing falleth frewil werching, as if a man another man wrongfully anoyeth, wherfore he him sleeth, that it bee constrained to that ende, as mokell folke crieth and saithe: lo, as it was destenied of God toforne know, so it is thorowe necessite fal, and other wise might it not betide. Trewlye neither he that the wronge wrought, ne he that him selfe venged, none of thilke things thorow necessite wrought: for if that with frewil ther had it not willed, neither had wrought that he performed: and so vtterly grace that frewil in goddnes bringeth and kepeth, and fro badnes it tourneth, in al thinge moste thanke deserueth. This grace maketh sentence in vertue to abyde, wherfore in body and in sonle in full plentie of cominge, after their good deseruing in the euerlastinge ioye, after the daye of dome shul they endles dwel, and they shul ben lerned that in kingdome with so mokel affecte of loue and of grace, that the lest ioy shal of the greatest in glorie reioyce and been gladded, as if he the same ioye had. What wonder sith God is the greatest loue, and thee ne ought to loke thinges with resonning to proue, and so is instrument of wil, will: and yet varieth he from effecte and vsinge both. Affeccion of wil also for wil is cleped, but it varieth from instrument in this maner wise, by that name, liche whan it cometh in to minde, anon right it is in willing desired, and the negatife thereof with willing my not acorde: this is closed in herte, though vsage and instrument slepe. This slepeth whan instrument and vse waken: and of soche maner affection trewelye, some man hath more, and some man lesse. Certes trewe louers wenen euer therof to litell to haue. False louers in litell wenen haue right mokell. Lo instrumente of will in false and trewe bothe euenlich is proporcioned, but affeotion is more in some place than in some, bycause of goodnes that foloweth and that I think hereafter to declare. Use of this instrument is wil, but it taketh his name whan wilned thinge is in doynge. But vtterly grace to catch in thy blisse, desired to ben rewarded. Thou muste haue than affection of will at the ful, and vse whan his tyme asketh wysely to ben gouerned. Sothly my disciple without feruent affection of will maye no man ben saued: this affection of good seruice in good loue, may not ben grounded, without feruent desire to the thinge in will coucited. But he that neuer retcheth to haue or not to haue, affecion of will in that hath no resting place. Why? for whan thinge cometh to minde and it bee not taken in hede to comin or not come, therfore in that place affection faileth: and for thilke affection is so litel, thorow whiche in goodnes he shoulde come to his grace, the litelnes wil it not suffre to auaile by no waye in to his helpes: certes grace and reson thilke affection foloweth. This affection with reason knitte, dureth in eueriche trewe herte, and euermore is encreasing, no ferdnes, no strength may it remoue while truthe in herte abideth. Sothly whan falshed ginneth entre, truth draweth away, grace and ioy both, but than thilke falshed that trouth hath there voided hath vnknit the bonde of vnderstandinge reason, bytwen wil and the herte. And who so that bonde vndoth, and vnknitteth wil to be in other purpose than to the first accorde, knitteth him with contrary of reason, and that is vnreason. Lo, than will and vnreason bringeth a man from the blisse of grace, whiche thing of pure kinde, euery man ought to shonne and to eschew, and to the knot of wil and reason confirme. "Methinketh" (quod she) "by thy studient lokes, thou wenest in these wordes me to contrarien, from other sayinges here toforne in other place, as whan thou were somtime in affection of will, to thinges that now han brought the in disease, whiche I haue the counsailed to voide, and thin herte discouer, and there I made thy wil to ben changed, whiche now thou wenest I argue to withholde and to kepe. Shortlye I say that reuers in these wordes may not ben founde: for though dronkenes be forboden, men shull not alway ben drinkles. I trow right for thou thy wil out of reason shulde not tourne, thy will in one reason shuld not vnbinde, I say thy wil in thy firste purpose with vnreason was closed: constrewe forth of the remnaunte what the good liketh. Trewly that wil and reason shuld be knit togither was frewil of reason, after time thine herte is assentaunt to them both, thou myght not chaunge, but if thou from rule of reason varye, in whiche variaunce to come to thilke blisse desired, contrariously thou werchest: and nothing may know wil and reason but loue alone. Than if thou voide lone, than wenest the bonde, that knitteth, and so nedes or els right lightly, your other gon a sondry; wherfore thou sest apertly that loue holdeth this knot, and amaistreth hem to be bounde. These thinges, as a ring in circuit of wreth ben knit in thy soule without departing. "A lot be, let be" (quod I) "it nedeth not of this no rehersaile to make, my soule is yet in parfite blisse, in thinking of that knot.

"Now trewly lady I haue my grounde wel vnderstond, but what thinge is thilke spire that into a tree shoulde wexe: expowne me that thing, what ye therof meane."—"That shal I" (quod she) "blithlie, and take good hede to the wordes I the rede. Continuaunce in thy good seruice, by long processe of tyme in full hope abiding, without any chaunge to wilne in thyn herte: this is the spire, whiche if it be well kept and gouerned, shal so hugely spring, til the fruit of grace is plentuously out sprongen: for all though thy will be good, yet may not therfore thilke blisse desired, hastely on the discenden, it must abyde his sesonable tyme. And so by proces of growing, what thy good traueile, it shall into more and more wexe, til it be founde so mighty, that windes of yuel speche, ne

scornes of enuie, make nat the trauaile euerthrow, ne frostes of mistrust, ne hailes of ielousy right litel might haue in harming of soch springes. Euery yong setling lightly with smal stormes is apeired, but whan it is woxen somdele in greatnes, than han great blastes and wethers but litel might, any disauauntage to hem for to werche."—"Mine owne souerain lady" (quod I) "and welth of mine herte, and it were lyking vnto your noble grace, ther through nat to be displeased, I supose ye erren, now ye maken ielosy enuy, and distourbour to hem that ben your seruauntes. I haue lerned ofte toforne this time, that in euery louers herte great plentie of ielousies greues ben sowe, wherfore me thinketh ye ne ought in no maner accompte, thilke thing amonge these other welked winers and venomous serpentes, as enuy, mistrust, and yuel speche."—"O foole" (quod she) "mistrust with foly, with yuel wil medled engendreth that welked padde. Truely if they were distroied ielousy vndowne were for euer, and yet some maner of ielousy, I wot wel is euer redy in al the hertes of my trew seruauntes, as thus: to be ielous ouer him self, lest he because of his owne disease.

"This ielousye in ful thought, euer shuld be kept for ferdnes to lese his loue by miskeping therowe his owne doing in leudnes, or els thus: lest she that thou seruest so feruently is beset ther her better lyketh, that of al thy good seruice she compteth nat a cresse. These ielousies in herte for acceptable qualitees ben demed: these oughten euery trew louer by kindely, euermore hauen in his minde, til fully the grace and blisse of my seruice be on him discended at wil. And he that than ielousy catcheth, or els by wening of his owne folishe wilfulnes mistrusteth, treuly with fantasy of venim, he is foule begiled. Yuel wil hath grounded thilke mater of sorow in his leude soule, and yet nat for than to euery wight shuld me not trust, ne euery wight fully misbeleue the meane of these thinges owen to be vsed. Sothly withouten causeful euidence, mistrust in ielousye, shulde not be wened in no wise person comenly, soch leude wickednes shulde me nat finde. He that is wise and with yuel wil nat be a comered, can abyde wel his time til, grace and blisse of his seruice folowing haue him so mokel eased, as his abidinge tofore hande hath him diseased."—"Certes lady" (quod I tho) "of nothing me wondreth, sithen thilke blisse so precious is and kindly, good and wel is, and worthy in kind, whan it is medleth what loue and reason, as ye to forne haue declared. Why, anon as hie one is sprong, why springeth not the tother? and anone as the one cometh, why receiueth not the other? for euery thing that is out of his kindly place, by full appetite, euer cometh thyderward kindly to drawe, and his kindely being therto him constraineth. And the kindly stede of this blisse, is in soch wil medled to vnbide, and nedes in that it shuld haue his kindely beyng. Wherfore me thinketh anon as that wil to be shewed, and kinde him profereth, thilke blisse shulde hym hye thilke wil to receyue, or els kind of goodnes worchen not in hem as they shuld. Lo, be the Sonne neuer so ferre, euer it hath hys kynde werching in erth: great weight on hie on loft caried, stinteth neuer til it come to this resting place. Waters to the se ward euer ben they drawing, thing that is light blythly will not sinke, but euer ascendeth and vpward draweth. Thus kind in euery thing his kindly course, and his being place sheweth: wherfore be kinde on this good wil, anon as it were sprong, this blisse shuld theron discende, bir kinde wold they dwelleden togider, and so haue ye said your selfe."—"Certes" (quod she) "thyne herte sitteth wonder sore this blisse for to haue, thin herte is sore agreued that it tarieth so longe, and if thou durstest, as me thinketh by thine words, this blisse woldest thou blame. But yet I say, thilke blisse is kindely good, and his kindely place in that will to vnbyde. Neuer the later, there comming togider after kindes ordinaunce nat sodainly may betide it must abide time, as kind yeueth him leue, for if a man, as this wil medled gonne him shewe, and thilke blisse in haste folowed, so lightly comming shulde lightly cause going, longe time of thrusting, causeth drinke to be the more delicious whan it is atasted."—"Howe is it" (quod I than) "that so many blisses se I all day at min eye, in the first moment of a sight with soche wil accord. Ye, and yet other while with wil assenteth, singulerly by himselfe ther reason faileth, trauaile was none, seruice had no time. This is a queint maner thinge, how soche doing cometh aboute."—"O" (quod she) "that is thus, the erthe kindely after seasons and times of the yere, bringeth forth immmunerable herbes and trees bothe profitable and other, but soch as men might leaue though they were nought in norishinge to mans kinde seruen or els soche as tournen soone vnto mennes confusion, in ease that thereof they ataste, comen forthe out of the erthe by their owne kind, withouten any manes cure or any busynes in traueile: and the ilke herbes that to mennes liuelode necessarily seruen without, whiche goodly in this life creatures mowen not enduren, and moste ben nourishen to mankind, without great traueile, great tilthe, and longe abiding time, comen not out of the erthe, and it with seed toforne ordained soche herbes to make spring and forthe growe. Right so the parfite blisse, that we haue in meaning of duringe tyme to abide, maye nat come so lightly, but with great traueile and right besy tilth, and yet good seed to be sowe, for oft the croppe failethe of badde sede, be it neuer so wel traueiled. And thilke blisse thou spoke of so lightly in commynge, trewely is nat necessary ne abydinge: and but it the better bee stamped, and the venomous ieuse out wrongen, it is likely to enpoisonen all tho that there of tasten. Certes right bitter ben the herbes that showen first the yere of hir own kind. Wel the more is the haruest that yeldest many graines, tho long and sore it hath ben traueyled. What woldest thou demen yf a man wolde yeue thre quarters of nobles of golde, that wer a precious gift?"—"ye certes" (quod I). "And what" (quod she) "three quarters ful of peerles:"—"certes" (quod I) "that were a riche gifte."—"And what" (quod she) "of as mokel azure?" (quod I) "a precious gyfte at ful."—"Were not" (quod she) "a noble gifte of all these at ones?"—"In good faith" (quod I) "for wanting of Englishe naming of so noble a worde, I can not for preciousnesse yeue it a name:"—"rightfully" (quod she) "hast thou demed, and yet loue knitte in vertue, passeth al the golde in this erthe. Good wil accordant to reason, with no maner property may be counterpailed, all the azure in the world is not to accounte in respecte of reason, loue that with good wil and

accordeth, with non erthely riches maye nat ben amended. This yeft hast thou yeuen I knowe it myself, and thy Magarite thilke gift hath receued, in which thing to reward she hath her selfe bounde. But thy gift as I said, by no maner riches maye be amended wherfore with thing that may nat be amended thou shalt of thy Margarites right wisnesse be rewarded. Right suffred yet neuer but euery good deede somtyme to be yolde. Al wolde thy Margarite with no rewarde the quite. Right that neuer more dieth thy mede in merite wol purney. Certes soch sodaine blisse as thou first mempnest, right wil hem reward as the wel is worthy, and though at thin eye it semeth the rewarde the desert to passe, right can after sende soch biternes euenly it to rewarde: so the sodain blisse by always of reson in great goodnes may not be acompted, but blisse long, both long it abydeth, and endlesse it woll last. Se why thy wit is endelesse, for if thou louedeste euer, thy will is euer ther tabide and neuer more to chaunge: euenhed of reward must ben done by right: than muste nedes thy grace and this blisse endelesse in ioy to vnbide. Euenlyche disease asketh euenlyche ioy, whiche hastly thou shalte haue. "A" (quod I) "it suffiseth not than alone good will, be it neuer so well with reason medled, but if it be in good seruice long trauailed. And so through seruice should men come to the ioye, and this me thinketh should be the wexing tre of which ye first meued."

"VERY trouthe" (quod she) "hast thou now conceiued of these thinges in thin herte, hastely shalt thou be able verye ioye and parfite blisse to receiue. And now I wote well thou desyrest to knowe the maner of branches, that out of the tre should spring."—"Therof lady" (quod I) "hertely I you pray: for than leue I wol, that right soone after I shall ataste of the frute that I so longe haue desired."—"Thou haste herde" (quod she) "in what wise this tre toforne this haue I declared, as in ground and in stocke of wexing. First the ground shuld be thy frewil ful in thine herte, and the stocke (as I saide) shoud be continuaunce in good seruice, by long time in trauaile, til it were in greatnes right well woxen. And whan this tree soche greatnes hath caught, as I haue rehersed, the braunches than that the frute should forth bringe, speche muste they be nedes in voice of prayer, in complaining wise vsed."—"Out alas" (quod I tho) "he is sorowfully wounded that hideth his speche, and spareth his complaints to make, what shal I speke that care: but paine euen lyke to hel, sore hath me assailed, and so ferforth in paine me throng, that I leue my tre is ser and neuer shal it frut forth bring. Certes he is greatly eased, that dare his preuy mone discouer to a true felow, that conning hath and might wherthrough his pleint in any thing may be amended. And mokel more is he ioied that with herte of hardines, dare complaine to his ladye, what cares that he suffreth, by hope of mercy with grace to be auaunced. Truely I say for me, sithe I came this Margarit to serue, durst I neuer me discouer of no maner disease, and wel the later hath min herte hardied soch thinges to done, for the great bounties and worthy refreshements that she of her grace goodlye, without any deserte on my halue ofte hath me rekened, and nere her goodnes the more with grace and with mercy medled, which passed al desertes, trauails, and seruinges, that I in any degre might endite, I wold wen I shuld be without recouer in getting of this blisse for euer. Thus haue I stilled my disease, thus haue I couered my care, that I bren in sorowful anoy, as gledes and coles wasten a fire vnder deed ashen. Wel the hoter is the fire, that with ashen it is ouerlein: right longe this wo haue I suffred."—"Lo" (quod Loue) "how thou farest: me thinketh the palse yuel hath aeomered thy wittes, as fast as thou hiest forwarde, anon sodainly backwarde thou mouest. Shall nat yet all thy leudnes out of thy braines? dul ben thy skilful vnderstandinges, thy wil hath thy wit so amaistred. Wost thou not wel" (quod she) "but euery tree in his sesonable time of bourioning shewe his bloines fro within, in signe of what fruite shuld out of him spring, els the frute for that yere men halt deliuered, be the ground neuer so good. And though the stock be mighty at the ful, and the braunches seer and no burions shew, farwel the gardiner he may pipe with an yue leafe his fruite is failed. Wherfore thy braunches must burionen in presence of thy lady, if thou desire any frute of thy ladies grace, but beware of thy lyfe, that thou no wo delay vse, as in asking of things that stretchen into shame, for than might thou not spede by no way that I can espie. Uertue wol not suffre villany out of himself to springe. Thy wordes may not be queint ne of subtel maner vnderstanding. Freelwitted people supposen in soch poesies to be begiled in open vnderstanding must euery word be vsed. Uoice without clere vnderstandinge of sentence, saith Aristotel, right nought printeth in herte. Thy wordes than to abide in herte and cleue in ful sentence of trewe mening platly must thou shew and euer be obedient, her hestes and her willes to performe, and be thou set in soche a wit to wete by a loke euermore what she meaneth. And he that list nat to speke, but stilly his disease suffre: what wonder is it tho he neuer come to his blisse? who that trauaileth vnwist, and coueiteth thing vnknowe, vnweting he shal be quited, and with vnknow thing rewarded."—"Good lady" (quod I than) "it hath oft be sene, the wethers and stormes so hugely haue fal in burioning tyme, and and by perte duresse han beaten of the springes so cleue, wher through the fruit of thilk yere hath failed. It is a great grace whan burions han good wethers, their frutes forth to bring. Alas than after soche stormes howe harde is it to auoide, till efte wedring and yeres han maked hir circute cours al about, er any frute be able to be tasted he is shent for shame, that foole is rebuked of his speche. He that is in fire brenning sore smarteth for disease. Him thinketh ful longer the water come that shuld the fire quenche. Whil men gon after a leche, the body is buried. Lo howe semely this frute wexeth, me thinketh that of tho frutes may no man atast, for pure bitternes in sauour. In this wise both friut and the tre wasten away togither, though mokel besy occupacion haue bespente to bringe it so ferforthe, that it was able to spring. A littel spech hath maked that al this labour is in ydel:"—"I not" (quod she) "wherof it serueth thy question to assoile, me thinketh the now duller in wittes, than whan I with the first mette, although aman be leude commenly for a foole he is not demed, but if he no good wol lerne, sottes and fooles let lightly out of minde, the good

that men teacheth hem. I said therfore thy stocke must be strong, and in greatnes wel herted, the tre is ful feble that at the first dent faileth: and al though frute faileth one yere or two, yet shall soche a season come one time or other, that shall bring out frute, that is nothing preterit ne passed, ther is nothing futur ne coming but al thinges togider in that place ben present euerlasting without any meuing, wherfore to god al thing is as now: and though a thing be nat in kindly nature of thinges as yet, and if it should be herafter, yet euermore we shul saye god it maketh be time present, and nowe for no futur ne preterit in him may be found. Wherfore his wetinge and his before weting, is al one in vnderstanding. Than if weting and before wetinge of god, putteth in necessite to al things which he wot or before wot ne thinge after eternite, or els after anye time he wol or doth of liberte, but al of necessite, which thing if thou wene it be ayenst reason nat thorowe necessite, to be or nat to be, all thinge that god wot or before wot, to be or nat to be; and yet nothing defendeth any thing to be wist or to be before wist of him in our willes or our doinges to be done, or els comming to be for fre arbitrement. Whan thou hast these declaracions well vnderstande, than shalte thou finde it resonable at proue, and that many thinges be nat thorowe necessite, but thorowe liberte of wil, saue necessite of freewil, as I tofore said: and as me thinketh al vtterly declared."—"Me thinketh lady" (quod I) "so I shoulde you nat displease, and euermore your reuerenee to kepe, that these thinges contrarien in any vnderstandynge, for ye sain somtyme is thorowe lybertye of wyll, and also thorowe necessite. Of this haue I yet no sauour, without better declaracion."—"What wonder" (quod she) "is there in these thinges, sithen al day thou shalt se at thine eye, in manye thinges receiuen in hem selfe reuers, thorowe diuers reasons, as thus. I pray the" (quod she) "whiche thinges been more reuers than comen and gone: for if I bidde thee come to me, and thou come, after whan I bid the go and thou go, thou reuersest fro thy firste comminge."—"That is sothe" (quod I) "and yet" (quod she) "in thy firste alone by diuers reason was full reuersinge to vnderstand:"—"As how" (quod I). "That shall I shewe the" (quod she) "by ensample of thinges that haue kindly moving. Is there any thing that meueth more kindly than doth the heuens iye, which I clepe the Sonne." "Sothely" (quod I) "me semeth it most kindely to moue."—"Thou saiest soth" (quod she). "Than if thou loke to the Sonne, in what parte he be vnder heuen, euermore he heigheth him in mouinge fro thilke place, and heigheth meuinge towarde the ilke same place, to thilke place from whiche he gothe he heigheth comming, and without any ceasinge to that place he neigheth from which he is chaunged and withdraw. But now in these thinges after diuersite of reason, reuers in one thing may be sey without repugnaunce. Wherfore in the same wise, without any repugnaunce by my reasones to fore maked, all is one to beleue, somthing to be thorow necessite comminge for it is coming, and yet with no necessite constrained to be comminge, but with necessite that comethe out of freewill, as I haue said." Tho list me a litel to speke, and gan stint my penne of my writing, and said in this wise. "Trewly lady as me thinketh, I can allege authoritees great that contrarien your saiynges. Job saith of mannes person, thou haste putte his terme, whiche thou might nat passe. Than saye I that no man maye shorte ne length the daye, ordained of his doing, altho somtime to vs it semeth some man to do a thinge of free wil, wherthrowe his death he henteth."—"Nay forsothe" (quod she) "it is nothing ayenst my saiyng for God is nat begiled, ne he seeth nothing wheder it shall come of liberte or elles of necessite, yet it is said to be ordained at God immouable, which at man or it be done maye be chaunged. Soch thing also is that Poule the apostel saith of hem that tofore werne purposed to be saintes, as thus, whiche that God before wist, and hath predestined, conformes of ymages of his sonne, that he shuld ben the firste begeten, that is to say, here amonges many brethern, and whom he hath predestined, hem he hath cleped, and whom he hath cleped, hem he hath iustified, and whom he hath iustified, hem he hath magnified. This purpose after whiche thei been cleped sainctes, or holy in the euerlasting present, where is neither time passed, ne time coming, but euer it is onely present, and now as mokell a momente, as vii. M. winter, and so ayenward withouten any meuing, is nothing iche temporell presence, for thyng that there is euer presente. Yet emonges you men, ere it be in your presence, it is mouable through libertie of arbitrement. And right as in the euerlastyng present, no maner thing was, ne shal be, but onely is, and now here in your temporel time, some thing was and is, and shal be, but mouyng stoundes, and in this is no maner repugnaunce. Right so in the euerlastyng presence, nothing maie be chaunged: and in your temporel time, other while it is proued mouable, by libertie of will, or it be doe, withouten any inconuenience thereof to folow. In your temporell tyme is no soche presence, as in the other, for your presente is dooen, whan passed and to come ginnen entre, which times here emongs you, euerich easily foloweth other, but the presente euerlastyng, dureth in onehed, withouten any imaginable chaunging, and euer is presente and nowe. Truly the course of the planettes, and ouerwhelminges, of the Sonne, in daies and nightes, with a newe ginning of his circuite after it is ended, that is to sain, one yere to folowe an other. These maken your transitorie times, with chaungyng of liues, and mutacion of people. But right as your temporell presence, coueiteth euery place, and all thinges in euery of your times be contained, and as now both sey and wist to Gods very knowing."—"Than" (quod I) "me wondreth why Poule spake these wordes, by voice of significacion in time passed, that God his sainctes before wist, hath predestined, hath cleped, hath iustified, and hath magnified: me thinketh he should haue said tho wordes in time present, and that had been more accordaunte, to the euerlasting presente, than to haue spoke in preterit voice of passed vnderstandyng."—"O" (quod Loue) "by these wordes, I se well thou hast litle vnderstanding of the euerlasting presence, or els of my before spoken wordes, for neuer a thing of tho thou haste nempned, was to fore other, or after other, but al atones eneliche, at the God been, and al togider in the euerlasting presente, bee now to vnderstandyng, the eternall presence, as I saied, hath inclose togider in one, all tymes, in whiche close and one all thinges, that been in diuers times, and in diuers places temporel,

without posteriorite or priorite, been closed therin perpetuall nowe, and make to dwell in present sight. But there thou saiest that Poule should haue spoke thilke forsaid sentence be time present, and that moste should haue been accordaunt, to the euerlasting presence, why gabbest thou to thy wordes? Sothlie I saie Poule moued the wordes, by significacion of time passed, to shewe fullie that thilke wordes, wer not put for temporell significacion, for al thilke time wer not thilk sentence temporalliche borne, which that Poule pronounced, God haue tofore know, and haue cleped than magnified, wherthrough it maie well be know, that Poule vsed tho wordes of passed significacion, for nede and lacke of a worde in mans bodily speach, betokening the euerlasting presence. And therfore word is most semelich in likenesse to euerlasting presence, he tooke his sentence for thinges, that here beforne been passed, vtterly be immouable, ilike to the euerlasting presence. As thilke that been, there neuer mowe not been present, so thinges of time passed, ne mo in no wise not been passed: but all thinges in you temporall, presence that passen in a litle while, shullen been not present. So than in that it is more similitude to the euerlastyng presence, significacion of tyme passed, that of time temporall presente, and so more in accordaunce. In this maner what thynge of these that been dooen through free arbitrement, or els as necessarie, holy writ pronounceth, after eternitie he speaketh, in whiche presence is euerlastyng soth, and nothing but soth immouable, that after tyme, in which naught alwaie been your willes and your actes, and right as while thei be not, it is not nedefull, hem to be: so oft it is not nedeful, that sometyme thei should be."—"As how" (quod I) "for yet must I be lerned, by some ensample."—"Of loue" (quod she) "wol I now ensample make, sithen I knowe the hed knot in that yelke. Lo, sometyme thou writest no arte, ne arte than in no wil to write, and right as while thou writest not, or els wolt not write, it is not nedefull the to write, or els wiln to write.

"And for to make the know vtterly, that thynges been otherwise in the euerlastyng presence, than in temporall time: se now my good child, for somthing is in the euerlasting presence, than in temporal tyme, it was not in eternitie tyme, in eterne presence shall it not be. Than no reason defendeth, that some thing ne maie be in tyme temporell mouing, that in eterne is immouable. Forsothe it is no more contrary ne reuers, for to be mouable in time temporell, and mouable in eternitie, than not to be in any tyme, and to be alwaie in eternitie, and haue to be, or els to come in tyme temporell, and not haue bee, ne nought commyng to be in eternitie. Yet neuer the later, I saie not somethyng to bee neuer in tyme temporell, that euer is eternitie, but all onely in sometyme not to bee. For I saie not thy loue to morne in no time to be, but to daie alone I deny ne it to bee, and yet neuer the later, it is alway in eternitie."

"Also" (quod I) "it semeth to me, that commyng thyng, or els passed, here in your temporall tyme to bee, in eternitie euer now, and present oweth not to be demed, and yet foloweth not thilke thing, that was or els shall be, in no maner therto been passed, or els coming: than vtterly shull wee deny, for there without ceasing, it is in his present maner"—"O" (quod she) "myne owne disciple, now ginnest thou able to haue the name of my seruaunt. Thy wit is clered, awaie is now errour of cloud in unconnyng, awaie is blindnesse of loue, awaie is thoughtfull study, of medling maners, hastlie shalte thou entre into the ioye of me that am thine owne maistres.

"Thou haste" (quod she) "in a few wordes, well and clerely concluded mokell of my matter. And right as there is no reuers, ne contrariouscie in tho doinges, right so withouten any repugnaunce, it is saied, some thyng to be mouable in time temporell, and for it be, that in eternitie dwelleth immouable, not afore it bee, or after that it is, but without cessing, for right naught is there after time that same is there euerlastyng, that temporaliche some tyme nis, and toforne it bee, it maie not be, as I haue saied,"—"Now sothly" (quod I) "this haue I well vnderstande, so that now me thinketh that prescience of God, and fre arbitrement withouten any repugnaunce accorden, and that maketh the strength of eternitie, whiche encloseth by presence, duryng all tymes, and all thynges that been, han been, and shull been in any tyme.

"I would now" (quod I) "a little vnderstande, sithen that all thynge thus beforne wotte, whether thilke wetyng be of tho thynges, or els thilke thynges been to been of Gods wetyng, and so of God nothyng is: and if euery thing bee through Gods weting, and thereof take his being, than should God bee maker and aucthour of badde werkes, and so he should not rightfully punishe euill doinges of mankinde." (Quod Loue) "I shall tel thee, this lesson to learne, myne owe true seruaunte, the noble philosophicall poete, in Englishe, whiche euermore hym busieth and trauaileth right sore, my name to encrease, wherefore all that willen me good, owe to doe him worship and reuerence both, truly his better ne his pere, in schole of my rules coud I neuer finde: "He" (quod she) "in a treatise that he made of my seruaunt Troilus, hath this matter touched, and at the full this question assoiled. Certainly his noble saiyngs, can I not amend: in goodnes of gentil manlich spech, without any maner of nicitie of starieres imaginacion, in wit and in good reason of sentence, he passeth al other makers. In the boke of Troilus, the answer to thy question maiest thou lerne, neuer the later, yet maie lightly thine vnderstanding, somdeale been learned, if thou haue knowyng of these to fornsaid thinges, with that thou haue vnderstanding, of two the last chapiters of this second boke, that is to saie, good to be some thing, and bad to want al maner being, for badde is nothyng els, but absence of good, and that God in good, maketh that good deedes been good, in euill he maketh that thei been but naught, that thei been bad: for to nothing is badnesse to bee."—"I haue (quod I tho) "inough knowing therein, me needeth of other thinges to heare, that is to saie, how I shall come to my blisse so long desired."

"In this matter to forne declared" (quod Loue) "I haue wel shewed, that euery man hath free arbitrement of thinges in his power to doe, or vndoe what hym liketh. Out of this ground muste come the spire, that by processe of tyme, shall in greatnesse sprede, to haue branches and blosomes, of waxyng fruicte in grace, of whiche the taste and the sauour, is endelesse blisse in ioye euer to onbide."

"Now ladie" (quod I) "that tree to sette faine would I learne."—"So thou shalte" (quod she) "ere thou departe hence. The firste thynge thou must set thy werke on ground siker and good, accordaunte to thy springes. For if thou desire grapes thou goest not to the hasell, ne for to fetchen roses, thou sekest not on okes: and if thou shalt haue bonie soukels, thou leauest the fruict of the soure docke. Wherfore if thou desire this blisse in parfite ioye, thou must set thy purpose ther vertue foloweth, and not to loke after the bodily goodes, as I saied whan thou were writyng in thy seconde booke. And for thou hast set thy self in so noble a place, and vtterly lowed in thine herte, the misgoyng of thy firste purpose, this setteles is the easier to spring, and the more lighter thy soule in grace to bee lissed. And truely thy desire, that is to saie, thy will, algates mote been stedfast in this matter, without any chaunging, for if it be sted faste, no man maie it voide"—"Yes parde" (quod I) "my will maie been tourned by frendes, and disease of manace, and threatning in lesing of my life, and of my limmes, and in many other wise, that now cometh not to minde. And also it mote ofte been out of thought, for no remembraunce maie hold one thyng continuelly in herte, bee it neuer so lustie desired."—"Nowe see" (quod she) "thou thy will shall followe, thy frewill to bee grounded, continuelly to abide: it is thy frewill that thou louest and haste loued, and yet shalt louen this Margarite perle, and in thy wil thou thinkeste to holde it. Than is thy will knitte in loue, not to chaunge for no newe luste beside: this will teacheth thyne herte, from all maner variyng. But than althoughe thou be threatened in death, or els in otherwise, yet is it in thin arbitrement to chose, thy loue to voide, or els to holde: and thilke arbitremente is in a maner a iudgemente, bitwene desire and thy herte. And if thou deme to loue, thy good wil faileth, than art thou worthy no blisse, that good will shuld deserue: and if thou chose continuaunce in thy good seruice, than thy will abideth, nedes blisse folowyng of thy good will, muste come by strengthe of thilke iudgement: for thy firste will that naught thine herte to abide: and halt it from theschange, with thy reason is accorded. Truly this maner of will thus shall abide, impossible if were to turne if thy herte be true, and if euery man be diligently, the meanynges of his will consider, he shall well vnderstande, that good will knit with reason, but in a false herte neuer is voided: for power and might of keping this good wil, is through libertie of arbitrement in herte, but good wil to kepe maie not faile. Eke than if it faile, it sheweth it self, that good will in keping is not there. And thus false will that putteth out the good, anone constraineth the herte, to accorde in louyng of thy good will, and this accordaunce bitwene false wille and thyne herte, in falsitie been likened togither. Yet a little woll I saie thee, in good wille, thy good willes to raise and strength. Take hede to me" (quod she) "howe thy willes thou shalte vnderstande. Right as ye han in your bodie diuers members, and fiue sondrie wittes, eueriche aparte to his owne doyng, whiche thynges as instrumentes ye vsen, as your handes apart to handle, feete to goe, tongue to speake, iye to see: right so the soule, hath in hym certaine sterynges and strengthes, whiche he vseth as instrumentes, to his certain doynges. Reason is in the soule, whiche he vseth thinges to knowe and to proue, and will, whiche he vseth to wilne: And yet is neither wille ne reason all the soule, but eueriche of hem is a thing by hymself in the soule. And right as eueriche hath thus singuler instrumentes by hem self, thei han as well diuers aptes, and diuers maner vsynges, and thilk aptes mowen in will been cleped affeccions. Affeccion is an instrument of willyng in his apetites. Wherefore mokell folke saine, if a reasonable creatures soule, any thing feruently wilneth, affectuously he wilneth, and thus maie wille by terme of equiuocas, in three waies been vnderstande: one is instrument of willyng, an other is affeccion of this instrument: and the third is vse, that setteth it a werke. Instrumente of willing is the ilke strength of the soul, which thee constraineth to wiln, right as reason is instrument of reasons, which ye vsen whan ye loken. Affeccion of this instrument is a thing, by whiche ye be drawe desirously any thing, to wilne in coueitous maner, all bee it for the time out of your mind: as if it come in your thought thilk thing to remember, anon ye been willing thilke to doen, or els to haue. And thus is instrument will, and affeccion is will also, to wilne thing as I saied: as for to wilne helth, whan will nothyng theron thinketh for anone as it cometh to memorie, it is in wil, and so is affeccion to wiln slepe, whan it is out of minde, but anon as it is remembred wil wilneth slepe, whan his time cometh of the doing. For affeccion of wil, neuer accordeth to sicknesse, ne alwaie to wake. Right so in a true louers affeccion of willing instrument, is to wilne truthe in his seruice, and this affeccion alway abideth; although he be sleping or thretned, or els not thereon thinkyng, but anone as it cometh to minde, anone he is stedfast in that will to abide. Use of this instrument forsoth is an other thing, by hymself, and that haue ye not but whan ye be doyng, in willed thing by affecte or instrument of will, purposed or desired, and this maner of vsage in my seruice, wisely nedeth to be ruled, from waiters with enuie closed from speakers full of iangeling wordes, from proude folke and hautin, that lambes and innocentes both scornen and dispisen. Thus in doyng, varieth the actes of willing eueriche from other, and yet ben thei cleped wil, and the name of will vtterly owen thei to haue, as instrument of wil is will, whan ye turne into purpose of any thing to doen, be it to sit or to stande, or any soche thing els. This instrument maie been had, although affecte and vsage be left out of doyng, right as ye haue sight and reason, and yet alway vse ye greatest wisedome in hem shall he be, and thei in God. Nowe than whan all false folke be ashamed, which wenen al bestialtie and yerthly thing, be swetter and better to the body, than heauenly is to the soule: this is the grace and the fruict that I long haue desired, it doth me good the sauour to smel. Christe now to thee I crie of mercie and of grace, and graunte of thy goodnes to euery maner reder, full vnderstanding in this lead pamflet to haue, and let no man wene other cause in this werke, than is verily the soth: for enuy is euer redy all innocentes to shend, wherfore I would that good speach enuie euermore hinder. But no man wene this werke be sufficiently maked, for Gods werke passeth mans, no mannes wit to parfit werke maie by no waie purueie thende: how shold I than so leude, aught wene of

perfeccion any ende to get? neuerthelater grace, glorie, and laude, I yelde and put with worshipful reuerenced, to the sothfast God in thre, with vnitie closed, whiche that the hetie langor of my sicknesse, hath tourned into mirth of health to recouer: for right as I was sorowed, through the gloten cloud of manifold sickly sorowe, so mirth ayen coming health hath me gladed and greatly comforted. I beseche and praie therfore, and I crie on Gods greate pitie, and on his mokell mercie, that this present scorges of my flesh, mow make medicine, and feche craft of my inner mans health, so that my passed trespas and tenes through wepyng of myne iyes been washe, and I voided from al maner disease, and no more to wepe hereafter, I now be kept thorow Gods grace: so that Gods hand which thee merciably me hath scorged, hereafter in good plite, from thence merciably me kepe and defende. In this booke be many priuie thinges wimpled and fold, vnneth shull leude men the plites vnwinde, wherefore I praie to the Holy Ghoste, lene of his ointmentes, mennes wittes to clere, and for Gods loue no man wonder, why or how this question cùm to my minde, for my great lustie desire was of this ladie to been enformed, my leudnesse to amende. Certes I know not other mens wittes, what I should aske, or in answere, what I should saie, I am so leude my self, that mokell more learnyng, yet me behoueth. I haue made therfore as I could, but not sufficiently as I would, and as matter yaue me sentence, for my dul wit is hindred, by stepmother of foryetyng, and with cloude of vnconning, that stoppeth the light of my Margarite perle, wherfore it maie not shine on me as it should. I desire not onely a good reader, but also I coueite and praie a good booke amender, in correccion of wordes, and of sentence: and onely this mede I coueite for my trauaile, that euery inseer and herer of this leude fantasie, deuoute horisons, and praiers, to God the greate iudge yelden, and praien for me, in that wise that in his dome, my sinnes mow been released and foryeuen: he that praieth for other, for hymself trauaileth. Also I praie that euery man parfitelie mowe knowe, through what intencion of herte, this treatise haue I drawe. Now was it the sightfull manna in desert, to children of Israel was spirituell meate: bodily also it was, for mennes bodies it norisheth. And yet neuer the later, Christe it signified. Right so a iewell betokeneth a gemme, and that is a stone vertuous, or els a perle. Margarite a woman betokeneth grace, learnyng, or wisedome of God, or els holie Churche. If bread through vertue is made holie fleshe, what is that our God saith? It is the spirit that yeueth life, the fleshe of nothyng it profiteth. Fleshe is fleshly vnderstanding: fleshe without grace and loue naughte is worthe. The letter sleeth, the spirite yeueth lifelich vnderstandyng. Charite is loue and loue is charitie, God graunte vs al therein to be frended. And thus the Testament of Loue is ended.

HERE ENDETH THE TESTAMENT OF LOUE.

END OF THE PROSE WORKS OF CHAUCER.

POEMS

IMPUTED TO CHAUCER,

OR

BY OTHER AUTHORS,

AND USUALLY PRINTED WITH HIS WORKS.

POEMS

IMPUTED TO CHAUCER.

THE FLOURE OF COURTESIE.

MADE BY JOHN LIDGATE.

In this book is set forth the rare vertues of a certain lady. Made by John Lidgate, as some think, in the behalf of some gentlewoman in the court.

IN Feuerier, when the frosty Moone
Was horned, full of Phebus fiery light,
And that she gan to reyse her streams soone,
Saint Ualentine, upon the blisful night
Of dilly, whan glad is every wight,
And foules chese, to void hir old sorrow,
Eueriche his make vpon the next morrow.

The same time I heard a larke sing
Full lustely, again the morrow gray,
" Awake ye lovers out of your slumbring
This glad morrow, in all the haste ye may,
Some observaunce doth vnto this day,
Your choise ayen of herte to renew
In confirming for ever to be trew.

" And ye that be of chosing at your large
This lusty day, by custom of nature,
Take vpon you the blisful holy charge,
To serve loue, while your life may dure,
With herte, body, and all your busie cure,
For euermore, as Uenus and Cipride
For you disposeth, and the god Cupide.

" For joy owe we plainly to obey
Unto this lords mighty ordinaunce,
And mercilesse rather for to dey,
Than euer in you be founden variaunce,
And thogh your life be medled with greuaupce
And at your herte closet be your wound,
Bethe alway one, there as ye are bound."

That whan I had heard and listed long
With deuout herte the lusty melodie
Of this heavenly comfortable song,
So agreeable, as by ermonie,
I rose anone, and fast gan me hie
Toward a grove, and the way take,
Foules to seen, euerich choose his make.

And yet I was full thrusty in languishing,
Mine ague was so fervent in his hete,
Whan Aurora for drery complaining,
Can distill her chrystal teares wete
Upon the soyle, with silver dew so swete,
For she durst for shame not appeare
Under the light of Phebus beames clere.

And so for anguish of my paines kene,
And for constraint of my sighes sore,
I set me downe under a laurer grene
Full pitously, and alway more and more,
As I beheld into the holts hore,
I gan complain mine inward deadly smert,
That aye so sore crampish at mine herte.

And while that I in my drery paine
Sate, and beheld about on every tree,
The foules sit alway twaine and twaine,
Than thought I thus, " Alas what may this be,
That euery foule hath his liberte
Freely to chuse after his desire
Eueriche his make, thus fro yere to yere.

" The sely wren, the tytemose also,
The little redbrest have free election
To flyen yferre, and together go
Where as hem list, about enuiron,
As they of kind haue inclination,
And as Nature, empresse and guide
Of euery thing, list to prouide.

" But man alone, alas the hard stound,
Full cruelly, by kinds of ordinaunce
Constrained is, and by statute bound
And debarred from all such pleasaunce.
What meneth this, what is this purveiaunce
Of God above, againe all right of kind,
Without cause so narrow man to bind."

Thus may I seene and plaine, alas
My woful houre, and my disauenture,
That dulfully stond in the same caas,
So ferre behind from all health and cure,
My wound abideth like a sursanure,
For me fortune so felly list dispose,
My harm is hid, that I dare not disclose.

For I my herte have set in such a place,
Where I am neuer likely for to spede,
So farre I am hindred from her grace,
That saue danger, I haue none other mede:
And thus alas, I not who shall me rede,
Ne for mine helpe shape remedy,
For male bouche, and for false envy.

The which twaine aye stondeth in my wey
Maliciously, and false suspection
Is very cause also that I dey,
Ginning and root of my destruction,
So that I fele in conclusion,
With her traines that they woll me shend,
Of my labour that death mote make an end.

Yet or I die, with herte, will, and thought,
To god of loue this auow I make.
As I best can, how dere that it be bought,
Where so it be that I sleepe or wake,
While Boreas doth the leaves shake,
As I have hight, plainly till I sterue,
For wele or wo, that I shall her serve.

And for her sake now this holy time,
Saint Ualentine, somewhat shall I write,
Although so be that I can nat rime,
Nor curiously by no craft endite,
Yet leuer I haue, that she put the wite
In ynconning, than in negligence,
Whatever I say of her excellence.

Whatever I say is of dutee
In soothfastnesse, and no presumption,
This I ensure to you that shall it see,
That it is all vnder correction,
What I rehearse in commendation
Of her, that I shall to you as blive,
So as I can, her vertues here discrive.

Right by example, as the summer Sunne
Passeth the sterre, with his beames shene,
And Lucifer among the skies dunne
A morrow sheweth, to void nights tene,
So verily, withouten any wene,
My lady passeth, who so taketh hede,
All tho alive, to speake of womanhede,

And as the ruby hath the soveraignty
Of rich stones, and the regaly,
And the rose of sweetnesse and beauty
Of fresh floures, without any lye,
Right so in sooth, with her goodly eye,
She passeth all in bounty and fairenesse,
Of manner eke, and of gentilnesse.

For she is both the fairest and the best,
To reken all, in very soothfastnesse,
For every vertue is in her at rest:
And furthermore, to speake of stedfastnesse,
She is the root, and of seemelinesse
The very mirrour, and of governaunce,
To all example, withouten variaunce.

Of port benigne, and wonder glad of chere,
Hauing evermore her trew advertence
Alway to reason, so that her desire
Is brideled aye by wit and providence,
Thereto of wit, and of high prudence,
She is the well, aye devoid of pride,
That vnto vertue her selven is the guide.

And over this, in her dalliaunce,
Lowly she is, discreet, and wise,
And goodly glad, by attemperaunce,
That every wight, of high and low degree,
Are glad in herte with her for to be,
So that shortly, if I shall not lye,
She named is, the Floure of Courtesie.

And there to speake of feminity,
The least mannish in comparison,
Goodly abashed, having aye pity
Of hem that ben in tribulation,
For she alone is consolation
To all that arne in mischeefe and in nede,
To comfort hem of her womanhede.

And aye in vertue is her busie charge,
Sad and demure, and but of words few,
Dredefull also of tongues that ben large,
Eschowing aye hem, that listen to hew
Above her head, her wordes for to shew,
Dishonestly to speake of any wight
She deadly hateth, of hem to have a sight.

The herte of whom so honest is and cleane,
And her entent so faithfull and entere,
That she ne may for all the world sustene,
To suffer her eares any word to here
Of friend nor foe, neither ferre ne nere,
Amisse resowning that hinder should his name,
And if she do, she wexeth red for shame.

So truly in meaning she is set
Without chaunging, or any doublenesse,
For bounty and beauty are together knet
In her person, under faithfulnesse.
For voide she is of newfanglenesse,
In herte aye one, for ever to persever
There she is set and never to dissever.

I am too rude, her vertues everychone
Cunningly to discrive and write,
For well ye wote colour have I none,
Like her discretion, craftely to endite,
For what I say, all it is too lite,
Wherefore to you, thus I me excuse,
That I acquainted am not with no muse.

By rhetoricke my stile to governe,
In her preise and commendation,
I am too blind so highly to discerne,
Of her goodnesse to make description
Save thus I say in conclusion,
If that I shall shortly commend,
In her is naught that nature can amend.

For good she is, like to Polixene,
And in fairenesse to the queene Helaine,
Stedfast of herte, as was Dorigene,
And wifely trouth, if I shall nat faine,
In constaunce eke and faith she may attaine
To Cleopatra, and thereto as setrone,
As was of Troy the white Antigone.

As Hester meke, like Iudith of prudence,
Kinde as Alceste, or Marcia Catoun,
And to Grisilde like in patience,
And Ariadne of discretioun,
And to Lucrece, that was of Rome toun,
She may be likened as for honeste,
And for her faith vnto Penelope,

To faire Phillis, and to Hipsiphile,
For innocence, and for womanhede,
For seemelinesse vnto Canace,
And over this, to speake of goodlyhede,
She passeth all that I can of rede,
For word and deed, that she naught ne fall,
Accord in vertue, and her werkes all.

For though that Dido, with wit sage,
Was in her time stedfast to Enee,
Of hastinesse yet she did outrage,
And so for Iason did also Medee,
But my lady is so avisee,
That bounty and beauty both in her demaine,
She maketh bounty alway soveraine.

This is too meane, bounty goth afore,
Lad by prudence, and hath the soverainte,
And beauty followeth, ruled by her lore,
That she ne fende her in no degree,
So that in one, this goodly fresh free
Surmounting all, withouten any were,
Is good and faire in one persone yfere.

And though that I for very ignoraunce
Ne may discrive her vertues by and by,
Yet on this day for a remembraunce,
Onely supported under her mercy,
With quaking hond I shall full humbly
To her highnesse, my rudenesse for to quite,
A little ballade here beneath endite.

Ever as I can surprise in mine herte
Alway with feare, betwixt drede and shame,
Least out of lose any word astert
In this mytre, to make it seeme lame,
Chaucer is dead that had such a name
Of faire making, that without wene
Fairest in our tongue, as the laurer grene.

We may assay for to counterfete
His gay stile, but it woll not be,
The well is drie, with the licour swete,
Both of Clye, and of Caliope,
And first of all I woll excuse me
To her that is ground of goodlihede,
And thus I say vntill her womanhede.

BALLADE SIMPLE.

With all my might, and my best entent,
With all the faith that mighty God of kind
Me yave, sith hee mee soule and knowing sent,
I chese, and to this bond ever I me bind
To love you best, while I have life and mind,
Thus heard I foules in the dawning,
Upon the day of saint Ualentine sing.

Yet chese I at the beginning, in this entent
To love you, though I no mercy find,
And if you list I died, I would assent,
As ever twinne I quicke of this line,
Suffiseth me to seene your feathers ynde,
Thus heard I foules in the morning
Upon the day of saint Ualentine sing.

And over this, mine hertes lust to bent
In honour onely of the wood bind,
Holly I yeve, never to repent,
In joy or wo, where so that I wind,
Tofore Cupide, with his eyen blind,
The foules all whan Titan did spring,
With devout herte me thought I heard sing.

LENUOYE.

Princesse of beauty, to you I represent
This simple dity, rude as in making,
Of herte and will, faithfull in mine entent,
Like as this day foules heard I sing.

[*Here endeth the Floure of Courtesie, and hereafter followeth, how Pity is dead, and buried in a gentle herte.*]

Pity that I have sought so yore ago,
With herte sore, and full of busie paine,
That in this worlde was never wight so wo
Without death, and if I shall nat faine.
My purpose was, to Pity to complaine
Upon the cruelty and tyranny
Of Love, that for my trouth doth me dye.

And that I by length of certaine yeres
Had ever in one sought a time to speake,
To Pity ran I, all bispreint with teares,
To prayen her on Cruelty me awreake,
But or I might with any word out breake,
Or tell her any of my paines smert,
I found her dead, and buried in an herte.

Adowne I fell, whan I saw the herse,
Dead as a stone, while that swoone me last,
But vp I rose with colour full diverse,
And pitously on her mine eyen I cast,
And neerer the corse I gan preasen fast,
And for the soule I shope me for to pray,
I was but lorne, there was no more to say.

Thus am I slaine, sith that Pity is dead,
Alas that day that ever it should fall,
What maner man dare now hold vp his head
To whom shall now any sorrowfull herte call,
Now Cruelty hath cast to slee vs all
In idle hope, folke redelesse of paine,
Sith she is dead, to whom shal we complain.

But yet encreaseth me this wonder new,
That no wight wote that she is dead but I,
So many men as in her time her knew,
And yet she died so suddainly,
For I have sought her ever full busily,
Sith I had first wit or mind,
But she was dead, ere I coud her find.

About her herse there stooden lustely,
Withouten any mo, as thought me,
Bounty, perfitely well armed and richely,
And fresh Beaute, Lust, and Iolite,
Assured Manner, Youth and Honeste,
Wisedome, Estate, Drede, and Governaunce,
Confedred both by bond and alliaunce.

A complaint had I written in my hond,
To have put to Pity, as a bill,
But I there all this company fond,
That rather would all my cause spill,
Than doe me helpe: I held my plaint still,
For to those folke withouten faile,
Without pity there may no bill availe.

Than leave all vertues, save onely Pity,
Keeping the corse, as ye have heard me saine,
Confedred by hond vntill Cruelty,
And be assented whan I shall be slaine,
And I have put my complaint vp againe,
For to my foes my bill I dare not shew
The effect, which saith thus in wordes few.

" Humblest of herte, highest of reverence,
Benigne floure, croune of vertues all,
Sheweth vntó your royall excellence
Your seruaunt, if I durst me so call,
His mortall harme, in which he is ifall
And naught all onely for his wofull fare,
But for your renome, as he shall declare.

" It standeth thus, that your contrary Crueltie
Allied is ayenst your regallie,
Under colour of womanly beautie,
(For men should not know her tyrannie)
With Bountie, Gentillesse, and Courtesie,
And hath depriued you of your place,
That is hie beautie, appertenaunt to your grace.

" For kindly, by your heritage right,
Ye be annexed euer vnto Bountie,
And verely ye ought to doe your might
To helpe Trouth in his aduersitie:
Ye be also the croune of beautie,
And certes, if ye want in these twaine,
The world is lore, there is no more to saine.

" Eke what auaileth manner and gentillesse
Without you, benigne creature?
Shall Crueltie be your gouernesse,
Alas, what herte may it long endure?
Wherefore but ye rather take cure
To breake that perilous alliaunce,
Ye sleen hem that been in your obeysaunce.

" And further, if ye suffer this,
Your renome is fordo in a throw,
There shall no man wete what pitie is,
Alas, that euer your renome is fall so low,
Ye be also fro your heritage ithrow
By Crueltie, that occupieth your place,
And we dispaired that seeken your grace.

" Haue mercy on me thou Herenus, queene,
That you haue sought so tenderly and sore,
Let some streame of light on me be seene,
That loue and drede you euer lenger the more,
For soothly to saine, I beare so sore,
And though I be not conning for to plaine,
For Gods loue haue mercy on my paine.

" My paine is this, that what so I desire,
That haue I not, ne nothing like thereto,
And euer setteth desire mine herte on fire,
Eke on that other side where that I go,
What maner thing that may encrease my wo,
That haue I ready vnsought euery where,
Me lacketh but my death, and than my bere.

" What needeth to shew percell of my paine,
Sith euery wo, that herte may bethinke,
I suffer, and yet I dare not to you plaine,
For well I wote, though I wake or winke,
Ye recke not whether I flete or sinke,
And nathelesse yet my trouth I shall susteine
Unto my death, and that shall well be sene.

" This is to saine, I will be yours euer,
Though ye me slea by crueltie your fo,
Algate my spirit shall neuer disceuer
Fro your seruice, fro any paine or wo,
Sith ye be yet dead, alas that it is so,
Thus for your death I maye wepe and plaine
With herte sore, and full of busie paine."

LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCIE.

M. Aleyn, secretary to the king of France, framed this dialogue between a gentleman and a gentlewoman, who finding no mercy at her hand, dieth for sorrow.

Halfe in a dreame not fully well awaked,
The golden sleep me wrapped vnder his wing,
Yet not for thy, I rose, and well nigh naked,
All suddainly my selfe remembring
Of a matter, leauing all other thing,
Which I must doe withouten more delay
For hem, which I durst not disobay.

My charge was this, to translate by and by,
(All thing forglue, as part of my pennance)
A book, called La bel Dame sans Mercy,
Which maister Aleine made of remembrance,
Cheefe secretarie with the king of France,
And hereupon a while I stood musing,
And in my selfe greatly imagining,

What wise I should perform the said processe,
Considering by good aduisement
My vnconning, and my great simplenesse,
And ayenward, the strait commaundement
Which that I had, and thus in mine entent
I was vexed and tourned vp and doun,
And yet at last as in conclusioun,

I cast my clothes on and went my way,
This forsaid charge hauing in remembrance,
Till I came to a lustie greene vallay
Full of floures, to see a great pleasaunce,
And so boldly, with their benigne suffraunce
Which rede this book, touching this matere,
Thus I began, if it please you to here.

Not long agoe, riding an easie paas,
I fell in thought of joy full desperate,
With great disease and paine, so that I was
Of all louers the most vnfortunate,
Sith by his dart, most cruell full of hate,
The Death hath take my lady and maistresse,
And lefte me sole thus discomfite and mate,
Sore languishing, and in waie of distresse.

Than said I thus, " It falleth me to cesse,
Either to rime, or dities for to make,
And I surely to make a full promesse
To laugh no more, but wepe in clothes blake,
My joyfull time (alas) now doeth it slake,
For in my selfe I feele no manner of ease,
Let it be written, such fortune (as I take)
Which neither me nor none other doth please.

" If it were so, my will or mine entent
Constrained were a joyfull thing to write,
My pen could neuer know what it mènt,
To speak thereof my tongue hath no delite,
Tho with my mouth I laugh much or lite,
Mine eien shuld make a countenance vntrue,
My herte also would haue thereof dispite,
The weeping teares haue so large issue.

" These sick louers I leue that to hem longs,
Which lead their life in hope of allegeance,
That is to say to make ballades and songs,
Euery of hem as they feel their greuaunce,
For she that was my joy and my pleasaunce,
Whose soule I pray God of his mercy saue,
She hath my will, mine hertes ordinaunce,
Which lieth here within this tombe ygraue.

" Fro this time forth, time is to hold my pees,
It wearieth me this matter for to trete,
Let other louers put himselfe in prees,
Their season is, my time is now forgete,
Fortune by strength the forcer hath vnshete,
Wherein was sperde all my worldly richesse,
And all the goods which that I haue gete
In my best time of youth and lustinesse.

" Loue hath me kept vnder his gouernance,
If I misdid, God graunt me forgiuenesse,
If I did well, yet felt I no pleasance,
It causeth neither joy nor heauinesse,
For whan she died, that was my maistresse,
My welfare than made the same purchase,
The death hath shet my bonds of witnesse,
Which for nothing mine herte shal neuer pase."

In this great thought, sore troubled in mind,
Along thus rode I all the morrow tide,
Till at the last it happed me to find
The place, wherein I cast me to abide,
Whan that I had no further for to ride,
And as I went, my lodging to puruay,
Right soone I heard, a little me beside,
In a garden, where minstrels gan to play.

With that anon I went me backer more,
My selfe and I, me thought we were inow,
But twain that were my friends here before,
Had me espied, and yet I wote not how,
They came for me, awayward I me drow,
Somwhat by force, somwhat by her request,
That in no wise I could my selfe rescow,
But needs I must come in and see the feast.

At my comming, the ladies euery chone
Bad me welcome, God wote right gentilly,
And made me chere, euery one by one,
A great deale better than I was worthy,
And of their grace shewed me great courtesie,
With good disport, because I shold not mourn:
That daie I bode still in their companie,
Which was to me a gracious sojourne.

The bordes were spred in right little space,
The ladies sat each as hem seemed best,
There were no deadly seruants in the place,
But chosen men, right of the goodliest,
And some there were, peraunenture most freshest,
That saw their judges full demure,
Without semblaunt, either to most or lest,
Notwithstanding they had hem vnder cure.

Emong all other, one I gan espy,
Which in great thought ful often came and went,
As one that had been rauished vtterly,
In his language not greatly dilligent,
His countenance he kept with great turment,
But his desire farre passed his reason,
For euer his eye went after his entent,
Full many a time, whan it was no season.

To make chere, sore himselfe he pained,
And outwardly he fained great gladnesse,
To sing also, by force he was constrained,
For no pleasaunce, but very shamefastnesse,
For the complaint of his most heauinesse,
Came to his voice, alway without request,
Like as the soune of birdes doth expresse,
Whan they sing loud in frithe or in forrest.

Other there were, that serued in the hall,
But none like him, as after mine aduise,
For he was pale, and somwhat lean withall,
His speech also trembled in fearfull wise,
And euer alone, but whan he did seruise,
All blacke he ware, and no deuise but plain,
Me thought by him, as my wit could suffise,
His herte was nothing in his own demain.

To feast hem all, he did his dilligence,
And well he coud, right as it seemed me,
But euermore, whan he was in presence,
His chere was done, it nolde none other be,
His schoolemaister had such auctiorite,
That all the while he bode still in the place,
Speake coud he not, but upon her beautie
He looked still, with a right pitous face.

With that his head he tourned at the last
For to behold the ladies euerichone,
But euer in one he set his eye stedfast
On her, which his thought was most vpon,
For of his eyen the shot I knew anone,
Which fearful was, with right humble requests,
Than to my self I said, by God alone,
Such one was I, or that I saw these jests.

Out of the prease he went full easely
To make stable his heauie countenance,
And wote ye well, he sighed wonderly
For his sorrowes and wofull remembrance,
Than in himselfe he made his ordinance,
And forthwithall came to bring in the messe,
But for to judge his most wofull pennance,
God wote it was a pitous entremesse.

After dinner anon they hem auanced
To daunce aboue the folke euerichone,
And forthwithall, this heauy man he danced,
Somtime with twain, and somtime with one,
Unto hem all his chere was after one,
Now here, now there, as fell by auenture,
But euer among he drew to her alone
Which he most dread of liuing creature.

To mine aduise good was his purueiance,
Whan he her chose to his maistresse alone,
If that her herte were set to his pleasance,
As much as was her beauteous person;
For who so euer setteth his trust vpon,
The report of the eyen, withouten more,
He might be dead, and grauen vnder stone;
Or euer he should his hertes ease restore.

In her failed nothing that I cond gesse,
One wise nor other, priuie nor apert,
A garrison she was of all goodlinesse,
To make a frontier for a louers herte,
Right yong and fresh, a woman full couert,
Assured wele of port, and eke of chere,
Wele at her ease withouten wo or smert,
All vndereath the standerd of dangere.

To see the feast, it wearied me full sore,
For heauy joy doth sore the herte trauaile:
Out of the prease I me withdrow therefore,
And set me downe alone behind a traile,
Full of leaues, to see a great meruaile,
With greene wreaths ybounden wonderly,
The leaues were so thicke withouten faile,
That throughout no man might me espy.

To this lady he came full courtesly,
Whan he thought time to dance with her a trace,
Set in an herber, made full pleasantly,
They rested hem fro thens but a little space,
Nigh hem were none of a certain compace,
But onely they, as farre as I coud see,
Saue the traile, there I had chose my place,
There was no more between hem two and me.

I heard the louer sighing wonder sore,
For aye the more the sorer it him sought,
His inward paine he coud not keepe in store,
Nor for to speake, so hardie was he nought,
His leech was nere, the greater was his thoght,
He mused sore to conquer his desire,
For no man may to more pennance be broght
Than in his heat to bring him to the fire.

The herte began to swell within his chest,
So sore strained for anguish and for paine,
That all to peeces almost it to brest,
Whan both at ones so sore it did constraine,
Desire was bold, but shame it gan refraine,
That one was large, the other was full close,
No little charge was laid on him certaine,
To keepe such werre, and haue so many fose.

Full oftentimes to speak himself he pained,
But shamefastnesse and drede said euer nay,
Yet at the last, so sore he was constrained,
Whan he full long had put it in delay,
To his lady, right thus than gan he say,
With dredeful voice, weeping, half in a rage,
" For me was purueyed an vnhappy day,
Whan I first had a sight of your visage.

" I suffer pain God wote, full hote brenning,
To cause my death, all for my true seruice,
And I see well ye recke thereof nothing,
Nor take no heed of it in no kind wise,
But whan I speake after my best aduise,
Ye set it at nought, but make thereof a game,
And though I sewe, so great an enterprise,
It peireth not your worship nor your fame.

" Alas, what should it be to you prejudice,
If that a man doe loue you faithfully
To your worship, eschewing euery vice,
So am I yours, and will be verely,
I challenge nought of right, and reason why,
For I am hole submit vnto your seruice,
Right as you list it be, right so will I,
To bind my self, where I was in fraunchise.

L'AMANT.

" Though it be so, that I cannot deserue
To haue your grace, but alway liue in drede
Yet suffer me you for to loue and serue,
Withouten maugre of your most goodlyhede,
Both faith and trouth I giue your womanhede,
And my seruice without any calling,
Loue hath me bound without wage or mede
To be your man, and leue all other thing."

LA DAME.

Whan this lady had heard all this language,
She gaue answere ful soft and demurely,
Without chaunging of colour or courage,
Nothing in hast, but measurably.
" Me thinketh sir, your thoght is great folly,
Purpose ye nought your labour for to cease,
For thinketh not, whiles ye liue and I,
In this matter to set your herte in pease.'

L'AMANT.

There may none make the peace, but only ye,
Which are the ground and cause of all this war,
For with your eyen the letters written be,
By which I am defied and put a farre.
Your pleasaunt looke, my very lodestarre,
Was made heraud of thilke same defiaunce;
Which vtterly behight me for to barre
My faithfull trust, and all my affiaunce.

LA DAME.

To liue in wo he hath great fantasie,
And of his herte also slipper hold,
That onely for beholding of an eie,
Cannot abide in peace, as reason would:
Other or me, if ye list ye may behold,
Our eien are made to look, why shold we spare,
I take no keepe neither of yong ne old,
Who feeleth smart, I counsail him beware.

L'AMANT.

If it be so, one hurt another sore,
In his defaut that feleth the greuaunce,
Of very right, a man may doe no more,
Yet reason would it were in remembraunce,
And sith fortune onely by her chaunce
Hath caused me to suffer all this paine
By your beautie, with all the circumstaunce,
Why list ye haue me in so great disdaine.

LA DAME.

To your person ne haue I no disdaine,
Nor neuer had truly, ne nought will haue,
Nor right great loue, nor hatred in certaine,
Nor your counsail to know, so God me saue,
If such loue be in your mind igraue,
That little thing may doe your displesaunce
You to beguile, or make you for to raue,
I will not cause no such encombraunce.

L'AMANT.

What euer it be that me hath thus purchased,
Wening hath not deceiued me certaine,
But feruent loue so sore hath me ichased,
That I vnware am casten in your chaine,
And sith so it is, as fortune list ordaine,
All my welfare is in your hands fall
In eschewing of more mischeeuous paine,
Who soonest dieth, his care is least of all.

LA DAME.

This sicknesse is right easie to endure,
But few people it causeth for to die,
But what they meane, I know it very sure,
Of more comfort, to draw the remedie,
Such be there now plaining full pitously,
That fele God wote not alther greatest pain,
And if so be loue hurt so greeuously,
Lene harm it were one sorowful than twain.

L'AMANT.

Alas madame, if that it might you please,
Much better it were by way of gentilnesse,
Of one sorrie, to make twaine well at ease,
Than him to destroy that liueth in distresse,
For my desire is neither more nor lesse,
But my seruice to doe for your pleasaunce,
In eschewing all manner doublenesse,
To make two joys in steed of one greuaunce.

LA DAME.

Of loue I seek neither pleasaunce, nor ease,
Nor haue therein no great affiaunce,
Though ye be sick, it doth me nothing please,
Also I take no heed of your pleasaunce,
Chese who so will hir hertes to aduaunce,
Free am I now, and free will I endure,
To be ruled by mans gouernaunce
For earthly good, nay, that I you ensure.

L'AMANT.

Loue, which that joy and sorrow doth depart,
Hath set the ladies out of all seruage,
And largely doth graunt hem for her part,
Lordship and rule of euery manner of age,
The poor seruaunt nought hath of anauntage,
But what he may get onely by purchesse,
And he that ones to loue doth his homage,
Full oftentimes, dere bought is the richesse.

LA DAME.

Ladies be not so simple, thus I meane,
So dull of wit, so sotted in folly,
That for words, which said be of the splene,
In faire language painted full pleasauntly,
Which ye and mo hold schooles of daily,
To make hem all great wonders to suppose,
But soone they can away their heads wrie,
And to faire speech lightly their eares close.

L'AMANT.

There is no man that jangleth busily,
And setteth his herte and all his mind therefore,
That by reason may plaine so pitously,
As he that hath much heauinesse in store:
Whose head is hole, and sayth that it is sore,
His fained chere is hard to keepe in mew,
But thought, which is vnfained euermore,
The workes preueth as the words shew.

LA DAME.

Loue is subtill, and hath a great await,
Sharp in working, in gabbing great plesance,
And can him venge of such as by deceit
Would feele and know his secret gouernance,
And maketh hem to obey his ordinance,
By cherefull waies, as in hem is supposed,
But whan they fall into repentance,
Than in a rage her counsaile is disclosed.

L'AMANT.

Sith for as much as God and eke nature
Hath anaunced loue to so high degree,
Much sharpe is the point, thus am I sure,
Yet greeueth more the faut where euer it be,
Who hath no cold, of heat hath no deinte,
The one for that other, asked is expresse,
And of pleasaunce knoweth none certainete,
But it be one, in thought and heauinesse.

LA DAME.

As for pleasaunce, it is not alway one,
That you think swete, I think it bitter pain,
Ye may not me constrain, nor yet right none,
After your lust to loue, that is but vaine,
To challenge loue by right, was neuer seine,
But herte assent before bond and promise,
For strength and force may not attaine
A will that standeth enfeoffed in franchise.

L'AMANT.

Right faire lady, God mote I neuer please,
If I seeke other right in this case,
But for to shew you plainly my disease,
And your mercy to abide, and eke your grace,
If I purpose your honour to deface,
Or euer did, God and fortune me shend,
And that I neuer vnrightfully purchase
One onely joy vnto my liues end.

LA DAME.

Ye and other, that sweare such othes fast,
And so condemne, and cursen to and fro,
Full sikerly ye wene your othes last
No lenger than the wordes ben ago,
And God and eke his saints laugh also,
In such swearing there is no stedfastnesse,
And these wretches that haue full trust thereto,
After they weepe and wailen in distresse.

L'AMANT.

He hath no courage of a man truly,
That seecheth pleasaunce, worship to dispise,
Nor to be called forth, is not worthy
The yearth to touch, the aire in no kind wise,
A trusty herte, a mouth without feintise,
Thus by the strength of euery manner name,
And who that layeth his faith for little prise,
He leseth both his worship and his fame.

LA DAME.

A cursed herte, a mouth that is curteise,
Full well ye wote they be not according,
Yet fained chere right sone may hem apeise,
Where of mallice is set all hir working,
Full false semblant they bere, and true seming,
Hir name, hir fame, hir tongues but fained,
Worship in hem is put in forgetting,
Nought repented, nor in no wise complained.

L'AMANT.

Who thinketh ill, no good may him befall,
God of his grace grant each man his desart,
But for his loue, among your thoughts all,
As thinke vpon my wofull sorrowes smart,
For of my paine, whether your tender hart
Of sweet pitie be not therewith agreued,
And of your grace, to me were discouart,
That by your mean soon should I be releued.

LA DAME.

A lightsome herte, a follie of pleasance,
Are much better, the lesse while they abide,
They make you think, and bring you in a trance,
But that sickenesse will soone be remedide,
Respite your thought, and put all this aside,
Full good disport werieth me all day,
To helpe nor hurt, my will is not aplide,
Who troweth me not, I let him passe away.

L'AMANT.

Who hath a bird, a faucon, or a hound,
That followeth him for loue in euery place,
He cherisheth him, and kepeth him full sound,
Out of his sight he will not him enchace,
And I that set my wits in this cace
On you alone, withouten any chaunge,
Am put vnder, much farther out of grace,
And lesse set by, than other that be straunge.

LA DAME.

Thogh I make chere to euery man about,
For my worship, and for mine owne fraunchise,
To you I nill doe so withouten doubt,
In eschewing all manner prejudise,
For wote ye well, loue is so little wise,
And in bileue so lightly will be brought,
That he taketh all at his owne deuise,
Of thing God wote, that serueth him of nought.

L'AMANT.

If I by loue and by my trew seruise
Lese the good chere that strangers haue alway,
Whereof shall serue my trouth in any wise,
Lesse than to him that commeth and goeth all day,
Which holdeth of you nothing, that is no nay,
Also in you is lost, as to my seeming,
All courtesie, which of reason will say,
That loue for loue were lawfull desiring.

LA DAME.

Courtesie is alied wonder nere
To worship, which him loueth tenderly,
And he will not be bound for no praiere,
Nor for no gifts I say you verely,
But his good chere depart full largely,
Where him liketh, as his conceit will fall:
Guerdon constrained, a gift done thankfully,
These twain can neuer accord, nor neuer shall.

L'AMANT.

As for guerdon, I seeke none in this cace,
For that desert to me it is too hie,
Wherefore I ask your pardon and your grace,
Sith me behoueth death, or your mercy,
To giue the good where it wanteth truly,
That were reason, and a courteise manere,
And to your owne much better were worthy,
Than to strangers, to shew hem louely chere.

LA DAME.

What call ye good, faine would I that I wist,
That pleaseth one, another smerteth sore,
But of his owne, too large is he that list
Giue much, and lese his good name therefore,
One should not make a grant, little ne more,
But the request were right well according:
If worship be not kept and set before,
All that is left, is but a little thing.

L'AMANT.

Into this world was founden neuer none,
Nor vnder heauen creature ibore,
Nor neuer shall, saue onely your persone,
To whom your worship toucheth half so sore,
But me which haue no season lesse ne more
Of youth ne age, but still in your seruice,
I haue no eyen, no wit, nor mouth in store,
But all be giuen to the same office.

LA DAME.

A full great charge hath he withouten fail,
That his worship keepeth in sikernesse,
But in daunger he setteth his trauail,
That feffeth it with others businesse,
To him that longeth honour and noblesse,
Upon none other should not be await,
For of his owne so much hath he the lesse,
That of other much followeth the conceit.

L'AMANT.

Your eyen hath set the print, which that I fele
Within my herte, that where so euer I go,
If I doe thing that souneth vnto wele,
Needs must is come from you, and fro no more,
Fortune will this, that I for wele or wo
My life endure, your mercy abiding,
And very right will, that I thinke also
Of your worship, aboue all other thing.

LA DAME.

To your worship see well, for that is nede,
That ye spend not your season all in vaine,
As touching mine, I rede you take no hede,
By your folly to put your selfe in paine,
To ouercome is good, and to restraine
An herte, which is deceiued follily,
For worse it is to break than bow certaine,
Better bow, than to fall sodainly.

L'AMANT.

Now faire lady, thinke, sith it first began,
That loue hath set mine herte vnder his cure,
It neuer might, ne truly I ne can
None other serue, while I shall here endure,
In most free wise thereof I make you sure,
Which may not be withdraw, this is no nay,
I must abide all manner aduenture,
For I may neither put to nor take away.

LA DAME.

I hold it for no gift in soothfastnesse,
That one offereth, where it is forsake,
For such a gift is abandoning expresse,
That with worship ayen may not be take,
He hath an herte full fell, that list to make
A gift lightly, that put is to refuse,
But he is wise, that such conceit will slake,
So that him need neither to study ne muse.

L'AMANT.

He shotld not muse, that hath his seruice spent
On her which is a lady honourable,
And if I spend my time to that entent,
Yet at the least, I am not reprouable
Of fained herte, to thinke I am vnable,
Or I mistooke, whan I made this request,
By which loue hath of enterprise notable
So many hertes gotten by conquest.

LA DAME.

If that ye list do after my counsaile,
Seeche a fairer, and of more higher fame,
Which in seruice of loue will you preuaile
After your thought, according to the same,
He hurteth both his worship and his name,
That follily for swaine himself will trouble,
And he also leseth his after game,
That surely cannot set his points double.

L'AMANT.

This your counsail, by ought that I can see,
Is better said than done, to mine aduise,
Though I beleeue it not, forgiue it me,
Mine herte is such, so hole without feintise,
That I ne may giue credence in no wise
To thing which is not souning vnto truth,
Other counsaile I see be but fantasie,
Save of your grace to shew pity and ruth.

LA DAME.

I hold him wise that worketh no folly,
And whan him list can leave and part therefro,
But in conning he is to learne truly,
That would himselfe conduit, and cannot so.
And he that will not after counsaile do,
His sute he putteth into disperaunce,
And all the good that should fall him to,
Is lost and dead, cleane out of remembraunce.

L'AMANT.

Yet will I shew this matter faithfully
Whiles I live, what ever be my chaunce,
And if it hap that in my truth I dye,
Than death shall do me no displeasaunce,
But whan that I, by your hard suffraunce,
Shall dye so true, and with so great a paine,
Yet shall it do me much the lesse grevaunce,
Than for to live a false lover certaine.

LA DAME.

Of me get ye right nought, this is no fable,
I will to you be neither hard nor streit,
And right will not no man customable,
To thinke ye should be sure of my conceit,
Who seecheth sorrow, his be the receit,
Other counsaile can I not feele nor see,
Nor for to learne, I cast me not to await,
Who will thereof, let him assay for me.

L'AMANT.

Ones must it be assayed, that is no nay
With such as be of reputation,
And of true love the right honour to pay
Of free hertes gotten by due raunsome,
For free will holdeth this opinion,
That it is great duresse and discomfort,
To keepe a herte in so strait a prison,
That hath but one body for his disport.

LA DAME.

I know so many causes marvelous,
That I must need of reason thinke certaine,
That such aventure is wonder perillous,
And yet well more, that comming back againe,
Good or worship, thereof is seldome seene,
Where I ne will make any such array,
As for to find a pleasaunce, but barraine,
Whan it shall cost so dere the first assay.

L'AMANT.

Ye have no cause to doubt of this matter,
Nor you to meue with no such fantasie,
To put me farre all out as a straunger,
For your goodnesse can thinke and well advise,
That I have made aprise in every wise,
By which my truth sheweth open evidence,
My long abiding, and my true service,
May well be knowen by plaine experience.

LA DAME.

Of very right he may be called true,
And so must he be take in every place.
That can discerne, and let as he ne knew,
And keepe the good, if he it may purchase:
For who that prayeth, or swereth in any cace,
Right well ye wote, in that no trouth is preved,
Soch hath there ben, and are, that getten grace,
And lese it sone, whan they have it acheved.

L'AMANT.

If truthe me cause, by vertue soverain,
To shewe good love, and alway find contrary,
And cherish that, which sleeth me with the pain
This is to me a lovely adversary,
Whan that pity, which long on sleep doth tary,
Hath set the fine of all my hevinesse,
Yet her comfort to me most necessary,
Shall set my will more sure in stablenesse.

LA DAME.

The wofull wight, what may he think or say,
The contrary of all joy and gladnesse,
A sicke body, his thought is alway
From him that felen no sore nor sicknesse,
Thus hurtes been of divers businesse.
Which love hath put to great hindraunce,
And truth also, put in forgetfulnesse,
Whan they full sore begin to sigh askaunce.

L'AMANT.

Now God defend, but he be harmelesse,
Of all worship or good that may befall,
That to werst tourneth by his leudnesse,
A gift of grace, or any thing at all,
That his lady vouchsafe vpon him call,
Or cherisheth him in honourable wise,
In that defaute, what ever he be that fall,
Deserveth more than death to suffre twise.

LA DAME.

There is no judge yset on soch trespace,
By which of right love may recovered be,
One curseth fast, another doth manace,
Yet dyeth none, as farre as I can see,
But kepe hir course alway in one degree,
And ever more hir labour doth encrease,
To bring ladies by their great subteltee,
For others gilte, in sorow and disease.

L'AMANT.

All be it so, one doth so great offence,
And is not dedde, nor put to no justice,
Right well I wote him gayneth no defence,
But he must end in full mischevous wise,
And all ever said, God will him dispise,
For falshed is full of cursednesse,
That his worship may never have enterprise
Where it reigneth, and hath the wilfulnesse.

LA DAME.

Of that have they no great fere now adaise,
Soch as will say and maintain it thereto,
That stedfast truth is nothing for to praise,
In hem that kepe it long in wele or wo,
Their busie hertes passen to and fro,
They be so well reclaimed to the lure,
So well learned hem to withhold also,
And al to chaunge, whan love should best endure.

L'AMANT.

Whan one hath set his herte in stable wise,
In such a place, as is both good and true,
He should not flit, but doe forth his service,
Alway withouten chaunge of any newe,
As soone as love beginneth to remewe,
All pleasaunce gothe anone in little space,
As for my party that shall I eschue,
While the soule abideth in his place.

LA DAME.

To love truely, there as it ought of right,
Ye may not be mistaken doubtlesse,
But ye be foule disceived in your sight,
By light vnderstanding, as I gesse,
Yet may ye well repele your businesse,
And to reason have some attendaunce,
Moch better than to abide by folie simplenesse,
The feble soccour of disperaunce.

L'AMANT.

Reason, counsaile, wisedome and good advise,
Been vnder love arested everichone,
To which I can accorde in every wise,
For they been not rebell, but still as a stone,
Their will and mine be medled all in one,
And therwith bounden with so strong a chain,
That as in hem, departing shall be none,
But pity breake the mighty bonde atwaine.

LA DAME.

Ye love not your selfe, what ever ye bee,
That in love stand subject in every place,
And of your wo, if ye have no pitee,
Others pitee bileve you not to purchace,
But be fully assured, as in this cace,
I am alway vnder one ordinaunce,
To have better trust not after grace,
And all that leveth, take to your pleasaunce.

L'AMANT.

I have my hope so sure and so stedfast,
That such a lady should not lacke pity,
But now alas, it is shyt vp so fast,
That daunger sheweth on me his cruelty,
And if she see the vertue fayle in me,
Of true service, though she doe faile also,
No wonder were, but this is my surete,
I must suffre, which way that ever it go.

LA DAME.

Leave this purpose, I rede you for that best,
For the lenger ye kepe, it is in vaine,
The lesse ye get, as of your hertes rest,
And to rejoyce it shall you never attaine,
When ye abide good hope to make you faine,
Ye shall be found asotted in dotage,
And in the end, ye shall know for certaine,
Hope shall pay the wretches for hir wage,

L'AMANT.

Ye say as falleth most for your pleasaunce,
And your power is great, all this I see,
But hope shall never out of my remembraunce
By which I fele so great adversitee,
For whan nature hath set in you plentee
Of all goodnesse, by vertue and by grace,
He never assembled hem, as seemed mee,
To put pity out of his dwellyng place.

LA DAME.

Pity of right ought to be reasonable,
And to no wight do no great disavauntage,
There as is nede, it should be profitable,
And to the pitous shewing no domage,
If a lady will doe so great outrage,
To shew pity and cause her owne debate,
Of soch pity commeth dispitous rage,
And of soch love, also right deadly hate.

L'AMANT.

To comfort hem that live all comfortlesse,
That is no harm, but comfort to your name,
But ye that have a herte of soch duresse,
And a faire lady, I must affirme the same,
If I durst say, ye winne all this defame,
By cruelty, which sitteth you full ill,
But if pity, which may all this attain,
In your high herte may rest and tary still.

LA DAME.

What ever he be that saith he loveth me,
And paraventure lleve well it be so,
Ought he be wrothe, or should I blamed be,
Though I did not as he would have me do,
If I medled with soch or other moe,
It might be called pity mercilesse,
And afterward if I should live in woe,
Than to repent, it were to late I gesse.

L'AMANT.

O marble herte, and yet more hard parde,
Which mercy may not perce for no labour,
More strong to bowe than is a mighty tree,
What availeth you to shew so great rigour,
Pleaseth it you more to see me die this houre,
Before your iyen, for your disport and play,
Than for to shewe some comfort and soccour,
To respite death, which chaseth me alway.

LA DAME.

Of your disease, ye may have allegeaunce,
And as for mine, I let it over slake,
Also ye shall not dye for my pleasaunce,
Nor for your heale, I can no surety make,
I will not hurt my selfe for others sake,
Wepe they, laugh they, or sing they, I warrant,
For this matter, so will I vndertake,
That none of hem shall make therof avant.

LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCIE.

L'AMANT.

I can not skill of love by God alone,
I have more cause to wepe in your presence,
And well ye wote, avauntour am I none,
For certainly, I love better silence,
One should not love by his hertes credence,
But he were sure to kepe it secretly
For a vauntour is of no reverence,
Whan that his tongue is his most enemy.

LA DAME.

Male bouch in court, hath great commaundment,
Ech man studieth to say the worst he may,
These false lovers, in this time now present,
They serue best to jangle as a jay,
The most secrete iwis, yet some men say,
How he mistrusted is in some partise,
Wherfore to ladies what so men speake or say,
It should be bileved in no wise.

L'AMANT.

Of good and ill shall be, and is alway,
The world is soch, the yearth is not all plain,
They that be good, that profe shewth every day
And otherwise great villony certain:
It is no reason, though one his tong distain
With cursed speech, to do himself a shame,
That soch refuge should wrongfully remain
Upon the good renomed in their fame.

LA DAME.

Soch as be nought, whan they here tidings new,
That ech trespas shall lightly have pardon,
They that pursuen to be good and true,
Will not set by none ill disposition,
To continue in every good condicion,
They are the first that fallen in domage,
And full freely the hertes habandon,
To little faith, with soft and faire language.

L'AMANT.

Now know I well of very certaintee,
If one do truely, yet shall he be shent,
Sith all maner of justice and pitee
Is banished out of a ladies entent,
I cannot see but all is at one stent,
The good, the ill, the vice, and eke the vertue,
Soch as be good, soch haue the punishment,
For the trespace of hem that liue untrue.

LA DAME.

I have no power you to do greuaunce,
Nor to punish none other creature,
But to eschew the more encombraunce,
To kepe us from you all, I hold it sure,
False semblaunce, hath a face full demure,
Lightly to catch these ladies in a wait,
Wherefore we must, if we will here endure,
Make right good watch, lo this is my conceit.

L'AMANT.

Sith that of grace, a goodly word not one
May now be had, but alway kept in store,
I appeale to God, for he may hear my mone
Of the duresse, which greueth me so sore.
And of pitee, I complaine furthermore,
Which he forgate, in all his ordinaunce,
Or els my life to haue ended before,
Which so sone am put out of remembraunce.

LA DAME.

My herte nor I, haue done you no forfet,
By which ye should complain in any kind,
Nothyng hurteth you, but your own conceit,
Be iudge your self, for so ye shall it find,
Thus alway let this sinke in your mind,
That your desire shall never recovered be,
Ye noye me sore, in wasting all this wind,
For I haue said ynough, as seemeth me.

L'AMANT.

This woful man rose vp in all his paine,
And so departed with weping countenaunce,
His woful herte almost to brast in twaine,
Full like to dye, walking forth in a traunce,
And sayed, "Death come forth, thy self auaunce,
Or that mine herte forget his property,
And make shorter all this woful penaunce,
Of my poore lyfe full of aduersity."

Fro thens he went, but whither wist I nought,
Nor to what part he drew in soothfastnesse,
But he no more was in his ladies thought,
For to the daunce anone she gan her dresse,
And afterward, one tolde me thus expresse,
He rent his heer, for anguish and for paine,
And in himself toke so great heauinesse,
That he was dedde within a day or twaine.

LENUOY.

The true louers thus I beseech you all,
Soch aduentures flye hem in euery wise,
And as people defamed ye hem call,
For they truely do you great prejudice,
His castels strong stuffed with ordinaunce,
For they have had long time by their office,
The whole countrey of loue in obeysaunce.

And ye ladies, or what estate ye be,
Of whom worshyp hath choyse his dwellyng place,
For Goddes loue do no such cruelty,
Nor in no wise ne foule not the trace
Of her that here is named rightwisely,
Which by reason me seemeth in this cace,
May be called, *La belle Dame sans Mercy*,

Go litle book, God send thee good passage,
Chese well thy way, be simple of manere,
Looke thy clothing be like thy pilgremage,
And specially let this be thy prayere,
Unto hem all that thee will rede or here,
Where thou art wrong, after hir help to call,
Thee to correct in any part or all.

Pray hem also with thine humble seruice,
Thy boldnesse to pardon in this cace,
For els thou art not able in nowise
To make thy self appear in any place,
And furthermore beseech hem of hir grace,
By hir favour and supportacion,
To take in gree this rude translation.

The which God wote standeth ful destitute
Of eloquence, of metre, and colours,
Like as a beast naked without refute,
Upon a plain to abide all manner showers,
I can no more but ask of hem socours,
At whose request thou were made in this wise
Commanding me with body and seruice.

Right thus I make an end of this prosses,
Besechyng him, that all hath in balaunce,
That no true man be vexed causelesse,
As this man was, which is of remembraunce,
And all that done hir faithful observaunce,
And in hir trouth purpose hem to endure,
I pray God send hem better auenture.

EXPLICIT.

THE ASSEMBLY OF LADIES.

A gentlewoman dreameth that she seeth a great number of ladies put up their bills of complaint before a judge, who promiseth to relieve their grievances.

In Septembre at the falling of the lefe,
The fresh season was altogider done,
And of the corne was gathered the shefe,
In a gardine about twaine after noone,
There were ladies walking, as was hir wone
Foure in nombre, as to my mind doth fall,
And I the fifth, the simplest of hem all.

Of gentilwomen fayre there were also,
Disporting hem, euerich after her gise,
In crosse alies walking by two and two,
And some alone, after hir fantasie,
Thus occupied we were in diuerse wise,
And yet in trouth we were not all alone,
There were knights and squires many one.

Whereof I serued, one of hem asked me,
I said ayen, as it fell in my thought,
To walke about the mase in certainte,
As a woman that nothing rought,
He asked me ayen whom that I sought,
And of my colour, why I was so pale,
"Forsoth" (quod I) "and thereby lithe a tale."

"That must me wete" (quod he) "and that anone,
Tell on, let see, and make no tarying."
"Abide" (quod I) "ye ben a hastie one,
I let you wete it is no litel thing,
But for bicause ye haue a great longing,
In your desire, this processe for to here,
I shall you tell the plaine of this matere.

"It happed thus, that in an after noone,
My felawship and I by one assent,
Whan all other besinesses were doone,
To passe our time, in to this mase we went,
And tooke our waies, eche after our entent,
Some went inward, and went they had gon out,
Some stood in the mid, and looked all about.

"And soth to say, some were full ferre behind,
And right anon as ferforth as the best,
Other there were so mased in hir mind,
Alwaies were good for hem bost eest and west,
Thus went they forth, and had but little rest,
And some hir courage did hem sore assaile,
For very wrath, they did step ouer the raile,

"And as they sought hem selfe to and fro,
I gate my selfe a little auantage,
All forweried, I might no further go,
Though I had won right gret for my viage,
So came I forth into a strait passage,
Which brought me to an herber fair and grene,
Made with benches full craftie and cleane.

"That as me thought, there might no creature
Deuise a better, by dewe proporcioun,
Safe it was closed well I you ensure,
With masonry, of compace enuiroun,
Full secretly with staires going down,
In middes the place, with turning whele certaine,
And vpon that a pot of Margelaine.

"With Margarets growing in ordinance,
To shew hem selfe, as folke went to and fro,
That to behold it was a great pleasance,
And how they were accompanied with mo,
Ne mamblisnesse and sonenesse also,
The poure penses were not disloged there,
Ne God wote hir place was euery where.

"The flore and bench was paued fair and smoth,
With stones square, of many diuers hew,
So well joyned, that for to say the soth,
All semed one, that none other knew,
And vnderneth the stremes new and new,
As siluer bright, springing in such a wise,
That whence it came, ye coud it not deuise.

"A little while was I all alone,
Beholding well this delectable place,
My felawship were comming euerychone,
So must we needs abide for a space,
Remembring of many diuers cace,
Of time passed, with sighes depe,
I set me downe, and there I fell aslepe.

"And as I slept, me thought ther came to me,
A gentill woman, metely of stature,
Of great worship she seemed for to be,
Atyred well, not high but by measure,
Her countenaunce full sad and demure,
Her colours blewe, all that she had vpon,
There came no mo but her selfe alone.

"Her gown wel was embraudred certainly,
With stones after her owne deuise,
In her purfill, her word by and by,
Bien et loyalement as I coud deuise,
Than praid I her in any maner wise,
That of her name I might haue remembrance,
She said she was called Perseuerance.

"So furthermore to speake was I bold,
Where she dwelled, I prayed her for to say,
And she againe full curtesly me told,
'My dwelling is, and hath be many a day,
With a lady:' 'what lady I you pray?'
'Of great estate, thus warne I you' (quod she)
'What call ye her?' 'her name is Loyalte.'

"'In what office stand ye, or in what degree,'
(Quod I to her) 'that wold I wete right faine,'
'I am' (quod she) 'vnworthy though I bee,
Of her chambre her husher in certaine,
This rodde I beare, as for a token plaine,
Like as ye know the rule in soch seruice,
Apertaining is to the same office.

" ' She charged me by her commandement,
To warn you, and your felawes euerichone,
That ye should come there as she is present,
For a counsaile, which shall be now anone,
Or seuen daies be commen and gone,
And furthermore, she bad that I should say,
Excuse there might be none, nor delay.

" ' Another thing was not forget behind,
Which in no wise I wold but ye knew,
Remembre well, and beare it in your mind,
All your felawes and ye must come in blew,
Eueriliche able, your maters for to sew:
With more, which I pray you thinke vpon,
Your words on your selues eueryehon.

" ' And be not abashed in no maner wise,
As many ben, in soch an high presence,
Make your request, as ye can best deuise,
And she gladly woll yeue you audience,
There is no grefe, nor no maner offence,
Wherein ye fele that your herte is displeased,
But with her help, right soue ye shal be eased.'

" ' I am right glad' (quod I) ' ye tell me this,
But there is none of vs that knoweth the way,'
' As of your way' (quod she) ' you shall not mis,
Ye shall haue to gide you day by day,
Of my felawes, I cannot better say,
Soch one as shall tell you the way full right,
And Diligence this gentilwoman hight.

" ' A woman of right famous gouernaunce,
And well cherished, I tell you in certaine,
Her felawship shall do you great pleasaunce,
Her porte is soch, her maners trew and plaine,
She with glad chere wold do her besie paine,
To bring you there, now farwel I haue done,'
' Abide' said I, ' ye may not go so sone.'

" ' Why so' (quod she) ' and I haue ferre to go,
To yeue warning in many diuers place,
To your felawes, and so to other mo,
And well ye wote I haue but litell space,'
' Nowe yet' (quod I) ' ye must tell me this cace,
If we shall any *men* vnto-vs call?'
' Not one' (quod she) ' may come amongs you all.'

" ' Not one?' than said I, ' eigh benedicite,
What haue I done, I pray you tell me that,'
' Now by my life, I trowe but well' (quod she)
But euer I can bilieue there is somewhat,
And for to say you trouth more can I not,
In questions I may nothing be to large,
I meddle no further than my charge.'

" ' Than thus' (quod I) ' do me to vnderstand,
What place is there this lady is dwelling,' [land,
' Forsoth' (quod she) ' and one sought all this
Fairer is none, though it were for a king,
Deuised well, and that in euery thing,
The toures hie full pleasaunt shall ye find,
With phanes fresh, turning with euery wind.

" ' The chambers and parlers of a sort,
With baie windowes, goodly as may bee thought,
As for daunsing, and other wise disport,
The galeries right well ywrought,
That well I wote, if ye were thider brought,
And take good hede thereof in euery wise,
Ye woll it thinke a very paradise.'

" ' What hight that place' (quod I) ' now say me that?'
' Pleasaunt Regard' (quod she) ' to tell you plain.'
' Of very trouth' (quod I) ' and wote ye what,
It may right well be called so certaine:
But furthermore this wold I wit right fain,
What I should do as soone as I come there,
And after whom I may best enquere?'

" ' A gentilwoman, a porter of the yate,
There shall ye find, her name is Countenance,
If ye so hap ye come early or late,
Of her wer good to haue some acquaintance,
She can you tell how ye shall you auance.
And how to come to her ladies presence,
To her wordes I rede ye geue credence.

" ' Now it is time I parte you fro,
For in good faith I haue great businesse.'
' I wote right well' (quod I) ' that it is so,
And I thanke you of your great gentilnesse,
Your comfort hath yeuen me hardinesse,
That now I shall be bold withouten faile,
To do after your aduice and good counsaile.'

" Thus parted she, and I left all alone.
With that I saw (as I beheld aside)
A woman come, a very goodly one,
And forth withal as I had her aspide,
Me thought anone it should be the gide:
And of her name anone I did enquere,
Full womanly she yaue me this answere:

" ' I am' (quod she) ' a simple creature,
Sent from the court, my name is Diligence,
As sone as I might come I you ensure,
I taried not after I had licence,
And now that I am come to your presence,
Looke what seruice I can do or may.
Commaund me, I can no further say.'

" I thanked her and praied her to come nere,
Because I would see how she was araid,
Her gown was blew dressed in good manere,
With her deuise, her word also that said,
Tant que je puis, and I was well apaid,
And than wist I withouten any more,
It was full true that I had herde before.

" Though we toke now before a little space,
' It were full good' (quod she) as I coud gesse,'
' How farre' (quod I) ' haue we vnto the place?'
' A daies journey' (quod she) ' but littel lesse,'
Wherefore I rede that we outward dresse,
For I suppose our felawship is past,
And for nothing I wold not we were the last.'

" Than departed we at the *springing* of the day,
And forth we went soft and easie pace,
Till at the last we were on our iourney,
So far outward, that we might see the place,
' Now let us rest,' quod I, ' a littel space,
And say we as devoutly as we can,
A pater noster for saint Iulian.'

" ' With al my herte I assent with good will,
Moch better shal we spede, whan we have doen,'
Than taried we, and said it euery dyl,
And whan the day was past farre after none
We saw a place, and thider came we sone,
Which round about was *closed with a wall*,
Seeming to me full like an hospital.

" There found I one had brought al mine aray,
(A gentil woman of mine acquaintaunce)
' I haue meruaile,' quod I, ' what maner way
Ye had knowlege of al this ordenaunce,'
' Yes yes,' quod she, ' I herde Perseueraunce,
How she warned her felawes euerichone,
And what aray ye shoulde haue upon.'

" ' Now for my loue,' quod I, ' this I you pray,
Sith ye haue take upon you all the paine,
That ye would helpe me on with mine aray,
For wit ye well, I wold be gone right faine.'
' All this praier needeth not certaine,'
Quod she again, ' come off and hie you sone,
And ye shall see anone it shall be done.'

" ' But this I dout me greatly, wote ye what,
That my felawes be passed by and gone:'
' I warne you,' quod she, ' that are they nat,
For here they shall assemble euerichone,
Notwithstanding I counsaile you anone,
Make you redy, and tary you no more,
It is no harme though ye be there before.'

" So than I dressed me in mine aray,
And asked her whether it were well or no,
' It is right well,' quod she, ' unto my pay,
Ye nede nat care to what place euer ye go.'
And whiles that she and I debated so,
Came Diligence and saw me all in blew,
' Sister,' quod she, ' right well broke ye your new.'

DISCRECION, PURUEIOUR.

" Than went we forth and met at auenture,
A yong woman, an officer seeming,
' What is your name,' quod I, ' good creature,'
' Discrecion,' quod she, ' without lesing,'
' And where,' quod I, ' is your most abiding,'
' I haue,' quod she, ' this office of purchace,
Chiefe purueiour that longeth to this place.'

ACQUAINTANCE, HERBYGER.

" ' Faire loue,' quod I, ' in all your ordenaunce,
What is her name that is the herbigere,'
' Forsoth,' quod she, ' her name is Acquaintaunce,
A woman of right gracious manere,'
Than thus, quod I, ' What strangers haue ye here'
' But few,' quod she, ' of high degree ne low,
Ye be the first, as ferforth as I know.'

COUNTENAUNCE, PORTER.

" Thus with tales we came streight to the yate,
This yong woman departed was and gone,
Came Diligence and knocked fast thereat,
' Who is without,' quod Countenaunce, anone,
' Truly,' quod I, ' faire sister here is one:'
' Which one,' quod she, and therewithal she lough,
' I Diligence, ye know me wel inough.'

" Than opened she the gate, and in we go,
With wordes faire she said full gentilly,
' Ye are welcome ywis, are ye no mo?'
' Nat one,' quod she, ' saue this woman and I,'
' Now than,' quod she, ' I pray you hertely,
Take my chambre for a while to rest,
Till your felawes come, I hold it best.'

" I thanked her, and forth we go euerichone,
Till her chambre without wordes mo,
Came Diligence and toke her leaue anone,
' Where euer ye list,' quod I, ' now may ye go,
And I thanke you right hertely also,
Of your labour, for which God do you mede.
I can no more, but Iesu be your spede.'

" Than Countenaunce asked me anone,
' Your felawship, where be they,' quod she,
' Forsoth,' quod I, ' they be comming euerichone,
But where they are I know no certainte,
Without I may hem at this window se,
Here will I stand awaiting euer among,
For well I wote they will not be long.'

" Thus as I stode musing full busily,
I thought to take good hede of her aray,
Her gowne was blewe, this wote I verely,
Of good facion, and furred wel with gray,
Upon her sleue her worde *this is no nay*,
Which said thus, *as my penne can endite,*
A moy, que je voy, written with letters white.

" Than forth withal she came streight to me,
' Your wordes,' quod she, ' fain would I that I knew,'
' Forsoth,' quod I, ' ye shall well know and see,
And for my worde I haue none, this is trewe,
It is inough that my clothing be blew,
As here before I had commaundement,
And so to do, I am right well content.

LARGESSE, STEWARD.

" ' But tell me this I pray you hertely,
The steward here, say me what is her name?'
' She hight Largesse I say you surely,
A faire lady and of right noble fame,
Whan ye her see ye will reporte the same,
And under her to bid you welcome all,
There is Belchier, marshal of the hall.'

" ' Now all this while that ye here tary still,
Your own maters ye may wel haue in mind,
But tel me this, have ye brought any bill?'
' Ye ye,' quod I, ' and els I were behind,
Where is there one tell me that I may find,
To whom that I may shew my maters plain:'
' Surely' (quod she) ' unto the chamberlain.'

REMEMBRAUNCE CHAMBERLAINE.

" ' The chamberlain' (quod I) ' say ye trewe,'
' Ye verely' (said she) ' by mine advise,
Be nat aferde, unto her lowly sewe,"
' It shall be done' (quod I) ' as ye devise,
But ye must know her name in any wise,'
' Trewly' (quod she) ' to shew you in substaunce,
Withouten faining her name is Remembraunce.

" ' The secretary she may not yet be forget,
For she doth right moche in euery thing,
Wherfore I rede, whan ye haue with her ymet,
Your matere hole tell her without faining,
Ye shall her find full good and full loving,'
' Tell me her name' (quod I) ' of gentlenesse,'
' By my good sothe' (quod she) ' Avisenesse.'

" ' That,' quod I, ' for her is passing good,
For every bill and sedule she must see,
Now good,' quod I, ' come stand there as I stood,
My felawes be comming yonder they be,'
' Is it a yape, or say ye soth,' quod she?
' In yape, nay nay, I say you for certain,
Se how they come togither twain and twain.'

" ' Ye say ful sothe,' quod she, ' that is no nay,
I see comming a goodly company,'
' They ben soch folke,' quod I, ' dare I say,
That list to love think it verely,
And for my love I pray you faithfully,
At any time, whan they upon me call,
That ye wol be good frende to hem all.'

" ' Of my frendship,' quod she, ' they shal not misse,
And for their ease to put thereto my paine.'
' God yeld it you,' quod I, ' but take you this,
How shal we know who is the chamberlaine,
That shall ye well know by her word certaine.
What is her worde sister, I pray you say,'
' (*Plus ne pourroye*) thus writeth she alway.'

" Thus as we stode togider she and I,
Euen at the yate my felawes were echone,
So met I hem (as me thought was goodly)
And badde hem welcome all by one and one,
Than came forth Countenaunce anone,
' Full hertely, faire sisters all,' quod she,
' Ye be right welcome into this countre.

" ' I counsaile you to take a litel rest
In my chambre, if it be your pleasaunce,
Whan ye be there, me thinke it for the best,
That I go in, and cal Perseveraunce,
Bicause she is of your aequaintaunce,
And she also will tell you every thing,
How ye shal be ruled of your comming.'

" My felawes all and I, by one advise
Were wel agreed, to do like as she said,
Than we began to dresse us in our gise,
That folke should say we were nat unpurueid,
And good wagers among us there we laid,
Which of us was atired most goodlest,
And of us all which should be praised best.

" The porter came and brought Perseverance,
She welcomed us in curteise maniere, [dance,
' Think ye not long,' quod she, ' of your atten-
I will go speke unto the herbigere,
That she purvey for your lodging here,
Than will I go unto the chamberlain,
To speke for you, and come anone again.'

" And whan she departed was and golle,
We saw folks comming without the walle,
So greate people that nombre coude we none,
Ladies they were, and gentelwomen all,
Clothed in blewe echone her worde withal,
But for to know hir word or hir devise,
They came so thick, that I ne might in no wise.

" With that anone came in Perseverance,
And where I stode, she came streight to me,
' Ye ben,' quod she, ' of mine old aequaintaunce,
You to enquere the bolder would I bee,
What word they bere eche after her degree,
I you pray tell it me in secrete wise,
And I shall keepe it close on warrantise.'

' We ben five ladies,' quod I, ' all in fere,
And gentlewoman foure in company,
Whan they begin to open hir mattere,
Than shall ye know hir wordes by and by,
But as for me I have none verely,
And so I tolde Countenaunce here before,
All mine array is blewe, what needeth more.'

" ' Now than,' quod she, ' I woll go againe,
That ye may have knowledge what ye shuld do,'
' In soth,' quod I, ' if ye wold take the paine,
Ye did right moch for us, if ye do so
The rather speed, the soner may we go,
Great coste alway there is in tarying,
And long to sewe it is a wery thing.'

" Than parted she, and came again anone, [laine,'
' Ye must,' quod she, ' come to the chamber-
' We be now redy,' quod I, ' everychone,
To folow you, whan euer ye list certaine,
We have none eloquence to tell you plaine,
Beseeching you we may be so excused,
Our trewe meaning, that it be not refused.'

" Than went we forth after Perseverance,
To see the prees it was a wonder eace,
There for to passe it was great combrance,
The people stode so thick in every place.
' Now stand ye still,' quod she, ' a littel space,
And for your ease somewhat I shall assay,
If I can make you any better way.'

" And forth she goeth, among hem everychone
Making a way, that we might thorough passe
More at our ease, and whan she had so done,
She beckend us to come, where as she was,
So after her we folowed more and las,
She brought us streight unto the chamberlain,
There left she us, and than she went again.

" We salued her as reason would it so,
Full humble besechinge her great goodnesse,
In our matters that we had for to do,
That she would be good lady and maistresse.
' Ye be welcome' (quod she) ' in sothfastnesse,
And see what I can do, you for to please,
I am redy, that may be to your ease."

" We folowed her vnto the chamber dore,
' Sisters' (quod she) ' come ye in after mee.'
But wete ye well, there was a paued flore,
The goodliest that any wight might see,
And furthermore about than loked wee,
On eche corner, and vpon euery wall,
Which was made of burel and cristall.*

" Wherein was grauen of stories many one,
First how Phillis, of womanly pite,
Died piteously for loue of Demophone,
Next after was the story of Tisbe,
How she slewe her self under a tree,
Yet saw I more, how in a right pitous caas,
For Antony was slaine Cleopatras.

" That other side was Hawes the shene,
Full untrewly disceiued in her baine.
There was also Annelida the queene,
Upon Arcite how sore she did complaine,
All these stories were grauen there certaine,
And many mo than I reherse you here,
It were too long to tell you all in fere.

" And bicause the walles shone so bright,
With fine umple they were al ouer sprad,
To the entent folke should not hurt hir sight,
And through it the stories might be rad,
Than further more I went, as I was lad,
And there I sawe without any faile,
A chaire set with full rich apparaile.

" And fiue stages, it was set fro the ground,
Of Cassidony full curiously wrought,
With foure pomelles of gold, and very round,
Set with saphirs, as good as coude be thought
That wot ye what, if it were through sought,
As I suppose, fro this country to Inde,
Another soch it were right hard to finde,

" For wete ye well, I was right nere that,
So as I durst, beholding by and by,
Aboue there was a rich cloth of estate,
Wrought with a needle ful straungely,
Her worde theron, and thus it said truely,
I endured to tell you in words few,
With great letters, the better I hem knew.

" Thus as we stode, a dore opened anone,
A gentilwoman, semely of stature,
Bering a mace, came out her selfe alone,
Sothly me thought a goodly creature,
She speake nothing to lowde, I you ensure,
Nor hastely, but with goodly warning,
' Make rome' (quod she) ' my lady is comming.'

" With that anone I saw Perseveraunce,
How she helde vp the tapet in her hand,
I saw also right in goodly ordinaunce,
This great lady within the tapet stand,
Comming outward, I wol ye vnderstand,
And after her a noble company,
I coude not tell the nombre sikerly.

" Of their names I wolde nothing enquere;
Further than soch as we wolde sewe vnto,
Save a lady which was the chauncellere,
Attemperaunce sothly her name was so,
For vs nedeth with her have moche to do
In our matters, and alway more and more,
And so forth to tell you furthermore.

" Of this lady her beauty to discrive,
My conning is to simple verely,
For never yet the daies of my live
So inly faire I have seene none truly,
In her estate assured vtterly,
There wanted naught, I dare well assure,
That longed to a goodly creature.

" And furthermore, to speake of her array,
I shall tell you the manner of her gowne,
Of cloth of gold, full rich it is no nay,
The colour blew, of right goodly fashioun,
In taberde wise the sleves hanging adoun,
And what purfill there was and in what wise,
So as I can, I shall it you devise.

" After a sort, the coller and the vent
Like as armine is made in purfeling,
With great pearles full fine and orient,
They were couched all after one worching,
With diamonds in steed of powdering,
The sleeves and purfell of assise,
They were made like in every wise.

" About her necke a sort of faire rubies
In white floures of right fine enamaile,
Upon her head set in the fairest wise
A cercle of great balais of entaile,
That in earnest to speake without faile,
For young and old, and every manner age,
It was a world to looken on her visage.

" Thus comming forth to sit in her estate,
In her presence we kneeled down everychone,
Presenting our billes, and ye wote what,
Full humbly she tooke hem by one and one,
Whan we had done, than came they all anone,
And did the same each after her manere,
Kneeling at ones, and rising all in fere.

" And whan this was don, and she set in her place,
The chamberlaine she did vnto her call,
And she goodly comming vnto her apace,
Of her entent knowing nothing at all, [wall,
' Uoid backe the prease' (quod she) ' vp to the
Make large roome, but looke ye do not tary,
And take these billets to the secretary.'

" The chamberlaine did her commaundment,
And came againe, as she was bid to do,
The secretary there being present,
The billes were delivered her also,
Not only ours, but many other mo
Than the lady with good advise againe,
Anone withall called her chamberlaine.

" ' We woll' (quod she) ' the first thing that ye do,
The secretary ye do make come anone
With her billes, and thus we will also,
In our presence she rede hem euerychone,
That we may take good advise theron
Of the ladies that ben of our counsaile,
Looke this be done withouten any faile.'

" Whan the chamberlain wist of her entent,
Anone she did the secretary call,
' Let your billes' (quod she) ' be here present,
My lady it will:'—' madame' (quod she) ' *I shall*,'
' And in presence she will ye hem call,'
' With good will I am ready' (quod she)
' At her pleasure, whan she commandeth me.'

" And vpon that was made an ordinaunce,
They that came first, her billes should be red,
Full gentilly than said Perseveraunce,
' Reason it will they were soonest sped,'
Anone withall, vpon a tapet spred
The secretary laid hem downe echone,
Our billes first she redde one by one.

" The first lady bearing in her devise,
Sans que jamays, thus wrote she on her bill,
Complaining sore, and in full pitous wise
Of promise made, with faithful herte and will,
And so broken ayenst all manner skill
Without desert, alwaies on her party
In this matter desiring a remedy.

" Her next folowing, her word was in this wise
Un sans cuanger, and thus she did complaine,
Though she had guerdoned for her service,
Yet nothing like as she that tooke the paine,
Wherfore she coud in no wise her restraine,
But in this case sue vntill her presence,
As reason would, to have recompence.

" So furthermore, to speake of other twaine,
One of hem wrote after her fantasie,
Onques puis leuer, and for to tell you plaine,
Her complaint was full pitous verely,
For as she said: there was great reason why,
As I can remember this matere,
I shall you tell the processe all in fere.

" Her bill was made complaining in her gise,
That of her joy her comfort and gladnesse
Was no surety, for in no manner wise,
She said therein no point of stablenesse,
Now ill, now wele, out of all sikernesse,
Full humbly desiring of her high grace,
Soone to shew her remedy in this case.

" Her fellaw made her bill, and thus she said,
In plaining wise there as she loved best,
Whether she were wroth or wele apaid,
She might not see whan she woll fainest,
And wroth she was in very earnest
To tell her word, as ferforth as I wote,
Entierement vostre, right thus she wrote,

" And vpon that she made a great request,
With herte and will and all that might be done,
As vntill her that might redresse it best,
For in her mind there might she find it soone
The remedy of that which was her boone,
Rehearsing that she had said before;
Beseeching her it might be so no more.

" And in like wise as they had done before,
The gentlewomen of our company
Put hir billes, and for to tell you more,
One of hem wote (*C'est sans dire*) verely,
And her matere hole to specifie,
Within her bill she put it in writing,
And what it said, ye shall have knowing.

" It said God wote, and that full pitously,
Like as she was disposed in her herte,
No misfortune that she tooke grevously,
All one to her was the joy and smert,
Sometime no thanke for all her good desert,
Other comfort she wanted none comming,
And so vsed, it greeued her nothing.

" Desiring her, and lowly beseeching
That she would for seke a better way,
As she that had been her daies living
Stedfast and trewe, and will be alway.
Of her felaw somewhat I shall you say,
Whose bill was red next forth withall,
And what it meant rehearsen you I shall.

" *En dieu est*, she wrote in her devise,
And thus she said withouten faile,
Her trouth might be take in no wise,
Like as she thought, wherefore she had mervaile,
For trouth somtime was wont to take availe
In every matter but all that is ago,
The more pity that it is suffred so.

" Much more there was, wherof she shuld complain,
But she thoght it too great encombraunce,
So much to write, and therfore in certain,
In God and her she put all her affiaunce,
As in her word is made a remembraunce,
Beseeching her, that she would in this cace
Shew unto her the favour of her grace.

" The third she wrote, rehersing her grevaunce,
Ye, wote ye what, a pitous thing to here,
For as me thoght she felt great displesaunce,
One might right wel perceive it by her chere,
And no wonder, it sate her passing nere,
Yet loth she was to put it in writing,
But need woll have course in every thing.

" *Soyes ensure*, this was her word certaine,
And thus she wrote in a little space,
There she loved, her labour was in vaine,
For he was set all in another place,
Full humbly desiring in that cace
Some good comfort her sorrow to appease,
That she might live more at hertes ease.

" The fourth surely me thought she liked wele,
As in her port, and in her behaving,
And *Bien moneste*, as ferre as I coud fele,
That was her word till her well belonging,
Wherefore to her she prayed above all thing,
Full hertely to say you in substaunce,
That she would send her good continuaunce."

" Ye have rehearsed me these billes all,
But now let see somwhat of your entent,"
" It may so hap, paraventure ye shall,
Now I pray you while I am here present.
Ye shall have knowledge parde what I ment,
But this I say in trouth, and make no fable,
The case it selfe is inly lamentable.

" And well I wote ye woll think the same,
Like as I say, whan ye have heard my bill,"
" Now good tel on, I here you by saint Iame,"
" Abide a while, it is not yet my will,
Yet must ye wete by reason and by skill,
Sith ye have knowledg of that was don before,
And thus it is said without words more.

" Nothing so lefe as death to come to me,
For finall end of my sorrowes and paine,
What should I more desire as seeme ye,
And ye knew all aforne it for certaine,
I wote ye would, and for to tell you plaine
Without her help, that hath all thing in cure,
I cannat thinke that it may long endure.

" As for my trouth, it hath be proued wele,
To say the sooth, I can say no more,
Of full long time, and suffered euerydele
In patience, and keepe it all in store
Of her goodnesse, beseeching her therefore,
That I might haue my thanke in such wise,
As my desert serueth of justise.

" Whan these billes were rad euerychone,
The ladies tooke a good aduisement,
And hem to answere by one and one,
She thought it was too much, in her entent,
Wherefore she yaue hem commaundement,
In her presence to come both one and all,
To yeue hem her answere in generall.

" What did she than, suppose ye verely?
She spake her self, and said in this manere:
' We haue well seene your billes by and by,
And some of hem pitous for to here,
We woll therefore ye know all this in fere,
Within short time, our court of parliment
Here shall be hold in our pallais present.

" 'And in all this, wherein you find you greued,
There shall ye find an open remedy,
In such wise as ye shall be releeued
Of all that ye rehearse here throughly:
As for the date ye shall know verely,
That ye may haue a space in your comming,
For Diligence shall it tell you by writing.'

" We thanked her in our most humble wise,
Our felawship ech one by one assent
Submitting vs lowly till her seruise,
For as we thought, we had our trauail spent
In such wise as we held vs content,
Than each of vs tooke other by the sleue,
And forthwithall, as we should take our leue.

" All suddainly the water sprang anone
In my visage, and therewithall I woke.
'Where am I now,' thought I, 'all this is gone,'
All mased, and vp I gan to loke,
With that anon I went and made this boke,
Thus simply rehearsing the substance,
Because it shuld not be out of remembrance."

" Now verely your dream is passing good,
And worthy to be had in remembraunce,
For though I stand here as long as I stood,
It should to me be none encombraunce,
I tooke therein so inly great pleasaunce.
But tell me now what ye the book do call,
For I must wete:"—" with right good will ye shall.

" As for this booke, to say you very right,
Of the name to tell you in certainte,
L'Assemble de Dames, thus it hight,
How thinke ye,"—" that name is good parde,"
" Now go farewell, for they call after me
My felawes all, and I must after sone,
Rede well my dreme, for now my tale is done."

THE

LAMENTATION OF MARY MAGDALEN.

This treatise is taken out of S. Origen, wherein Mary Magdalen lamenteth the cruel death of her Saviour Christ.

PLONGED in the wawe of mortal distresse,
Alas for wo, to whom shall I complain,
Or who shall deuoid this great heuinesse,
Fro me woful Mary, woful Magdalen,
My lord is gon, alas who wrought this tein
This sodain chance perseth my herte so depe,
That nothing can I do, but waile and wepe.

My lord is gone that here in graue was laied,
After his great passion and death cruell,
Who hath him thus again betraied?
Or what man here about can me tell
Where he is become, the prince of Israel,
Iesus of Nazareth, my ghostly succour,
My parfite loye and hope of all honour.

What creature hath him hence caried?
Or how might this so sodainly befall?
I would I had here with him taried,
And so should I haue had my purpose all,
I bought ointments full precious and royal,
Wherewith I hoped his corps to anointed,
But he thus gone my mind is dispointed.

While I therefore aduertise and behold,
This pitous chaunce here in my presence,
Full little maruaile though my herte be cold,
Considering lo, my lordes absence
Alas that I so full of negligence
Sould be found, because I come so late,
All men may say I am infortunate.

Cause of my sorow you may vnderstand
(Quia tulerunt dominum meum)
An other is, that I ne may fonde,
I wote nere, *ubi posuerunt eum,*
Thus I must bewayle, *dolorem meum,*
With hertie weping, I can no better deserue
Till death approch my herte for to kerue.

My herte oppresst with sodaine auenture,
By feruent anguish is be wrapped so,
That long this lyfe I may not endure,
Soch is my paine, soch is my mortall wo,
Neuerthelesse to what party shall I go,
In hope to find myne owne turtill true,
My liues ioy, my souerain Lorde Iesu.

Sith all my ioy that I call his presence,
Is thus remoued, now I am full of mone,
Alas the while I made no prouidence;
For this mishap, wherefore I sigh and grone,
Succour to find to what place might I gon,
Fain I would to some man my herte breake,
I not to whom I may complaine or speake.

Alone here I stand, full sory and full sad,
Which hoped to haue seen my lord and king,
Small cause haue I to be merie or glad,
Remembryng his bitterfull departing,
In this world is no creature liuing
That was to me so good and gracious,
His loue also than gold more precious.

Full sore I sigh, without comfort again,
There is no cure to my saluacion,
His brenning loue my herte so doth constrain,
Alas here is a wofull permutacion,
Whereof I find no joy nor consolacion,
Therefore my payne all onely to confesse,
With death I feare will end my heauinesse.

This wo and anguish is intollerable,
If I bide here life can I not sustaine,
If I go hence my paines be vncurable,
Where him to find, I know no place certain,
And thus I not of these things twaine,
Which I may take and which I may refuse,
My herte is wounded hereon to think or muse.

A while I shall stand in this mournyng,
In hope if any vision would appere,
That of my loue might tell some good tidyng,
Which into joy might chaunge my wepyng chere,
I trust in his grace and his mercy dere,
But at the least though I therewith me kill,
I shall not spare to waile and wepe my fill.

And if that I die in soch auenture,
I can no more but welcome as my chaunce,
My bones shall rest here in this sepulture,
My lyfe, my death, is at his ordinaunce,
It shall be told in euerlastyng remembraunce,
Thus to departe is to me no shame,
And also thereof I am nothyng to blame.

Hope against me hath her course ytake,
There is no more, but thus shall I die,
I see right well my Lorde hath me forsake,
But in my conceipt, cause know I none why,
Though he be farre hence and nothyng nye,
Yet my wofull herte after hym doth seeke,
And causeth teares to ren doun my cheeke.

Thinkyng alas I haue lost his presence,
Which in this world was all my sustenaunce,
I cry and call with herty diligence,
But there is no wight giueth attendance,
Me to certifie of myne enquirance,
Wherefore I will to all this world bewray
How that my lord is slaine and borne away.

Though I mourne it is no great wonder,
Sithe he is all my joy in speciall,
And now I thinke we be so farre asonder,
That him to see I feare neuer I shall,
It helpeth no more after him to call,
Ne after him to enquire in any coste,
Alas how is he thus gone and loste?

The Iewes I thinke full of misery,
Set in malice, by their busie cure,
With force and might with gileful trechery,
Hath entermined my Lordes sepulture,
And borne away that precious figure,
Leauing of it nothing, if they haue done so,
Marred I am, alas what shall I do.

With their vengeaunce insaciable,
Now haue they him entreated so,
That to reporte it is to lamentable,
They beate his body from toppe to the toe,
Neuer man was borne that felt soch woe,
They wounded him alas with all greuance,
The blood doun reiled in most habundance.

The bloody rowes stremed doune ouer all,
They him assayled so maliciously
With their scourges and strokes bestiall,
They spared not but smote incessantly,
To satisfie their malice they were full busie,
They spit in his face they smote here and there,
He groned full sore, and sweate many a tere.

They crouned him with thorns sharp and kene,
The veines rent, the blood ran doun apace,
With blood ouercome with both his iyen,
And bolne with strokes was his blessed face,
They him entreated as men without grace,
They kneeled to him, and made many a scorne,
Like hell-hounds they haue him all to torne.

Upon a mighty crosse in length and brede,
These turmentors shewed their cursednesse,
They nailed him without pitie or drede,
His precious blood brast out in largenesse,
They strained him along as men mercilesse,
The very jointes all, to mine apparence,
Riued asonder for their great violence.

All this I beholding with mine iyen twain,
Stode there beside with rufull attendaunce,
And euer me thought he being in that pain,
Loked on me with deadly countenaunce,
As he had said in his speciall remembraunce,
"Farwel Magdalen depart must I needs hens,
My herte is *Tanquam cera liquescens.*'

Which rufull sight whan I gan behold,
Out of my witte I almost destraught,
Tare my heere, my hands wrang and fold,
And of that sight my herte drank soch a draught,
That many a fall swouning there I caught,
I brused my body falling on the ground,
Whereof I fele many a greuous wound.

Than these wretches ful of al frowardnesse,
Gaue him to drinke eisel tempred with gall,
Alas, that poison full of bitternesse,
My loues chere caused than to appall,
And yet thereof might he not drinke at all,
But spake these wordes as him thought best,
"Father of Heauen, *Consummatum est.*"

Than kneeled I doune in paines outrage,
Clipping the crosse within mine armes twain,
His blood distilled doune on my visage,
My clothes eke the droppes did distain,
To haue died for him I would full fain,
But what should it auayle if I did so,
Sith he is, *Suspensus in patibulo.*

Thus my Lord full dere was all disguised
With blood, pain, and wounds many one,
His veines brast, his joynts all to riued,
Partyng asonder the flesh fro the bone,
But I saw he hing not there alone,
For *Cum iniquis deputatus est,*
Not like a man, but like a leprous beest.

A blind knight men called Longias,
With a speare aproched vnto my souerain,
Launsing his side full pitously alas,
That his precious herte he claue in twain,
The purple blood eke fro the hertes vain,
Doune railed right fast in most rufull wise,
With christal water brought out of Paradise.

Whan I beheld this wofull passion,
I wote not how by sodain auenture,
My herte was peersed with very compassion,
That in me remaymed no life of nature,
Strokes of death I felt without measure,
My deathis wound I caught with wo opprest,
And brought to point as my herte shuld brest.

The wound, herte, and blood of my darling,
Shall neuer slide fro my memoriall,
The bitter paines also of tourmenting,
Within my soule be grauen principall,
The speare alas that was so sharpe withall,
So thrilled my herte as to my felyng,
That body and soule were at departyng.

As soone as I might I releued vp againe,
My breth I coude not very well restore,
Felyng my selfe drowned in so great paine,
Both body and soul me thought were al to tore,
Uiolent falles greeued me right sore,
I wept, I bledde, and with my selfe I fared,
As one that for his life nothing had cared.

I lokyng vp to that rufull roode,
Saw first the visage pale of that figure,
But so pitous a sight spotted with bloode,
Saw neuer yet no liuyng creature,
So it exceeded the bounds of measure,
That mans mind with all his wits fiue,
Is nothing able that paine for to discriue.

Than gan I there mine armes to vnbrace,
Up liftyng my handes full mourningly,
I sighed and sore sobbed in that place,
Both Heuen and earth might haue herd me cry,
Weping, and said alas incessauntly,
" Ah my sweet herte, my ghostly paramour,
Alas I may nat thy body socour.

" O blessed lord, how fierse and how cruell
These cursed wights now hath thee slaine,
Keruing alas thy body eueridell,
Wound within wound, full bitter is thy pain,
Now wold that I might to thee attaine,
To nayle my body fast vnto thy tree,
So that of this payne thou might go free."

I can not report ne make no rehersaile
Of my demening with the circumstaunce,
But well I wote the speare with euery naile
Thirled my soule by inward resemblaunce,
Which neuer shall out of my remembraunce,
During my lyfe it woll cause me to waile
As oft as I remembre that bataile.

Ah ye Iewes, worse than dogges rabiate,
What moued you thus cruelly him to aray,
He neuer displeased you nor caused debate,
Your loue and true hertes he coueyted aye,
He preched, he teched, he shewed the right way,
Wherefore ye like tyrants wood and wayward,
Now haue him thus slaine for his reward.

Ye ought to haue remembred one thing special,
His fauour, his grace, and his magnificence,
He was your prince borne and lord ouer all,
How be it ye toke him in small reuerence,
He was full meke in suffring your offence,
Neuertheles ye deuoured him with one assent,
As hungry wolfs doth the lamb innocent.

Where was your pite, O people mercilesse,
Arming your self with falsheed and treason,
On my lord ye haue shewed your woodnesse,
Like no men, but beestes without reason,
Your malice he suffred all for the season,
Your payn woll come thinke it not to slack,
Man without mercy of mercy shall lack.

O ye traitours and maintainers of madnesse,
Unto your folly I ascribe all my paine,
Ye haue me depriued of joy and gladnesse,
So dealing with my lord and soueraine,
Nothing shuld I need thus to complaine,
If ye had liued in peace and tranquillite,
Whom ye haue slaine through your iniquite.

Farewel your noblenesse that somtime did rain,
Farewel your worship, glory, and fame,
Hereafter to liue in hate and disdaine,
Maruaile ye not for your trespace and blame,
Unto shame is tourned all your good name,
Upon you now woll wonder euery nation,
As people of most vile reputation.

These wicked wretches, these hounds of Hell,
As I haue told playne here in this sentence,
Were not content my dere loue thus to quel,
But yet they must embesile his presence,
As I perceyue by coiert violence
They haue him conueyed to my displeasure,
For here is lafte but naked sepulture.

Wherefore of trouth and rightful judgment,
That their malice againe may be acquited,
After my verdite and auisement,
Of false murdre they shall be endited,
Of theft also which shall not be respited,
And in all hast they shall be hanged and draw,
I woll my selfe plede this cause in the law.

Alas if I with trewe attendaunce,
Had still abidden with my lordes corse,
And kept it still with trewe perseueraunce,
Than had not befal this wofull deuorse,
But as for my paine welcome and no force,
This shal be my songe where so euer I go,
Departing is ground of all my wo.

I see right well now in my paines smart,
There is no wound of so greuous dolour,
As is the wound of my carefull herte,
Sith I haue lost thus my paramour,
All sweetnesse is tourned into sour,
Mirth to my herte nothing may conuey,
But he that beareth thercof both loke and key.

The ioy excellent of blissed Paradise,
May me alas in no wise comforte,
Song of angel nothing may me suffise,
As in min herte now to make disporte,
Al I refuse but that I might resorte
Unto my loue the well of goodliheed,
For whose longing I trowe I shal be deed.

Of painful labour and tourment corporal,
I make thereof none exception,
Paines of Hell I wol passe ouer all,
My loue to find in mine affection,
So great to him is my delectation,
A thousand times martred would I bee,
His blessed body ones if I might see.

About this world so large in all compasse,
I shal not spare to renne my life during,
My feet also shall not rest in one place,
Til of my loue I may heare some tiding,
For whose absence my hands now I wring,
To thinke on him cease shall neuer my mind,
O gentil Iesu where shall I thee find.

Ierusalem I wol serch place fro place,
Sion, the vale of Iosaphat also,
And if I find him not in all this place,
By mount Oliuet to Bethany wol I go,
These wayes wol I wander and many mo,
Nazareth, Bethleem, Mountana, Iude,
No trauaile shall me paine him for to see.

His blessed fase, if I might see and finde,
Serch I would euery coste and countrey,
The fardest part of Egipt or hote Inde,
Shulde be to me but a little iourney,
How is he thus gone or taken away,
If I knew the full trouth and certente,
Yet from this care released might I be.

Into wildernesse I thinke best to go,
Sith I can no more tydings of him here,
There may I my life lede to and fro,
There may I dwel, and to no man apere,
To towne ne village woll I come nere,
Alone in woods, in rockes, and in caues deep,
I may at mine own wil both waile and weep.

Mine eyen twaine withouten variaunce
Shall neuer cease, I promise faithfully
Where to weepe with great aboundaunce,
Bitter teares renning incessauntly,
The which teares medled full petously,
With the very blood euer shall renne also,
Expressing in mine herte the greenous wo.

Worldly fode and sustenaunce I desire none,
Such liuing as I find soch woll I take,
Rootes that growen on the craggy stone,
Shall me suffice with water of the lake,
Than thus may I say for my lords sake,
Fuerunt mihi lachrymæ meæ
In deserto panes, die ac nocte.

My body to clothe it maketh no force,
A mourning mantel shal be suffieient,
The grewous woundes of his pitous corse,
Shal be to me a full royal garnement,
He departed thus I am best content,
His crosse with nailes and scourges withall,
Shal be my thought and paine speciall.

Thus wol I liue as I haue here told,
If I may any long tyme endure,
But I fere death is ouer me so bold,
That of my purpose I can not be sure,
My paynes encrease without measure,
For of long lyfe who can say any reason,
All thing is mortal and hath but a season.

I sigh full sore and it is ferre yfet,
Mine herte I feele now bledeth inwardly,
The blody teares I may in no wise let,
Sith of my paine I find no remedie,
I thanke God of all if I now die,
His will perfourmed I hold me content,
My soule let him haue that hath it me lent.

For lenger to endure it is intollerable,
My woful herte is inflamed so huge,
That no sorow to myne is comparable,
Sith of my mind I finde no refuge,
Yet I him require as rightful iudge,
To deuoide fro me the inwarde sorow,
Lest I liue not to the next morow.

Within mine herte is impressed full sore,
His royal forme, his shape, his semelines,
His porte, his chere, his goodues euermore,
His noble persone with all gentilnes,
He is the well of all partfitnes,
The very redemer of all mankind,
Him loue I best with herte, soule, and mind.

In his absence my paynes full bitter be,
Right well I may it fele now inwardly,
No wonder is though they hurte or slee me,
They cause me to crie so rufully,
Mine herte oppressed is so wonderfully,
Onely for him which so is bright of hue,
Alas I trowe I shall him neuer see.

My ioy is translate full farre in exile,
My mirth is chaunged into paynes cold,
My lyfe I thinke endureth but a while,
Anguish and payne is that I behold,
Wherfore my hands thus I wring and fold,
Into his graue I loke, I call, I pray,
Death remaineth, and life is borne away.

Now must I walke and wander here and there,
God wot to what partes I shall me dresse,
With quaking herte, weepyng many a tere,
To seek out my loue and all my sweetnes,
I wolde he wist what mortall heuines
About mine herte reneweth more and more,
Than wold he nat keepe pite long in store.

Without him I may not long endure,
His loue so sore worketh within my brest,
And euer I wepe before this sepulture,
Sighing full sore as mine herte should brest,
During my lyfe I shall obtayne no rest,
But mourne and wepe where that euer I go,
Making complaint of al my mortall wo.

Fast I crie but there is no audience,
My comming hider was him for to please,
My soule opprest is here with his absence,
Alas he list not to set mine herte in ease,
Wherefore to payne my self with al disease,
I shal not spare till he take me to grace,
Or els I shall sterue here in this place.

Ones if I might with him speake,
It were al my ioy, with parfite pleasaunce,
So that I might to him my herte breake,
I shuld anone deuoid al my greuaunce,
For he is the blisse of very recreaunce,
But now alas I can nothing do so,
For in steed of ioy naught haue I but wo.

His noble corse within mine hertes rote,
Deep is graued which shall neuer slake,
Now is he gone to what place I ne wote,
I mourne, I wepe, and al is for his sake,
Sith he is past, here a vowe I make,
With hertely promise, and thereto I me bind,
Neuer to cease till I may him find.

Unto his mother I thinke for to go,
Of her haply some comfort may I take,
But one thing yet me feareth and no mo,
If I any mencion of him make,
Of my wordes she wold trimble and quake,
And who coud her blame she hauing but one,
The son borne away, the mother wol mone.

Sorowes many hath she suffred trewly,
Sith that she first conceiued him and bare,
And seuen things there be most specially,
That drowneth her herte in sorrow and care,
Yet lo, in no wise may they compare,
With this one now, the which if she knew,
She wold her paines euerichone renew.

Great was her sorrow by mennes saying,
Whan in the temple Simeon Justus,
Shewing to her, these words prophesiyng,
Tuam animam pertransibit gladius,
Also whan Herode that tyrant furious,
Her childe pursued in euery place,
For his life went neither mercy ne grace.

She mourned whan she knew him gone,
Full long she sought or she him found ayen,
Whan he went to death his crosse him vpon,
It was to her sight a rewful paine,
Whan he hong thereon, between theues twaine
And the speare vnto his herte thrust right,
She swouned, and to the ground there pight.

Whan deed and bloody in her lappe lay
His blessed body, both hands and fete all tore,
She cried out and said, now wel away,
Thus araide was neuer man before,
Whan hast was made his body to be bore
Unto his sepulture, here to remaine,
Unnethes for wo she coude her sustaine.

These sorowes seuen, like swerds euery one,
His mothers herte wounded fro syde to syde,
But if she knew her sonne thus gone,
Out of this world she shuld with death ride,
For care she coude no lenger here abide,
Hauing no more joy nor consolacioun,
Than I here standing in this stacioun.

Wherefore her to see I dare nat presume,
Fro her presence I wol my selfe refraine,
Yet had I leuer to die and consume,
Than his mother should haue any more pain,
Neuertheles her sonne I would see ful fain,
His presence was very ioy and sweetnes,
His absence is but sorrow and heuines.

There is no more, sith I may him nat mete,
Whom I desire aboue all other thing,
Nede I must take the sour with the swete,
For of his noble corse I here no tiding,
Full oft I cry, and my hands wring,
Myne herte alas relenteth all in paine,
Which will brast both senew and vaine.

Alas how vnhappie was this woful hour,
Wherein is thus mispended my seruice,
For mine intent and eke my true labour,
To none effect may come in any wise.
Alas I thinke if he doe me dispise,
And list not take my simple obseruaunce,
There is no more, but death is my finaunce,

I haue him called, *Sed non respondet mihi,*
Wherfore my mirth is tourned to mourning
O dere Lord *Quid mali feci tibi,*
That me to comfort I find no erthly thing,
Alas, haue compassion of my crying,
Yf fro me, *Faciem tuam abscondis,*
There is no more, but *Consumere me vis.*

Within myne herte is grounded thy figure,
That all this worlds horrible tourment,
May it not asswage, it is so without measure,
It is so brenning, it is so feruent,
Remember Lord I haue bin diligent,
Euer thee to please onely and no mo,
Myne herte is with thee where so euer I go,

Therefore my dere darling, *Trahe me post te,*
And let me not stand thus desolate,
Quia non est, qui consoletur me,
Myne herte for thee is disconsolate,
My paines also nothing me moderate,
Now if it list thee to speake with me aliue,
Come in hast, for my herte asonder will riue.

To thee I profer lo my poore seruice,
Thee for to please after mine owne entent,
I offer here, as in deuout sacrifice,
My boxe replete with pretious oyntment,
Myne eyen twaine, weeping sufficient,
Myne herte with anguish fulfilled is alas
My soule eke redy for loue about to pas.

Naught els haue I thee to please or pay,
For if mine herte were gold or pretious stone,
It should be thine without any delay,
With hertely chere thou shuld haue it anone,
Why suffrest thou me then to stand alone,
Thou hast I trow my weeping in disdaine,
Or els thou knowest nat what is my paine.

If thou withdraw thy noble daliaunce,
For ought that euer I displeased thee,
Thou knowest right wel it is but ignorance,
And of no knowledge for certainte,
If I haue offended Lord forgiue it me,
Glad I am for to make full repentaunce,
Of all thing that hath bin to thy greuaunce:

Myne herte alas swelleth within my brest
So sore opprest with anguish and with paine,
That all to peeces forsooth it woll brest,
But if I see thy blessed corse againe,
For life ne death I can nat me refraine,
If thou make delay thou maist be sure
Myne herte woll leape into this sepulture.

Alas my Lord, why farest thou thus with me,
My tribulation yet haue in mind,
Where is thy mercy? where is thy pite?
Which euer I trusted in thee to find,
Sometime thou were to me both good and kind,
Let it please thee my prayer to accept,
Which with teares I haue here bewept.

On me thou oughtest to haue very routh,
Sith for thee is all this mourning,
For sith I to thee yplighted first my trouth,
I neuer varied with discording,
That knowest thou best, my owne darling,
Why constrainest thou me thus to waile?
My wo forsooth can thee nothing availe.

I haue endured without variaunce,
Right as thou knowest, thy louer iust and trew,
With herte and thought aye at thine ordinance,
Like to the saphire alway in one hew,
I neuer chaunged thee for no new,
Why withdrawest thou my presence,
Sith all my thought is for thine absence.

With herte intier, sweet Lord I crie to thee,
Encline thine eares to my petition,
And come, *Velociter exaudi me,*
Remember mine hertes dispositioun,
It may not endure in this conditioun,
Therefore out of these paines, *Libera me,*
And where thou art, *Pone me juxta te.*

Let me behold, O Jesu thy blissed face.
Thy faire glorious angellike visage,
Bow thine eares to my complaint, alas,
For to conuey me out of this rage,
Alas my lord, take fro me this dommage,
And to my desire for mercy condiscend,
For none but thou may my greuaunce amend.

Now yet good Lord, I thee beseech and pray,
As thou raised my brother Lazarons
From death to life, the fourth day
Came ayen in body and soule precious:
As great a thing maist thou shew vnto vs,
Of thy selfe, by power of thy godhead,
As thou did of him, lying in graue dead.

Mine herte is wounded with thy charite,
It brenneth, it flameth incessaintly,
Come my dear Lord, *Ad adjuvandum me*,
Now be not long, my paine to multiplie,
Least in the mean time I depart and die:
In thy grace I put both hope and confidence,
To do as it pleaseth thy high magnificence.

Floods of death, and tribulations,
Into my soule I feele entred full deepe,
Alas that here is no consolations,
Euer I waile, euer I mourne and weepe,
And sorow hath wounded mine herte ful deepe,
O deare lone, no maruaile though I die,
S. gittæ tuæ infixæ sunt mihi.

Wandring in this place, as in wildernesse,
No comfort haue I, ne yet assurannce,
Desolate of ioy, replete with faintnesse,
No answere receiuing of mine enquirannce,
Mine herte also greued with displeasaunce,
Wherefore I may say, *O Deus, O Deus,*
Non est dolor sicut dolor meus.

Mine herte expresseth, *Quod dilexi multum,*
I may not endure though I would faine,
For now *Solum superest sepulchrum,*
I know it right well by my huge paine,
Thus for loue I may not life sustaine,
But O God, I muse what ayleth thee,
Quod sic repente præcipitas me.

Alas, I see it wol none otherwise be,
Now must I take my leaue for euermore,
This bitter paine hath almost discomfite me,
My loues corse I can in no wise restore,
Alas to this wo that euer I was bore,
Here at this tombe now must I die and starue,
Death is about my herte for to carue.

My testament I woll begin to make,
To God the father my soule I commend,
To Jesu my loue, that died for my sake,
My herte and all both I giue and send,
In whose loue my life maketh end,
My body also, to this monument,
I here bequeath both boxe and ointment.

Of all my wills, lo now I make the last,
Right in this place, within this sepulture,
I woll be buried whan I am dead and past,
And vpon my graue I woll haue this scripture:
"Here within resteth a ghostly creature,
Christs true louer, Mary Magdalaine,
Whose herte for loue brake in peeces twaine."

Ye vertuous women, tender of nature,
Full of pitie and of compassion,
Resort I pray you vnto my sepulture,
To sing my dirige with great deuotion,
Shew your charitie in this condition,
Sing with pitie, and let your hertes weepe,
Remembring I am dead and layd to sleepe.

Than whan ye begin to part me fro,
And ended haue your mourning obseruaunce,
Remember wheresoeuer that ye go,
Alway to search and make due enquerence
After my loue, mine hertes sustenaunce,
In euery towne and in euery village,
If ye may here of this noble image.

And if it happe by any grace at last,
That ye my true loue find in any cost,
Say that his Magdaleine is dead and past,
For his pure loue hath yeelded vp the ghost,
Say that of all thing I loued him most,
And that I might not this death eschew,
May paines so sore did euer renew.

And in token of loue perpetual,
Whan I am buried in this place present
Take out mine herte, the very root and al,
And close it within this boxe of ointment,
To my deare loue make thereof a present,
Kneeling downe with words lamentable,
Do your message, speake faire and tretable.

Say that to him my selfe I commend
A thousand times, with herte so free,
This poore token say to him I send,
Pleaseth his goodnesse to take it in gree,
It is his own of right, it is his fee
Which he asked, whan he said long before,
Giue me thy herte, and I desire no more.

Adue my Lord, my loue so faire of face,
Adue my turtle doue, so fresh of hew,
Adue my mirth, adue all my solace,
Adue alas my sauiour Lord Jesu,
Adue the gentillest that euer I knew,
Adue my most excellent paramour,
Fairer than rose, sweeter than lilly flour.

Adue my hope of all pleasure eternall,
My life, my wealth, and my prosperitie,
Mine herte of gold, my perle orientall,
Mine adamant of perfite charitie,
My cheefe refuge, and my felicitie,
My comfort, and all my recreation,
Farewell my perpetuall saluation.

Farewell mine emperour celestiall,
Most beautifull prince of all mankind,
Adue my Lord, of herte most liberall,
Farewell my sweetest, both soule and mind,
So louing a spouse shall I neuer find,
Adue my soueraine, and very gentilman,
Farewell dere herte, as hertely as I can.

Thy words eloquent flowing in sweetnesse,
Shal no more alas my mind recomfort,
Wherfore my life must end in bitternesse,
For in this world shall I neuer resort
To thee, which was mine heauenly disport,
I see alas it woll none other be,
Now farewell the ground of all dignitie.

Adue the fairest that euer was bore,
Alas I may not see your blessed face,
Now welaway that I shall see no more
Thy blessed visage, so replete with grace,
Wherein is painted my perfite solace,
Adue mine hertes root and all for euer,
Now farewell, I must from thee disseuer.

My soule for anguish is now full thursty,
I faint right sore for heauinesse,
My lord, my spouse, *Cur me dereliquisti?*
Sith I for thee suffer all this distresse,
What causeth thee to seeme thus mercilesse,
Sith it thee pleaseth of me to make an end,
(In Manus tuas) my spirit I commend.

FINIS.

THE PROLOGUE

TO THE REMEDY OF LOVE.

Seeing the manifolde inconuenience
Falling by vnbrideled prosperitie,
Which is not tempred with mortal prudence,
Nothing more wealthy than youths freeltie,
Moued I am, both of right and equitie,
To youths wele somewhat to write
Whereby he may himselfe safecondite.

First I note, as thing most noyous
Unto youth a greeuous maladie,
Among us called loue encombrous,
Uexing yong people straungelie,
Oft by force causeth hem to die,
Age is eke turmented by loue,
Bineath the girdle, and not aboue.

Wherfore this werk, which is right laborous
For age me need nat in hond to take,
To youth me oweth to be obsequious,
Now I begin thus to worke for his sake,
Which may the ferueuce of loue aslake
To the louer, as a mitigatiue,
To him that is none a preseruatiue.

That mighty lord which me gouerneth,
Youth I meane, measure if I pace
In euery matter which him concerneth,
First, as is behouefull, I woll aske grace,
And forthwithall in this same place,
Ere I begin, I woll kneel and sa
These few words; and him of helpe pray.

" Flouring youth, which hast auauntage
In strength of body, in lust and beaute,
Also a precelling hast aboue age
In many a singular commodite,
Howbeit, one thing he hath beyond thee,
To thy most profite and greatest auaile,
Which shuld the conduit, I mean sad counsaile.

" And yet good lord, of a presumption,
I nill depraue thy might and deitie,
I liue but vnder thy protection,
I am thy subiect, I weare thy liuerie,
For thou art ground of my prosperitie,
And freshest floure of all my garland,
My singular aid, as I well vnderstand.

" But as he that oweth his lord best seruise,
And entire faith, his honour to support,
Right so I speake, and in none other wise,
I knowledge my selfe one of the least sort
Of thy seruaunts, to our elders comfort,
Draw sad counsaile to thee if thou list,
Thee and thy power, who may than resist."

" Feeon age, vnder words few,
And his erronious opinion,
What spekest of him, which saith most vntrue,
All youth to be of ill disposition,
Dampneth vs all without exceptioun,
And for a colerable auauntage,
He saith in him resteth counsaile sage.

" Well may sad counsaile in him rest,
But yet his deeds ben ferre therefro,
He may say with our parish priest,
' Do as I say, but not as I do,'
For I my selfe know one or two,
Well striken in age, for neighbourhed
Woll to their neighbours wiues bed.

" He will in presence of the young man
Her clippe and kisse, ye and doune lay,
To bleare his eye, thus he saieth than,
' O suffer ye old Morel to play,
Now haue I doen that I can or may,'
Thus he saieth her husband to queme,
That he nor no man should not misdeme.

" In word nor deed nedeth him not be coy,
It is impossible that he doe amisse,
If the yong man speake, anone he saith, ' Boy,
To rebuke age, beseemeth thee not iwis,'
Thus his old face aye his warrant is,
All is in him sleight and subtiltee,
And ferre from reason I tell thee.

" And shortly age is not aboue me,
Age is impotent, and of no resistence,
Age vnweldie may not fight nor flee,
What were age, without my defence
(Sad counsaile saist thou giueth him assistance)
Reason is freshest where that I am,
Wherefore in thy saying thou art to blame.

" Sith reason to me is rather accompanied
Than vnto age, whith is the opinion
Of euery wise man not to be denied,
And sith sad counsaile proceedeth of reason,
Sad counsaile in me hath his cheef mansion,
This is no nay, but what is the end
Of this thy suasion, what doest entend."

" Age to compare vnto thine excellence,
I nill presume him so to dignifie,
Ye be not egall, howbeit experience
Him auauntageth, for she most certainly,
Him teacheth what thing to him is contrary,
And oft to foresee it, and warely eschew
Which thou neuer assaidest yet nor knew.

" Experience maketh a man most certaine
Of any thing yearthly, and of necessite,
Sad counsaile requireth certaintie plaine,
So ferre to moue thus whereto need we
But to my purpose, as thou commandest me,
Shortly mine entent is thus, and none other,
Under thy license to counsaile my brother."

" How shuldest thou giue any counsail so yong.
Lacking experience vnto thine owne speach,
I report me, I wote well as for thy tong
Wil serue thee right wel, but than for to teach,
I doubt me lest that thy wit woll not reach,
Youth and experience thou saist be not conuert,
How shouldest thou than teach well vnexpert."

"Scripture witnesseth, that God will oft shitte
Fro the hie witted man, and shew it to the child,
To him I meane that of his own witte
Presumeth not, but is debonaire and mild,
By counsaile I entend vertue for to bild,
Which of mine elders part haue I borowed,
And part of experience, which I haue sorowed."

"Wel than, if it be as thou lettest fare,
Shew forth thy doctrine, be not agast,
I woll thee support, looke thou not spare,
Maugre age, though he frete or gnast,
To aske age counsaile herein, were but wast,
Boldely begin, go forth to the processe,
Feare not sith thou art of such sureneese."

"Graunt mercie lord, sith it thee doeth like
To license me, now I woll dare boldly
Assail my purpose, with scriptures autentike,
My werke woll I ground, vnderset, and fortefie,
Aspire my beginning, O thou wood furie,
Alecto, with thy susters, and in especiall
To the mother of ielousie Juno I call."

EXPLICIT PROLOGUS.

THE REMEDY OF LOVE.

This book, drawn for the most part out of the Proverbs of Solomon, is a warning to take heed of the deceitful company of women.

THIS werke who so shall see or rede,
Of any incongruitie do me not impeche,
Ordinately behoueth me first to procede
In deduction thereof, in manner as the leche
His patients siknesse oweth first for to seche,
The which known, medicin he should applie,
And shortly as he can, than shape a remedie.

Right so by counsaile, willing thee to exhort,
O yong man prosperous, which doth abound
In thy floures of lust belongeth on thee sort,
Me first to consider what is root and ground
Of thy mischeefe, which is plainly found,
Woman fareed with fraud and deceit,
To thy confusion most allectiue bait.

Fly the miswoman, least she thee deceiue,
Thus saith Salomon, which taught was fully
The falshed of women in his days to conceiue,
The lips of a strumpet ben sweeter than hony,
Her throte he saith soupled with oil of flatery,
Howbeit, the end and effect of all
Bitterer is than any wormwood or gall.

Fly the miswoman, louing thy life,
Ware the straungers bland eloquence,
Straunge I call her that is not thy wife,
Of her beauty haue no concupiscence,
Her countenance pretending beneuolence,
Beware her signes, and eye so amiable,
Hold it for ferme, they ben deceiuable.

Lo an ensample what women be
In their signes and countenaunce shortly,
I woll shew thee how louers three
Loued one woman right entirely,
Ech of them knew others maladie,
Wherefore was all their daily labour,
Who coud approch next in her fauour.

At sundry seasons, as fortune requireth,
Severally they came to see her welfare,
But ones it happened, loue them so fireth,
To see their lady they all would not spare,
Of others coming none of them were ware,
Till all they mette, whereas they in place
Of hir lady saw the desired face.

To supper set, full smally they eat,
Full sober and demure in countenaunce,
For there taried none of hem for any meat,
But on his lady to giue attendaunce,
And in secret wise some signifiaunce
Of loue to haue, which perceiuing she,
Fetely executed thus her properte.

In due season, as she alway espied
Euery thing to execute conueniently,
Her one louer first friendly she eied,
The second she offred the cup courtesly,
The third she gaue token secretly,
Underneath the bord she trade on his foot,
Through his entrailes tikled the herte root.

By your leaue, might I here ask a question
Of you my maisters, that sewe loues trace,
To you likely belongeth the solution,
Which of these three stood now in grace?
Clerely to answere ye would ask long space,
The matter is doubtfull and opinable,
To acertaine you I woll my selfe enable.

Of the foresaid three my selfe was one,
No man can answere it better than I,
Hertely of vs beloued was there none,
But Wattes packe we bare all by and by,
Which at last I my selfe gan aspie,
In time as me thought than I left the daunce,
O thoughtfull herte, great is thy greuaunce.

Hence fro me hence, that me for to endite
Halpe aye here afore, O ye Muses nine,
Whilom ye were wont to be mine aid and light,
My penne to direct, my braine to illumine,
No lenger alas may I sewe your doctrine,
The fresh lustie metres, that I wont to make
Haue been here afore, I vtterly forsake.

Come hither thou Hermes, and ye furies all,
Which fer ben vnder vs, nigh the nether pole,
Where Pluto reigneth, O king infernall,
Send out thine arpies, send Anguish and Dole,
Miserie and Wo, leaue ye me not sole,
Of right be present must Pain and eke Turment,
The pale Death beseemeth not to be absent.

To me now I call all this lothsome sort,
My pains t'encrease, my sorows to augment,
For worthie I am to be bare of all comfort,
Thus sith I haue consumed and mispent
Not only my days, but my 5 fold talent,
That my Lord committed me, I can't recompence
I may not too derely abie my negligence.

By the path of penaunce yet woll I reuert
To the well of grace, mercy there to fetch,
Despisest not God the meeke contrite herte
Of the cock crow, alas that I would not retch,
And yet it is not late in the second wetch,
Mercy shall I purchase by incessaunt crying,
The mercies of our Lord euer shall I sing.

But well maist thou wail wicked woman,
That thou shuldest deceiue thus any innocent
And in recompence of my sinne, so as I can,
To al men wol I make and leue this monument,
In shewing part of thy falshed is mine entent,
For all were too much, I cannot well I wote,
The cause sheweth plainly he that thus wrote.

If all the yearth were parchment scribable,
Speedie for the hand, and all manner wood
Were hewed and proportioned to pens able,
All water inke, in damme or in flood,
Euery man being a parfit scribe and good,
The cursednesse yet and deceit of women
Coud not be shewed by the meane of pen.

I flie all odious resemblaunces,
The deuils brond call women I might,
Whereby man is encensed to mischaunces,
Or a stinking rose that faire is in sight,
Or deadly empoyson, like that sugar white,
Which by his sweetnesse causeth man to tast,
And sodainly sleeth and bringeth him to his last.

It is not my manner to vse such languge,
But this my doctrine, as I may lawfully,
I woll holly ground with authoritie sage,
Willing both wisedome, and vertue edifie,
Wine and women into apostasie,
Cause wisemen to fall, what is that to say,
Of wisedome cause them to forget the way.

Wherefore the wiseman doth thee aduise,
In whose words can be found no leasing,
With the straunger to sit in no wise,
Which is not thy wife, fall not in clipping
With her, but beware eke of her kissing,
Keep with her in wine no altercation,
Least that thine herte fall by inclination.

May a man thinkest hide and safe lay
Fire in his bosome, without empairement,
And brenning of his clothes? or whider he may
Walke on hote coles, his feet not brent?
As who saith nay, and whereby is ment
This foresaid prouerbe and similitude,
But that thou ridde thee plainly to denude.

From the flatterers forgetting her gide,
The gide of her youth, I mean Shamefastnes,
Which shuld cause her maidenhead to abide,
Her Gods behest eke she full recheles,
Not retching, committeth it to forgetfulnes,
Neither God ne shame in her hauing place,
Needs must such a woman lacke grace.

And all that neigh her in way of sinne
To tourne, of grace shall lacke the influence,
The pathes of life no more to come in,
Wherefore first friend thee with Sapience,
Remembring God, and after with Prudence,
To thine owne weale that they thee keepe,
Unto thine herte least her words creepe.

In his book where I take my most ground,
And in his prouerbes, sage Salomon
Telleth a tale, which is plainly found
In the fifth chapiter, whider in deed don,
Or meekely feined to our instruction,
Let clerkes determine, but this am I sure,
Much like thing I haue had in vre.

"At my window" saith he "I looked out,
Fair yoog people, where I saw many,
Among hem all, as I looked about,
To a yong man fortuned I lent mine eye,
Estraunged from his mind it was likely,
By the street at a corner nigh his owu hous,
He went about with eye right curious.

"Whan that the day his light gan withdraw,
And the night approched in the twilight,
How a woman came and met him I saw,
Talking with him vnder shade of the night,
'Now blessed be God' (quod she) 'of his might,
Which hath fulfilled mine hertes desire,
Aslaked my paines, which were hote as fire.'"

And yet mine authour, as it is skill,
To follow, I must tell her arrayment,
She was full nice, soules like to spill,
As nice in countenaunce yet as in garment,
For jangling she was of rest impatient,
Wandring still, in no place she stode,
But restlesse now, and now out she yode.

Now in the house, now in the strete,
Now at a corner she standeth in await,
Incessauntly busie her pray for to gete,
To bring to the lure whom she doth lait.
Now where I left, vnto my matter strait
I woll tourne againe, how she him mette,
Sweetly kissed, and friendly hem grette.

With words of curtesie many and diuerse,
Right as in part I haue before told,
Now as I can, I purpose to reherse,
How she flattering said with visage bold,
"I haue made vowes and offerings manifold
For thy sake, O mine herte, O my loue dere,
This day I thanke God all performed were.

"Therefore I came out, and made thus astart,
Uery desirous your welfare to see,
Now I haue seene you, pleased is mine herte,
In faith shall neue haue my loue but ye,
As true as I am to you, be to me,
I pray you hertely dere herte come home,
No man should be to me so welcome.

"And in good faith, the sooth for to say,
Your comming to me ran in my thought,
Herke in your care, my bed fresh and gay,
I haue behanged with tapettes new bought,
From Egipt, and from far countries brought,
Steined with many a lustie fresh hue,
Exceeding gold or jasper in value.

"My chamber is strowed with mirre and insence,
With sote sauoring aloes, and with sinamome,
Breathing an aromatike redolence,
Surmounting olibane, in any mans dome,
Ye shall betweene my breasts rest if ye come,
Let vs haue our desired halsing,
For we may safe be till in the morning.

" Mine husband is not at home, he is went
Forth in his journey, a farre way hence,
A bagge with money he hath with him hent,
As him thought needfull for his expence,
Unto my word giue faith and credence,
Now is the Moone yong, and of light dull,
Ere he come home, it woll be at the full."

Thus craftely hath she him besette
With her lime roddes, panter, and snare,
The selie soule caught in her nette,
Of her sugred mouth alas nothing ware,
Thus is he left gracelesse and bare
Of helpe, comfort, and ghostly succour,
And furthermore, as saith mine authour.

As a beast led to his death, doth paut,
This yong man followeth her in that stound,
And as a wanton lambe full ignorant,
How he is pulled and drawen to be bound,
Unto the time he hath his deaths wound,
And like a bird that hasteth to the grin,
Not knowing the perill of his life therein.

" Now gentle sonne," saith Salomon, " take hede
My words in thy breast keepe and make fast,
Let her not thy mind in her waies mislede,
Be not deceiued, lese not thy tast,
Many hath she wounded, many doune cast,
Many strong by her hath lost their breath,
Her waies, waies of hell leading to death."

And in this little narration precedent,
The womans manifold gilt I attend,
The yong man alas how she hath shent,
Deceiued her husband, her own next friend,
In these both, her God she doth offend,
To break her spousail, to her is of no weight.
Furdermore to shew womans craft and sleight;

A woman at her dore sate on a stall,
To see folke passe by streets of the cite,
With eye and countenance eke she gan call,
" If there be any prety one come nere to me,
Come hither ye piggesnye, ye little babe,"
At last she said to a yong man lertelesse,
Of her deceit vnware and defencelesse:

" Much sweeter" she saith, " more acceptable
Is drinke, whan it is stollen priuely,
Than whan it is taken in forme auowable:
Bread hid and gotten jeoperdously,
Must needs be sweet, and semblably,
Uenison stolne is aye the sweeter,
The ferther the narrower fet the better."

And whom this woman (saith Salomon) festes,
The yong man woteth not whom she doth fede,
Of the dark deepnesse of hell ben her ghests,
Beware yong man therefore I thee rede,
And how be it cheefly for thy good spede,
This werk to compile I haue take in charge,
I must of pity my charity enlarge.

With the selie man which is thus begiled,
Her husband I mean, I woll wepe and waile
His painfull infortune, whereby reuiled
Causelesse he is, neuer to counaile,
Euery man yong and old woll him assaile
With words of occasion, with the loth name,
And alas good soule, he nothing to blame.

But she that coud so ill do and wold,
Hers be the blame for her demerite,
And leaue that opprobrous name cokold,
To a proper to him as in dispite,
Ransake yet we would if we might,
Of this worde the true ortographie,
The very discent and ethimologie.

The well and ground of the first inuencion,
To know the ortographie we must deriue,
Which is coke and cold, in composicion,
By reason, as nigh as I can contriue,
Than how it is written we know beliue,
But yet lo, by what reason and ground,
Was it of these two wordes compound.

As of one cause to giue very judgement,
Themilogie let vs first behold:
Eche letter an hole word doth represent,
As C, put for colde, and O, for old,
K, is for knaue, thus diuers men hold,
The first parte of this name we haue found,
Let vs ethimologise the second.

As the first finder ment I am sure,
C, for calot, for of, wolhaue O,
L, for leude, D, for delneanure,
The craft of the enuentour ye may see lo,
How one name signifieth persones two,
A colde old knaue, cokold himselfe wening,
And eke a calot of leude demeaning.

The second cause of thimposicion,
Of this foresaid name of jelousie,
To be jelouse is greatest occasion
To be cokold, that men can aspie,
And though the passion be very firie,
And of continuell feruence and heete,
The pacient aye suffreth cold on his feete.

And who that is jelous, and aye in a drede,
Is full of melancolie and gallie ire,
His wiues nose (if she misse trede,)
He woll cut off, ye and conspire
His death who that woll her desire:
Which she perceiuing brasteth his gall,
And anone his great woodnesse doth fall.

As soone as she hath knit him that knot,
Now is he tame that was so ramagious,
Mekely sitteth he doune and taketh his lot,
Layed been now his lookes so furious,
And he but late as a cooke batayious,
Hote in his quarell, to auenge him bold,
Now is he called both coke and cold.

This saying, to all curtesie dissonant,
Which seemeth that it of malice grewe,
In this rude treatise I woll not plant,
As parcell thereof, but onely to shewe,
The opinion of the taleatife shrewe,
Which in ill saying is euer merie,
No man as I thereof so werie.

But I as parcell of this my booke,
Woll graffe in some sad counsaile whereby,
The wedded man, if he daigne looke
In it, the better shall mowe him gie,
And prouide for his said infortunie,
Which as I haue said, with him complaine
I woll, as partener of his great paine.

As most expedient to his weale,
I would all jelousie were abject,
If he be jelous, that he it conceale,
And in his labour be circumspect,
To know her wayes if they seeme suspect,
And not for to breake, for one word broken,
She woll not misse but she woll be wroken.

Forbid her not, that thou noldest haue don,
For looke what thing she is forbod,
To that of all things she is most prone,
Namely if it be ill and no good,
Till it be executed she is nigh wood,
Soch is a woman, and soch is her feat,
Her craft by craft, labour to defeat.

If thou hereafter, now a single man,
Shouldest be jelous if thou haddest a wife,
Wedde not but if thou can trust woman,
For els shouldest lede a carefull life,
That thou most lothest should be full rife,
Yet I nill gainesay matrimonie,
But *Melius est nubere quam uri.*

That is to say, better is in wedlocke,
A wife to take, as the church doth kenne,
Than to been vnder the fleshes yoke,
In fleshly lust alway for to brenne,
But as I said, for all jelous menne,
So they liue chaste, I hold it lasse ill,
That they wedde not, than them self spill.

The single man which is yet to wedde,
And not the wedded man, thus I rede,
To warne him now he is too farre spedde,
It is too late him to forbedde,
But let him take as for his owne need,
Soch counsaile as is him before told,
These words folowing eke to behold.

Thy water to keep the wiseman doth teach,
That thou in no wise let it haue issue,
At a narow rifte, way it woll seach,
And semblably the woman vntrue,
To giue her free walke in al wise eschue,
If she at large, not at thine hand walke,
She woll thee shame, thou shalt it not balke.

Wedded or single, thus saith the wiseman,
Her that both day and night euermore,
Lithe in thy bosome, wife or yet lemman,
Loue not to hote, least thou repent sore,
Least she thee bring into some ill lore,
Thy wife not to loue yet I nill support,
But that thou dote not, thus I thee exhort.

Lo if thou loue her, loue eke thine honestie,
Be she not idell, for what woll betide,
If she sit idell, of very necessitie,
Her mind woll search ferre and eke wide,
Namely if she be not accompanide,
How accompanied, not with yong men,
But with maidens I meane or women.

Maiden seruants be right conuenient,
In house to helpe to doue her seruice,
In whom she may vse her commaundement,
In the season at her owne deuice:
To teach hem good, yeue her thine aduice,
To make them huswiues, thus businesse
May yet refraine her from idlenesse.

But bide not her that thou wolt haue do,
Of thine entent that might be letting,
But craftely encourage her thereto
By other meanes, as by commending,
And not too moch, but duely menging
Both praise and blame, and in thy reason
First praise wisely the place and season.

Of faithfull will, and herte full tender,
One thing I call into remembrance
Again which, though my wit be slender,
After my power and suffisaunce,
I purpose to make a purueyaunce,
Sith women of nature been vnchaungeable,
Freale, not ware, also disceiuable.

Be it that thy wife be excellently good,
That none be better of disposicion,
In procesSe of time she might turn her mood,
By some misse liuers instigacion,
Diuers men to thilke occupacion,
Aplien daily, minde and eke herte,
From hir goodnesse women to peruert.

If thou aspie any suspect person,
Draw to thy wife, beware in all wise
To him nor her of thy suspeccion
Breake not one worde, though thine herte agrise,
Kindle no fire, no smoke woll arise,
Though he be of a corrupt entent,
She perauenture is not of assent.

EXPLICIT.

THE LETTER OF CUPID.

This letter was made by Thomas Occleve of the office of the privy seale, Chaucer's scholar; and was by him termed, A Treatise of the Conversation of Men and Women in the little Island of Albion; which got him such hatred among the gentlewomen of the court, that he was inforced to recant in that book of his, called *Planctus proprius.*

Cupid, vnto whose commaundement,
The gentill kinrede of goddes on hie,
And people infernal been obedient,
And all mortall folke seruen busely,
Of the goddesse sonne Cythera onely,
To all tho that to our deite,
Been subjects, hertely greeting send we.

In general we woll that ye know,
That ladies of honour and of reuerence,
And other gentilwomen hauen sowe
Soch seed of complaint in our audience,
Of men that do hem outrage and offence,
That it our cares grieueth for to here,
So pitous is theffect of this matere,

Passing all londes, on the litell yle
That cleped is Albion, they most complaine,
They say that there is crop and rote of guile,
So con tho men dissimule and faine,
With standing dropes in hir eyen twaine,
Whan that hertes feeleth no distresse,
To blinden women with hir doublenesse,

Hir wordes spoken be so sighingly,
With so pitous chere and countenaunce,
That euery wight that meaneth trewly,
Deemeth they in herte haue such greuaunce,
They say so importable is hir penaunce,
That but hir lady lust to shew hem grace,
They right anone must steruen in the place.

"Ah lady mine," they say, "I you ensure,
As doth me grace, and I shall euer be
(While that my life may last and endure)
To you as humble and low in ech degre,
As possible is, and keep all things as secre,
Right as your selfe list that I do,
And els mine herte mote brast in two."

Ful hard it is to know a mans herte,
For outward may no man the trouth deme,
Whan word out of mouth may none sterte;
But it by reson semed euery wight to queme,
So it is said of herte as it would seme,
O faithful woman full of innocence,
Thou art disceiued by false apparence.

By processe moueth oft womans pite,
Wening all thing were as these men sey,
They graunt hem grace of hir benignite,
For that men should not for hir sake dey,
And with good herte sette hem in the wey
Of blisfull loue, keepe it if they conne,
And thus otherwhile women bethe ywonne.

And whan this man the pan hath by the stele,
And fully is in his possessioun,
With that woman keepeth he no more to dele,
After if he may finde in the toun
Any woman his blind affectioun
Unto bestow, yuel mote he preue,
A man for all his othes is hard to beleeue.

And for that every false man hath a make,
As unto euery wight is light to know,
Whan this traitour this woman hath forsake,
He fast spedeth him unto his felow,
Til he be there his herte is on a low,
His false disceit may him not suffise,
But of his traison telleth all the wise.

Is this a faire auaunt, is this honour,
A man himself accuse thus and diffame,
Is it good to confesse himself a traitour?
And bring a woman to sclandrous name,
And tell how he her body hath do shame?
No worship may he thus to him conquer,
But great disclaunder vnto him and her.

To her nay, yet was it no reprefe,
For all for vertue was that she wrought,
But he that brewed hath all this mischefe,
That spake so faire, and fasly inward thought,
His be the sclaunder, as it by reson ought,
And vnto her thanke perpetuell,
That in soch a need help can so well.

Although through mens sleight and subtilty,
A sely simple and innocent woman
Betraied is, no wonder sith the city
Of Troy, as the storie tell can,
Betrayed was through the disceit of man,
And set on fyre, and all downe ouerthrowe,
And finally destroied as men knowe.

Betray nat men cities great, and kings,
What wight is it that can shape remedy
Ayenst these falsely purposed things,
Who can by crafte soch craftes espy
But man, whose wit is ever redy taply
To thing that sowning is to falshede?
Women bethe ware of false men I rede.

And farthermore have these men in vsage,
That where they nat likely been to speed,
Soch as they ben, with a double visage,
They procuren for to pursewe hir need,
He prayeth him in his cause to proceed,
And largely guerdoneth he his travaile,
Litel wote women how men hem assaile.

Another wretch vnto his felow saith,
"Thou fishest faire, she that thee hath fired
Is false inconstaunt, and hath no faith,
She for the rode of folke is so desired,
And as an horse fro day to day she is hired,
That whan thou twinnest fro her company,
Commeth another, and blered is thine eye.

"Now pricke on fast, and ride thy journey
While thou art there, for she behind thy back
So liberall is, she will nothing withsey,
But smattly of another take a smack,
Thus fare these women all the pack,
Who so hem trusteth hanged mote he bee,
Ever they desire chaunge and nolveltee."

Whereof proceedeth this, but of envy?
For he himselfe her ne winne may,
He speaketh her reprefe and villany,
As mans blabbing tonge is wont alway,
Thus divers men full oft make assay
For to distourbe folke in sondry wise,
For they may not obtaine hir emprise.

Many one eke would for no good,
That hath in love his time spent and vsed,
Men wish that his lady his asking withstood,
Ere that he were of her plainly refused,
Or waste and vaine all that he had mused,
Wherefore he can none other remedy,
But on his lady shapeth him to ly.

"Every woman" he saith "is light to gete,
Can none say nay, if she be well ysought,
Who so may leiser have with her to trete,
Of his purpose shall he fayle nought,
But he on madnesse be so depe brought,
That he shende all with open homelynesse,
That loven women, they doten as I gesse."

To slander women thus what may profite,
To gentillesse namely, that hem arme should
In defence of women, and hem delite,
As that the ordre of gentillesse wold,
If that a man list gentill to be hold,
He must all eschewe that thereto is contrary,
A sclaundrous tonge is his great adversary.

A foule vice is, of tonge to be light,
For who so moch clapeth gabbeth oft,
The tonge of man so swift is and so wight,
That whan it is reised vp on loft,
Reason is shewed so slowly and soft
That it him never ouertake may,
Lord so these men been trusty in assay.

Albeit that men find one woman nice,
Inconstaunt, rechlesse, and variable,
Deignous, proude, fulfilled of mallice,
Without faith, or love, and discevable,
Sly, queint, false, in all vntrust coulpable,
Wicked, feirse, or full of crueite,
Yet foloweth it not that soch all women be.

Whan that high God aungels fourmed had,
Among hem all were there none
That founden was malicious and bad?
Yet all men wote there were many one
That for her pride fill fro Heven anone,
Shuld men for thy yeve al angels proud name,
Nay, he that thee susteineth is to blame.

Of twelve apostles, one a traitour was,
The remnant yet good were and trew:
So if it hap men find percaas,
O woman false, soch, good is to eschew,
And deme not that they all therfore be vntrewe,
I see well mens owne falsenesse,
Hem causeth woman to trust the lesse.

O every man ought have an herte tendre
Unto a woman, and deeme her honorable,
Where his shape be thicke or slendre,
Or he be good or badde, it is no fable:
Every wight wote, that wit hath resonable,
That of a woman he discended is,
Than is it shame of her to speake amisse.

A wicked tree good fruite may none forth bring,
For soch the fruite is as is the tree,
Take heed of whom thou toke thy beginning,
Let thy mother be mirrour vnto thee,
Honour her, if thou wolte honoured bee,
Dispise her than not in no manere,
Lest that thereby thy wickednesse appere.

An old proverbe sayd is in English,
That bird or foule is full dishonest,
What that he be, and hold full churlish,
That vseth to defoule his owne nest:
Men to say well of women it is the best,
And naught to dispise hem ne depraue,
If they woll hir honour keep or saue.

The ladies ever complain hem on clerks,
That they have made bookes of hir diffame,
In which they dispise women and hir werks,
And speak of hem great reprofe and shame,
And causelesse yeve hem a wicked name,
Thus they dispised be on every side,
Disclaundred and blowen on full wide.

Tho sory bookes maken mencion
How women betraide in especiall,
Adam, David, Sampson, and Salomon,
And many one mo, who may reherse hem all,
The treason that they have do and shall,
The world hir malice may not comprehend,
As clerkes saine, for it hath none end.

Ouide in his boke called Remedy
Of Loue, great reprofe of women writeth,
Wherein I trowe he did great foly,
And euery wight that in soch case him deliteth,
A clerkes custome is whan he endliteth,
Of women, be it prose, rime, or vers,
Say they be wicked, all know he the reuers.

And that boke scholers lerned in hir childhede,
For they of women beware should in age,
And to loue hem euer be in drede,
Sith to disceiue is set all hir corage,
They say of perel men should cast thauauntage,
Namely of soch as men haue in bewrapped,
For many a man by women hath mishapped.

No charge is what so these clerkes saine,
Of all hir writing I doe no cure,
All hir labour and trauayle is in vaine,
For betweene me and my lady nature,
Shall not be suffred, while the world may dure
Thus these clerkes by hir crueli tyranny,
On selie women kithen hir maistry.

Whilom for many of hem were in my cheine
Tied, and now for vnwedly age,
And vnlust, may not to loue attaine,
And saine now that loue is but very dotage,
Thus for they hemselfe lacken courage,
They folke excited by hir wicked sawes,
For to rebell ayenst me, and my lawes.

But mauger hem that blame women most,
Soch is the force of mine impression,
That sodainly I can fell hir boste,
And all hir wrong imagination,
It shall not be in hir election,
The foulest slutte in all the tonne to refuse,
If that me lust, for all that they con muse.

But her in herte as brenningly desire,
As though she were a duchesse or a queene,
So can I folkes hertes set on fire,
And as me list send hem joy or teene,
They that to women be whet so kene,
My sharpe persing strokes how they smite,
Shul fele and know, how they kerue and bite.

Parde this clerke, this subtill Ouide,
And many another disceiued haue be,
Of women, as it is know full wide,
What no men more, and that is great deinty,
So excellent a clerke as was he,
And other mo that couden full well preach,
Betrapped were, for aught that they coud teach.

And trusteth well that it is no marualle,
For women knowen plainly hir entent,
They wist how softly they coud assaile
Hem, and what falshede they in herte mente,
And thus they clerkes in hir daunger hente,
With o venime another is destroied,
And thus these clerkes oft were anoied.

These ladies, ne these gentiles neuerthelesse,
Where none of tho that wrought in this wise,
But soch as were vertulesse,
They quitten thus these old clerkes wise,
To clerkes lesse ought suffise,
Than to dispraue women generally,
For worship shull they none gette thereby.

If that these men, that louers hem pretend,
To women were faithfull, good, and true,
And dredde hem to disceiue, or to offend,
Women to loue hem would not eschue,
But euery day hath man an herte newe,
It on one abide can no while,
What forse is it such a wight to begnile.

Men beare eke women vpon hond,
That lightly and without any paine,
They wonen be, they can no wight withstond,
That his disease list to hem complaine,
They be so freele, they may hem not refraine,
But who so liketh hem, may lightly haue,
So be hir hertes easie into graue.

To maister Iohan de Moone, as I suppose
Than it was a leude occupacioun,
In making of the Romante of the rose,
So many a sigh imaginacioun,
And perilles for to rollen vp and doun,
The long processe, so many a slight cautell,
For to disceiue a sely damos ll.

Nought can I say, ne my wit comprehend,
That art, pain, and subtilty should faile,
For to conquere, and sone make an end;
Whan men a feble place shall assaile,
And sone also to vanquish a battaile,
Of which no wight may make resistence,
Ne herte hath none to make any defence.

Than mote folow of necessitee,
Sith art asketh so great engine and paine,
A woman to disceiue what so she bee,
Of constaunce be they not so baraine,
As that some of these clarkes saine,
But they be as women ought to bee,
Sadde, constant, and fulfilled of pitee.

How frendly was Medea to Iason,
In conquering of the fleece of gold,
How falsly quit he her true affection,
By whom victory he gate as he wold,
How may this man for shame be so bold
To falsen her, that fro his death and shame,
Him kept, and gate him so great prise and name.

Of Troy also the traitour Eneas,
The faithlesse wretch, how he him forswore
To Dido, that queene of Cartage was,
That him releued of his smertes sore,
What gentillesse might she haue do more,
Than she with herte vnfained to him kidde,
And what mischef to her therof after betidde.

In my legend of natures may men find,
Who so liketh therein for to rede,
That othe ne behest may man bind,
Of reprouable shame haue they no drede,
In mannes herte trouth hath no stede,
The soile is naught, there may no trouth grow,
To woman namely it is not vnknow.

Clerkes saine also there is no malice,
Unto womans wicked crabbidnesse,
O woman, how shalt thou thy self cheuice,
Sith men of thee soch harme witnesse,
Beth ware women of hir fikelnesse,
Kepe thine owne, what men clappe or crake,
And some of hem shall smart I vndertake.

Malice of women what is it to drede,
They slea no man, distroy no citees,
Ne oppresse folke, ne ouerlede,
Betray empires, realmes, or duchees,
Ne bireuen men hir lands ne hir mees,
Enpoison folke, ne houses set on fire,
Ne false contracts make for no hire.

Trust, parfite loue, entire charitee,
Feruent will, and entalented corage,
All thewes good, as sitteth well to bee,
Haue women euer of custome and vsage,
And well they conne mans ire asswage,
With soft words, discrete and benigne,
What they be inward, they shew outward by signe.

Womans herte vnto no cruelty
Enclined is, but they be charitable,
Pitous, deuoute, full of humility,
Shamefast, debonaire, and amiable,
Bredefull, and of wordes measurable,
What women these haue not parauenture,
Followeth not the way of hir nature.

Men saine our first mother nathelesse
Made all mankind lese his libertee,
And naked it of joy doubtlesse,
For Goddes heste disobeyed she,
Whan she presumed to taste of the tree
That God forbad that she eate therof should,
And ne had the Deuill be, no more she would.

The enuious swelling, that the fend our foe,
Had vnto man in herte for his wealth,
Sent a serpent, and made her for to goe
To disceiue Eue: and thus was mans wealth
Birafte him by the fende in a stealth,
The woman not knowing of that disceipt,
God wote full fayre was it from her conceipt.

Wherfore I say, this good woman Eue,
Our father Adam disceiued nought,
There may no man for disceipt it preue,
Properly, but that she in herte and thought,
Had it compassed first or she it wrought,
And for soch was not her impression,
Men may it call no disceipt of her, by reason.

Ne no wight disceiueth, but he purpose
The fend this disceipt cast, and nothing she:
Than is it wrong to deeme or suppose,
That of his harme she should the cause be,
Wyte the fende and his be the maugre,
And excused haue her innocence,
Saue onely that she brake obedience.

And touching this, full fewe men there be,
Unnethes any dare I safely say,
Fro day to day as men may all day see,
But that the heste of God they disobay,
Haue this in mind sirs I you pray,
If that ye be discrete and reasonable,
Ye woll her hold the more excusable.

And where men say, in man is stedfastnesse,
And woman is of her courage vnstable!
Who may of Adam beare soch a witnesse?
Telleth me this, was he not chaungeable?
They both weren in o case semblable,
Saue willing the fende disceiued Eue,
And so did she not Adam by your leue.

Yet was this sinne happy to mankind,
The fende disceiued was for all his sleight,
For aught he coud him in his sleights wind:
For his trespace, came fro Heauen on height
God to discharge man of his weight,
Flesh and blood tooke of a virgine,
And suffred death, him to deliuer of pine.

And God, to whom there may nothing hid be,
If he in women knowen had soch malice,
As men recorde of hem in generalte,
Of our lady of life reperatrice,
Nolde haue be borne, but that she of vice
Was voide, and full of vertue well he wist,
Endowed, of her to be borne him list.

Her heaped vertue hath soch excellence,
That all to leane is mans faculte
To declare it, and therefore in suspence,
Her due praysing put needs must be,
But thus I say, verely that she
Next God, best frend is that to man longeth,
The key of mercy by her girdle hongeth.

And of mercy hath euery man soch need,
That resing that, farewell the joy of man,
And of her power now taketh right good heed
She mercy may well, and purchase can,
Displeaseth her not, honoureth that woman,
And other women all for her sake,
And but ye doe, your sorow shall awake.

In any booke also where can ye find,
That of the werkes of death or of life
Of Iesu, spelleth or maketh any mind,
That women him forsoke, for wo or strife?
Where was there any wight so ententife
About him, as woman? proued none,
The apostles him forsoken euerichone.

Women forsoke him not, for all the fayth
Of holy church in woman left onely,
This is no lees, for thus holy writ sayth,
Looke and ye shall so finde it hardely:
And therefore I may well preue thereby,
That in women reigneth stable constaunce,
And in men is the chaunge of variaunce.

Thou precious gem of martirs, Margarite,
That of thy blood dredest none effusion,
Thou louer true, thou maiden mansuete,
Thou constant woman in thy passion,
Ouercame the fendes temptacion,
And many a wight converted thy doctrine
Unto the faith of holy God thou virgine.

But vnderstandeth this, I onely commend her
By encheson of her virginity, [nought
Trusteth it came never in my thought,
For ever werre I ayenst chastity,
And ever shall, but lo this meveth me,
Her loving herte, and constant to her lay,
Drive out of remembraunce I ne may.

Now holdeth this for ferme, and for no ly,
That this true and just commendacion
Of women, tel I for no flattery,
Ne bicause of pride or elacion,
But onely lo, for this entencion,
To yeve hem courage of perseveraunce
In vertue, and hir honour to avaunce.

The more vertue, the lasse is the pride,
Uertue so digne is and so noble in kind,
That vice and he woll not in fere abide,
He putteth vices cleane out of his mind,
He flieth fro hem, he leaveth hem behind,
O woman that of vertue art hostresse,
Great is thy honour and thy worthinesse.

Than woll I thus conclude and define,
We you commaund our ministers echone,
That ready ye be our hestes to encline,
That of these false men our rebell fone,
Ye do punishment and that anone,
Uoide hem our court, and banish hem for ever,
So that therein more come they never.

Fulfilled be it, ceasing all delay,
Looke there be none excusacion,
Written in the lusty moneth of May,
In our paleis where many a million
Of lovers true have habitation,
The yere of grace joyfull and jocond,
A thousand foure hundred and second.

EXPLICIT.

A BALLADE

IN COMMENDATION OF OUR LADY.

A THOUSAND stories coud I mo rehearce
Of old poetes, touching this matere
How that Cupide the hertes gan so pearce,
Of his servauntes setting hem in fere,
Lo here the fyne of therrour and the fere,
Lo here of love the guerdon and greuaunce,
That ever with wo her seruaunts do auaunce.

Wherfore now plainly I wol my stile dresse
Of one to speake, at need that woll not faile,
Alas for dole I ne can ne may expresse
Her passing prise, and that is no mervaile,
O winde of grace, now blowe unto my saile,
O auriate licour of Cleo for to write,
My penne enspire of that I woll endite.

Alas, vnworthy I am and unable
To love soch one, all women surmounting,
But she be benigne to me and merciable,
That is of pity the well and eke the spring,
Wherefore of her in laude and in praising,
So as I can, supported by her grace,
Right thus I say, kneeling tofore her face.

O sterre of sterres with thy streames clere,
Sterre of the sea, to shipmen light and gide,
O lusty living most pleasaunt to appere,
Whose bright beams the cloudes may not hide,
O way of life to them that go or ride,
Hauen after tempest surest vp to riue,
On me haue mercy for thy joyes fiue.

O rightful rule, O bote of holinesse,
And lightsome line of pity for to plain,
Original beginning of grace and all goodnesse,
And cleanest conduit of vertue most souerain
Mother of mercy, our trouble to restrain,
Chamber and closet clennest of chastity,
And named herbrough of the deity.

O closet garden all void of weedes wicke,
Cristallin welle, of clerenesse clere consigned,
Fructified oliue of oiles, faire and thick,
And redolent cedre most dere worthy digned
Remember on sinnes that to thee be assigned,
Or wicked fendes hir wrath on hem wreche,
Lanterne of light thou hir liues leche.

Paradise of pleasaunce, gladsome to al good,
Benigne braunchelet of the pine tree,
Uinary enuermailed, refresher of our blood,
Licour ayen al langour, that pallad may not be,
Blisful blomy bloseme, biding in bountee,
Thy mantel of mercy on our misery sprede,
And er we awake wrap vs vnder thy wede.

O rody rosier, flouring without spine,
Fountain all filthlesse, as byrel currant clere,
Som drop of thy graceful dew to vs propine,
O light without nebule, shining in thy sphere,
Medicine to mischeues, purcel without pere,
Flame doun the doleful light of thine influence,
Remembring thy seruants for thy magnificence.

Of all christen protectrice and tutele,
Retourne of exiled put in the proscripcion,
To hem that erren in the pathe of hir sequele,
To wery forwandred, tent and pauilion,
To faint and to fresh the pausacion,
Unto vnresty, both rest and remedy,
Fruitful to all tho that in her affie.

To hem that rennen thou art itenerary,
O blisfull brauy to knights of thy warre,
To wery werkmen she is diourne denary,
Mede vnto mariners that haue sailed farre,
Laureate croune streming as a starre,
To hem that put hem in palastre for thy sake,
Tours of hir conquest, thou white as any lake.

O mirth of martyrs, sweter than sitole,
Of confessours also richest donatife,
Unto virgines eternal lauriole,
Afore all women hauing prerogatife,
Mother and maide, both widow and wife,
Of all the world is none but thou alone,
Now sith thou may, be succour to my mone.

O trustie turtle truefastest of all true,
O curteyse columbe, replete of all mekenesse,
O nightingale with thy notes newe,
O popiniay pured with all clennesse,
O laueroke of loue, singing with sweetnesse,
Phebus awaiting till on the brest he light,
Under thy wing at domesday vs dight.

O ruby rubified in the passion
Of thy sonne, vs haue among in mind,
O stedfast diametre of duracion,
That few feres any time might thou find,
For none to his was founden half so kind,
O hardy herte, O louing creature,
What was it but loue that made thee so endure.

Semely saphre, depe loupe and blew ewage,
Stable as the loupe ewage of pitee,
This is to say the freshest of visage,
Thou louest unchaunged hem that seruen thee,
And if offence or varying in hem bee,
Thou art ay redy vpon hir wo to rue,
And hem receiuest with herte full true.

O goodly gladded whan that Gabriell
With joy the grette, that may not be nombred,
Or half the blisse who coude write or tell,
Whan the Holy Ghost to thee was obumbred,
Wherthrough fends were biterly encombred,
O wemlesse maid embelished in his birth,
That man and angell thereof hadden mirth.

Lo here the blosme and the budde of glory,
Of which the prophet so long spake beforne,
Lo here the fame that was in memory,
Of Esay, so long as she was borne,
Lo here of David the delicious corne,
Lo here the ground of life in to builde,
Becomming man our ransome for to yelde.

O glorious viole and vite inuiolate,
O firy Titan, persing with thy bemes,
Whose vertuous brightnes was in brest vibrat
That al the world embelished with the leams,
Conseruatrice of kings, dukes and realms,
Of Isaies seede sweet Sunamite,
Mesure my mourning mine own Margarite.

O soueraignest sought out of Sion,
Cockle with gold dewe from aboue berained,
Dew bush vnbrent firelesse fire set on,
Flaming with feruence not with heat pained,
During daisie that no weather stained,
Fleece vndefouled of gentilest Gedion,
And fructifying fairest the yerd of Aaron.

The mighty arch, probatife piscine,
Laughing Aurore, and of peace oliue,
Columpne and base, vp bearing from abym,
Why nere I conning here to discriue,
Chosen of Ioseph, whom he took to wiue,
Unknowing him, chiding by miracle,
And of our manly figure the tabernacle.

I haue none English conuenient and digne,
Mine hertes heale lady thee with to honour,
Iuory cleane, therefore I will resigne
Into thine hand, till thou list soccour,
To helpe my making both florish and flour,
Than should I shew in loue how I brend,
In songs making, thy name to commend.

For if I coud before thine excellence
Singen in loue I would what I fele,
And euer standen lady in thy presence,
To shew in open how I loue you wele,
And sith although your herte be made of stele,
To you withouten any disceueraunce,
J'ay en vous toute ma fiance.

Where might I loue euer better beset,
Than in this lilly liking to behold
That lace of loue, the bond so well thou knit,
That I may see thee or mine herte cold,
And or I passe out of my daies old,
Tofore singing euermore vtterly,
Your eyen two wol slea me sodainly.

For loue I langour, blissed be soch sicknes,
Sith it is for you my hertily suffisaunce,
I can not els say in my distresse,
So faire one hath mine herte in gouernance,
And after that I begin on esperaunce,
With feble entune, though it thine herte perce,
Yet for thy sake this letter I do reherce.

God wote on musike I can not, but I gesse
Alas why so, that I might say or sing,
So loue I you mine own souerain maistresse,
And euer shall without departing,
Mirrour of beauty, for you out should I ring
In remembraunce eke of your eyen clere,
Thus fer from you my souerain lady dere.

So would God your loue would me slo,
Sith for your sake I sing day by day,
Herte why nilt thou breake atwo,
Sith with my lady dwell I ne may,
Thus many a roundell and many a virelay,
In fresh English, whan I me laiser find,
I do record, on you to haue mind.

Now lady mine, sith I you loue and drede,
And you vnchaunged euer find in odegree,
Whose grace ne may fly fro your womanhede,
Disdaineth not for to remember on me,
Mine herte bleedeth for I may not you see,
And sith ye wote my meaning desirous,
Plores pour moy s'il vous plaist amoureus.

What maruaile is though I in paine be,
I am departed from you my soueraine,
Fortune alas, *dont vient la destenie*,
That in no wise I can ne may attaine
To see the beauty of your eyen twain,
Wherefore I say, for tristesse doth me grame,
Tant me fait mal departir de ma dame.

Why nere my wissing brought to such esploit,
That I might say for joy of your presence,
Or a mon cœur ce que vouloit,
Or a mon cœur, the highest excellence
That euer had wight, and sith mine aduertence
Is in you, reweth on my paines smert,
I am so sore wounded to the herte.

To liue well mery two louers were yfere,
So may I say withouten any blame,
If any man too wild were,
I coud him teach for to be tame,
Let him go loue, and see where it be game,
For I am bridled vnto sobernesse,
For her that is of woman cheef princesse.

But euer whan thought my herte shuld enbrace,
Than vnto me is best remedy,
Whan I look on your goodly fresh face,
So merry a mirrour coud I neuer espy,
And if I coud, I would it magnifie,
For neuer none was so faire ifound,
To reken hem all, and also Rosamound.

And finally, with mouth and will present
Of double eye without repentaunce,
Mine herte I yeue you lady in this entent,
That ye shall holly therof haue gouernaunce,
Taking my leaue with hertes obeysaunce,
(Salve regina) singing last of all,
To be our helpe whan we to thee call.

All out loue is but idlenesse,
Saue your loue alone, who might thereto attaine,
Who so woll haue a name of gentillesse,
I counsaile him in loue that he not faine,
Thou sweet lady, refute in euery paine,
Whose mercy most to me auaileth,
To gie by grace, whan that fortune faileth.

Nought may be told withouten any fable,
Your high renome, your womanly beaute,
Your gouernaunce to all worship able,
Putteth euery herte in ease in his degree,
O violet, O floure desiree,
Sith I am for you so amerous,
Estreignes moy de cœur joyeus.

With feruent herte my brest hath brost on fire,
L'ardant espoer en mon cœur point est mort,
D'auoir l'amour de celle que je desire,
I meane you sweet most pleasaunt of port,
Et je say bien que ce n'est pas mon tort,
That for you sing, so as I may mone
For your departing, alone I liue alone.

Though I might, I would none other chese,
In your seruice I would been founden sadde,
Therefore I loue no labour that ye lese,
Whan in longing forest ye be stadde,
Look vp you louers, and be right gladde
Ayenst saint Ualentines day,
For I haue chese that neuer forsake I may.

EXPLICIT.

JOHN GOWER UNTO THE NOBLE KING HENRY THE FOURTH.

O NOBLE worthy king Henry the ferthe,
In whom the gladde fortune is befall,
The people to gouern here vpon earthe,
God hath thee chosen in comfort of vs all,
The worship of this land, which was doun fall,
Now stant vpright through grace of thy goodnesse,
Which euery man is holde for to blesse.

The high God of his justice alone,
The right which longeth to thy regaly,
Declared hath to stand in thy persone,
And more than God may no man justifie,
Thy title is know vpon thine auncestrie,
The lands folke hath eke thy right affirmed,
So stant thy reign, of God and man confirmed.

There is no man may say in otherwise,
That God himself ne hath the right declared,
Whereof the land is bound to thy seruice,
Which for defaut of helpe hath long cared,
But now there is no mans herte spared,
To loue and serue, and worch thy pleasaunce,
And all this is through Gods purueiaunce.

In all thing which is of God begonne,
There followeth grace, if it be well gouerned,
Thus tellen they which old books conne,
Wherof my lord I wote well thou art lerned,
Ask of thy God, so shalt thou not be warned
Of no request, which is reasonable,
For God vnto the good is fauourable.

King Salomon, which had at his asking,
Of God what thing him was leuest crape,
He chase wisdome vnto gouerning
Of Gods folke, the which he would saue,
And as he chase, it fill him for to haue,
For through his wit while that his reign last,
He gate him peace and rest into his last.

But Alexander, as telleth his story,
Unto the God besought in other way,
Of all the world to win the victory,
So that vnder his swerd it might obay,
In warre he had all that he would pray,
The mighty God behight him that behest
The world wanne, and had it of conquest.

But though it fill at thilke time so
That Alexander his asking hath atcheued,
This sinful worlde was all Painem tho,
Was none which hath that high God beleued,
No wonder was though thilk world was greued,
Though a tirant his purpose might win,
All was vengeaunce and infortune of sin.

But now the faith of Christ is come a place
Among the princes in this yearth here,
It sitte hem well to do pity and grace,
But yet it must be tempered in manere,
For they finden cause in the mattere
Upon the point, what afterward betide,
The law of right shall not be laid aside.

So may a king of warre the voyage,
Ordaine and take, as he thereto is hold,
To claime and ask his rightful heritage
In all places where it is withhold,
But otherwise if God himself wold,
Affirme loue and peace between the kings,
Peace is the best aboue all earthly things.

Good is to eschew war, and nathelees,
A king may make war vpon his right,
For of battaile the final end is pees,
Thus stant the law, that a worthy knight
Upon his trouth may go to the fight,
But if so were that he might chese,
Better is the peace, of which may no man lese.

To stere peace ought euerich on line,
First for to sette his leige lord in rest,
And eke these other men that they ne strine,
For so this land may stand at best,
What king that would be the worthiest,
The more he might our deadly war cease,
The more he should his worthinesse increase.

Peace is the chiefe of all the worlds welth,
And to the Heauen it leadeth eke the way,
Peace is of soule and life the mannes health,
Of pestilence, and doth the war away,
My liege lord take heed of that I say,
If war may be left, take peace on hand,
Which may not be without Goddes sand.

With peace stant euery creature in rest,
Without peace there may no life be glad,
Aboue all other good peace is the best,
Peace hath himself whan werre is al bestad,
The peace is safe, the warre is euer drad,
Peace is of all charity the kay,
Which hath the life and soule for to way.

My liege lord, if that thee list to seech
The soth ensamples what the war hath wrought
Thou shalt well here of wise mennes speech,
That deadly warre turneth into nought,
For if these old books be well ysought,
There might thou se what thing the war hath do,
Both of conquest and conquerour also.

For vain honour, or for the worlds good,
They that whilome the strong wars made,
Wher be they now, bethink well in thy mood,
The day is gone the night is derke and fade,
Hir cruelty which made hem than glade,
They sorrowen now, and yet haue naught the more
The blood is shad, which no man may restore.

The warre is mother of the wrongs all,
It sleeth the priest in holy church at masse,
Forlith the maid, and doth her flour to fall,
The warre maketh the great city lasse,
And doth the law his rules ouerpasse,
Ther is nothing wherof mischeef may grow,
Which is not caused of the warre I trow.

The war bringeth in pouerty at his heels,
Whereof the commen people is sore greued,
The war hath set his cart on thilk wheles,
Where that fortune may nat be beleued:
For whan men wene best to haue atcheued,
Full oft it is all new to begin,
The warre hath nothing siker, tho he win.

For thy, my worthy prince in Christs halue,
As for a part, whose faith thou hast be guidt,
Ley to this old sore a new saue,
And do the warre away, what so betide,
Purchase peace and set it by thy side,
And suffer nat thy people be deuoured,
So shal thy name euer after stand honoured.

If any man be now, or euer was,
Ayen the peace thy preuy counsailour,
Let God be of thy counsaile in this caas,
And put away the cruel warriour,
For God which is of man the creatour,
He would not men slough his creature,
Without cause of deadly forfaiture.

Where needeth most, behoueth most to looke,
My lord, how so thy wars be without,
Of time passed, who that heed tooke,
Good were at home to see right well about,
For euermore, the worst is for to dout,
But if thou mightest parfite peace attaine,
There should be no cause for to plaine.

About a king good counsaile is to preise,
Aboue all other things most vailable,
But yet a king within himself shall peise,
And seene the things that be reasonable,
And there upon he shall his wits stable,
Among the men to set peace in euin,
For loue of him which is the king of Heuin.

A, well is him that shed neuer blood,
But if it were in cause of rightwisenesse,
For if a king the peril vnderstood,
What is to slee the people, than I gesse,
The deadly warres and the heauinesse,
Whereof peace distourbed is full oft,
Should at some time cease and wexe soft.

O king, fulfilled of grace and knighthode,
Remember vpon this point for Christs sake,
If peace be profered vnto thy manhode,
Thine honour saue, let it not be forsake,
Though thou the wars darst well vndertake,
After reason yet temper thy courage,
For like to peace there is none auauntage.

My worthy lord, think well how so befall
Of thilke lore as holy books saine,
Christ is the head, and we be members all,
As well the subject as the soueraigne,
So sitte it well, that charity be plaine,
Which vnto God himself most accordeth,
So as the lore of Christs word recordeth.

In the old law or Christ himselfe was bore,
Among the ten commaundements I rede,
How that manslaughter should be forbore,
Such was the will that time of the godhede,
But afterward whan Christ toke his manhede
Peace was the first thing he let do cry
Ayenst the worlds rancour and enuy.

And or Christ went out of this earth here,
And stighed to heuin, he made his testament,
Where he bequeath to his disciples there,
And yaue his peace, which is the foundement
Of charity, without whose assent
The worlds peace may neuer well be tried,
Ne loue kept, ne law iustified.

The Iewes with the painims hadden werre,
But they among hemself stode euer in peace,
Why should than our peace stand out of erre,
Which Christ hath chose vnto his own encrese,
For Christ is more than was Moyses,
And Christ hath set the parfite of the law,
The which should in no wise be withdraw.

To yeue vs peace, was cause why Christ dide,
Without peace, may nothing stond auailed,
But now a man may see on euery side
How Christs faith is euery day assailed,
With painims destroyed and so batailed,
That for defaut of helpe and of defence,
Unneth hath Christ his due reuerence.

The right faith to keepe of holy church,
The first point is named of knighthode,
And euery man is hold for to worch
Upon the point that stant to his manhode:
But now alas, the fame is spred so brode,
That euery man this thing complaineth,
And yet is there no man that help ordaineth.

The worlds cause is waited ouer all,
There be the warres ready to the full,
But Christs own cause in speciall,
There ben the swerds and the speares dull,
And with the sentence of the popes bull,
As for to done the folke paine obay,
The church is tourned all another way.

It is wonder aboue any mans wit,
Without war how Christs faith was won,
And we that be vpon this earth yet,
Ne keepe it nat as it was first begon,
To euery creature vnder the Sonne
Christ bad hemselfe that we should preach,
And to the folke his euangely teach.

More light it is to keep than to make,
But that we founden made tofore hond,
We keepe not, but let it lightly slake,
The peace of Christ hath al to broke his bond,
We rest our selfe, and suffren euery lond
To slee each other, as thing vndefended,
So stant the war, and peace is not amended.

But though the head of holy church aboue
Ne do not all his hole businesse,
Among the people to set peace and loue,
These kings oughten of hir rightwisenesse
Hir owne cause among hemselfe redresse,
Tho Peters ship as now hath lost his stere,
It lith in hem the barge for to stere.

If holy church after the duty
Of Christs word ne be nat all auised
To make peace, accord, and vnity
Among the kings that be now deuised,
Yet natheles the law stant assised
Of mans wit to be so reasonable,
Without that to stand himselfe stable.

Of holy church we ben children all,
And euery child is hold for to bow
Unto the mother, how that ever it fall,
Or els he must reason disallow,
And for that cause a knight shall first auow
The right of holy church to defend,
That no man shall the priuiledge offend.

Thus were it good to set all in euin
The worlds princes and the prelates both,
For loue of him wich is the king of Heuin,
And if men should algate wexen wroth,
The sarazins, which vnto Christ ben loth,
Let men be armed ayenst hem to fight,
So may the knight his deed of armes right.

Upon iii. points stant Christs peace oppressed,
First holy church in her selfe deuided,
Which ought of reason first to be redressed,
But yet so high a cause is not decided,
And thus whan humble patience is prided,
The remenaunt which that they should rule,
No wonder is though it stand out of rule.

Of that the head is sicke, the limmes aken,
These reigns that to Christs peace belongen,
For worlds good these deadly wars maken,
Which helpelesse, as in balaunce hongen,
The head aboue hem hath nat vnderfongen
To set peace but euery man sleeth other,
And in this wise hath charity no brother.

The two defauts that bringen in the third,
Of miscreants that seene how we debate,
Between the two, they fallen in amid,
Where now all day they find an open gate,
Lo thus the deadly warre stant algate,
But euer I hope of king Henries grace,
That he it is which shall the peace embrace.

My worthy noble prince and king annoint,
Whom God hath of his grace so preserued,
Behold and see the world vpon this point,
As for thy part, that Christs peace be serued,
So shall thy high mede be deserued,
To him which all shall quite at last,
For this life here may no while last.

See Alexander, Hector, and Iulius,
See Machabeus, Dauid, and Iosue,
See Charlemaine, Godefray, and Arthus,
Fulfilled of warre and of mortality,
Hir fame abitte, but all is vanity,
For death, which hath the warres vnder foot,
Hath made an end, of which there is no boot.

So many a man the soth wete and know,
That peace is good for euery king to haue,
The fortune of the warre is euer vnknow,
But where peace is, there is the marches saue,
That now is vp, to morrow is vnder graue,
The mighty God hath all grace in hand,
Without him men may not long stand.

At the tennes to win or lese a chase,
May no life wete or that the ball be ronne,
Al stant in God, what thing men shal purchase,
The end is in him or that it be begonne,
Men saine the woll whan it is well sponne,
Doth that the cloth is strong and profitable,
And els it may neuer be durable.

The worlds chaunces vpon auenture
Ben euer set, but thilke chaunce of pees
Is so behouedly to the creature,
That is aboue all other peerlees,
But it may not beget nathelees
Among the men to last any while,
But where the herte is plaine without guile.

The peace is as it were a sacrament
Tofore the God, and shall with words plaine,
Without any double entendement
Be treated, for the trouth cannot faine,
But if the men within himselfe ben vaine,
The substaunce of the peace may not be trew,
But euery day it chaungeth vpon new.

But who that is of charity parfite,
He voideth all sleights ferre away,
And set his word vpon the same plite,
Where that his herte had found a siker way,
And thus whan conscience is trewly way,
And that these ben handled with the wise,
It shall abide, and stand in all wise.

The apostle saith, ther may no life be good
Which is not grounded vpon charity,
For charity ne shed neuer blood,
So hath the warre as there no property,
For thilke vertue which is said pity,
With charity so ferforth is acquainted,
That in her may no false semblant be painted.

Cassodore, whose writing is authorised,
Saith: Where that pity reigneth, is grace,
Through which that peace hath al his welth assised,
So that of warre he dredeth no manace,
Where pity dwelleth in the same place,
There may no deadly cruelty sojourne,
Wherof that mercy should his way tourne.

To see what pity forthwith mercy doth,
The cronique is at Rome in thilk empire
Of Constantine, which is a tale sooth,
Whan him was leuer his owne death desire,
Than do the yong children to martire,
Of cruelty he left the quarele,
Pity he wrought, and pity was his hele.

For thilke mans pity which he dede,
God was pitous, and made him hole at all,
Siluester came, and in the same stede
Yaue him baptisme first in speciall,
Which did away the sinne originall,
And all his lepre it hath so purified,
That his pity for euer is magnified.

Pity was cause why this emperour
Was hole in body and in soule both,
And Rome also was set in thilke honour
Of Christs faith, so that they leue or loth,
Which hadden be with Christ tofore wroth,
Receiued were vnto Christs lore,
Thus hall pity be praised euermore.

My worthy liege lord, Henry by name,
Which England hast to gouerne and right,
Men ought well thy pity to proclaime,
Which openliche in all the worlds sight
Is shewed with the helpe of God almight,
To yeve vs peace, which long hath be debated,
Whereof thy prise shall neuer be abated.

My lord, in whome hath euer yet be found
Pity, without spot of violence,
Keepe thilke peace alway within bound,
Which God hath planted in thy conscience,
So shall the cronique of thy patience
Among the saints be taken into memory
To the legend of perdurable glory.

And to thine earthly prise, so as I can,
Which euery man is hold to commend,
I Gower, which am all thy liege man,
This letter vnto thine excellence I send,
As I which euer vnto my liues end
Woll pray for the state of thy persone,
In worship of thy scepter and thy throne.

Not onely to my king, of peace I write,
But to these other princes christen all,
That eche of hem his owne herte endite,
And sease the warre or more mischeefe fall,
Set eke the rightfull pope vpon his stall,
Keepe charity, and draw pity to hand,
Maintaine law, and so the peace shall stand.

Explicit carmen de pacis commendatione, quod ad laudem et memoriam serenissimi principis domini regis Henrici quarti, suus humilis orator Johannes Gower composuit.

Electus Christi, pie rex Henrici fuisti
Qui bene venisti, cum propria regna petisti
Tu mala vicistique bonis bona restituisti
Et populo tristi, nova gaudia contribuisti
Est mihi spes lata, quod adhuc per te renovata
Succedent fata, veteri probitate beata
Est tibi nam grata, gratia sponte data.
Henrici quarti, primus regni fuit annus
Quo mihi defecit visus ad acta mea,
Omnia tempus habent finem natura ministrat
Quem virtute sua frangere nemo potest,
Ultra posse nihil quamvis mihi velle remansit
Amplius ut scribam non mihi posse manet,
Dum potui scripsi, sed nunc quia curva senectus,
Turbavit sensus scripta relinquo scholis,
Scribat qui veniet post me discretior alter.
Ammodo namque manus et mea penna silent,
Hoc tamen in fine verborum queso meorum,
Prospera quod statuat regna futura deus.

EXPLICIT.

A SAYING OF DAN IOHN.

There be foure thinges that maketh man foole,
Honour first putteth him in outrage,
And alder next, solitary and soole,
The second is vnweldy crooked age,
Women also bring men in dotage,
And mighty wine in many diuers wise
Distempren folke which been holden wise.

YET OF THE SAME.

THERE ben four things causing great foly,
Honour first, and vnwildy age,
Women and wine I dare eke specifie,
Make wise men fallen in dotage.
Wherfore by counsail of philosophers sage,
In great honour learne this of me,
With thine estate have humilite.

BALADE DE BON CONSAIL.

IF it befall that God thee list visite
With any tourment or adversite,
Thanke firste the Lord, and thy selfe to quite,
Upon suffraunce and humilite
Found thou thy quarell, what euer that it be:
Make thy defence, and thou shalt haue no losse,
The remembrance of Christ and of his crosse.

EXPLICIT.

SCOGAN UNTO THE LORDS AND GENTLEMEN OF THE KINGS HOUSE.

In the written copies the title hereof is thus: Here followeth a moral ballad to the prince, the Duke of Clarence, the Duke of Bedford, the Duke of Gloucester, the kings sons; by Henry Scogan, at a supper among the merchants in the Vintry at London, in the house of Lewis John.

MY noble sonnes and eke my lords dere,
I your father called vnworthely,
Send vnto you this little treatise here,
Written with mine owne hand full rudely,
Although it be that I not reuerently
Haue written to your estates, I you pray
Mine vnconning taketh benignely
For Gods sake, and herken what I say.

I complain me sore whan I remember me.
The suddaine age that is vpon me fall,
But more I complain my mispent iuuentute
The which is impossible ayen for to call,
But certainly the most complaint of all,
Is to thinke, that I haue be so nice,
That I ne would vertues to me call
In all my youth, but vices aye cherice.

Of which I aske mercy of the Lord,
That art Almighty God in majesty,
Beseking to make so euen accord
Betwixt thee and my soule, that vanity,
Worldly lust, ne blind prosperity,
Haue no lordship ouer my flesh so frele,
Thou Lord of rest and parfite vnity,
Put fro me vice, and kepe my soule hele.

And yeue me might while I haue life and space,
Me to confirme fully to thy pleasaunce,
Shew to me the habundaunce of thy grace,
And in good werks grant me perseueraunce,
Of all my youth forget the ignoraunce,
Yeue me good will to serue thee ay to qneme,
Set all my life after thine ordinaunce,
And able me to mercy or thou deme.

My lords dere, why I this complaint write
To you, whom I loue most entirely,
Is for to warne you as I can endite,
That time lost in youth folily,
Greueth a wight bodily and ghostly,
I meane him that to lust and vice entend,
Wherefore lords I pray you specially,
Your youth in vertue shapeth to dispend.

Plant the root of youth in such a wise,
That in vertue your growing be alway,
Looke alway goodnesse be in your exercise,
That shall you mighty make at each assay,
The fiend to withstand at each affay,
Passeth wisely this perillous pilgrimage,
Think on this word, and werke it euery day,
That shall you yeue a parfite floured age.

Taketh also hede how that these noble clerkes
Writen in hir bookes of great sapience,
Saying that faith is ded withouten werkes,
And right so is estate with negligence
Of vertue, and therefore with diligence
Shapeth of vertue so to plant the root,
That ye thereof haue full experience
To worship of your life and soules boot.

Taketh also hede, that lordship ne estate
Without vertue may not long endure,
Thinketh eke how vices and vertue at debate
Haue ben and shall while the world may dure,
And euer the vicious by auenture
Is ouerthrow, and thinketh euermore
That God is Lord of all vertue, and figure
Of all goodnesse, and therefore follow his lore.

My maister Chaucer, God his soule saue,
That in his language was so curious,
He said that the father which is dead and graue,
Biqueth nothing his vertue with his hous
Unto his children and therefore labourous
Ought ye be, beseeking God of grace
To yeue you might for to be vertuous,
Through which ye might haue part of his place.

Here may ye see that vertuous noblesse,
Commeth not to you by way of auncestry,
But it commeth by lefull businesse
Of honest life and not by slogardry,
Wherefore in youth I rede you edifie
The house of uertue in such a manere,
That in your age may you keepe and gie
Fro the tempest of worlds wawes here.

Thinketh how betwixe vertue and estate
There is a parfite blessed mariage,
Uertue is cause of peace, vice of debate
In mans soule, the which be full of courage,
Cherisheth than vertue, vices to outrage,
Drieuth hem away, let hem haue no wonning
In your soules, leseth not the heritage
Which God hath yeue to vertuous liuing.

Take heed also how men of poore degree
Through vertue haue beset in great honour,
And euer haue liued in great prosperity
Through cherishing of vertuous labour,
Thinketh also how many a gouernour
Called to estate, hath be set full low
Through misusing of right and of errour,
And therefore I counaile you vertue to know.

Thus by your ancesters ye may nothing claim,
As that my maister Chaucer saith expresse,
But temporal thing, that men may hurt or maime,
Than is God stocke of vertuous noblesse,
And sith that he is lord of blessednesse,
And made us all, and for us all deide,
Followeth him in vertue with full businesse,
And of this thing herke how my maister seide.

The first stocke, father of gentilnesse,
What man that claimeth gentill for to be,
Must follow his trace, and all his wits dresse,
Uertue to looke, and vices for to fly,
For unto vertue longeth dignity,
And not the reuers safely dare I deme,
All weare the mitre, corowne, or diademe.

The first stocke was full of rightwisenesse,
True of his word, sobre, pitous, and free,
Cleane of his ghost, and loued busynesse
Ayenst the vice of sloth in honesty,
And but his heire loue vertue, as did he,
He is not gentill though he rich seme,
All weare he mitre, croune, or diademe.

Uice may be an heire to old richesse,
But there may no man, all men may see,
Biqueth his heire his vertuous noblesse,
That is appropried vnto no degree,
But to the first father of majesty,
That maketh his heires hem that can him queme,
All weare he mitre, croune, or diademe.

Lo, heare this noble poete of Brittaine
How lightly in vertuous sentence
The losse on youth of vertue can complaine,
Therefore I pray you with your diligence,
For your profite and Gods reuerence,
Tempereth fully vertue in your mind,
That when ye come to your judges presence,
Ye be not vertulesse than behind.

Many lords haue a manner now adayes,
Though one shew hem a vertuous mattere,
Hir feruent youth is of so false alayes,
That of that art they haue no joy to here,
But as a ship that is without a stere,
Drieuth vp and doun without gouernaunce,
Wening that calme would last yere by yere,
Right so fare they for very ignoraunce.

For very shame know they not by reason,
That after an ebb ther cometh a flood ful rage,
In the same wise whan youth passeth his season
Commeth crooked and unweldy palled age,
And sone after comen the kalends of dotage,
And if that hir youth haue no vertue provided,
All men woll say fie on hir vassalage,
Thus hath hir sloth fro worship hem deuided.

Boecius the clerk, as men may rede and see,
Saith in his booke of Consolation,
What man desireth of vine or tree,
Plenteous fruit in reaping season,
Must euer eschue to doe oppression
Unto the root, while it is yong and grene,
Thus may ye see well by that inclusion,
That youth vertulesse doeth much tene.

Now seeth there ayenst how vertuous noblenesse,
Rooted in youth with good perseueraunce,
Drieuth away all vices and wretchednesse,
As slogardry, riot, and distaunce,
Seeth eke how vertue causeth suffisaunce,
Seeth eke how vertue voideth all vice,
And who so hath vertue, hath all habundaunce
Of wele, as farre as reason can deuise.

Take heed of Tullius Hostilius,
That fro pouert came to high degree
Through vertue, redeth eke of Julius
The conquerour, how poore a man was he,
Yet through his vertue and humility,
Of many countrey had he in gouernance,
Thus vertue bringeth a man to great degree,
Eche wight that lust to do him entendaunce.

Rede here ayenst now of Nero vertulees,
Taketh heed also of proud Balthasare,
They hated vertue, equity, and pees,
And looke how Antiochus fill fro his chare,
That he his skin and bones all to tare,
Look what mischance they had forther vices,
Who so woll not by these signes beware,
I dare well say infortunate and nice is.

I can no more now say, but hereby may ye see,
How vertue causeth parfite sikernesse,
And vices exilen all prosperity,
The best is ech man to chose as I gesse,
Doeth as you list, I me excuse expresse,
I would be right sorry if that ye mischefe,
God confirme you in vertuous noblesse,
So that through negligence ye not it lese.

EXPLICIT.

Sometime the world so stedfast was and stable,
That mans word was an obligatioun,
And now it is so false and deceivable,
That word and deed as in conclusioun
Is nothing like, for tourned is vp so doun
All the world, through mede and fikelnesse,
That all is lost for lack of stedfastnesse.

What maketh the world to be so variable
But lust, that men haue in dissension,
For among vs a man is hold vnable,
But if he can by some collusion
Doe his neighbour wrong and oppression:
What causeth this but wilfull wretchednesse,
That all is lost for lack of stedfastnesse.

Trouth is put downe, reason is hold fable,
Uertue hath now no domination,
Pity is exiled, no man is merciable,
Through couetise is blent discretion,
The world hath made a permutation,
Fro right to wrong, fro trouth to fikelnesse,
That all is lost for lacke of stedfastnesse.

LENUOYE.

Prince desire to be honourable,
Cherish thy folke, and hate extortion,
Suffer nothing that may be reprouable
To thine estate, done in thy region,
Shew forth the yerd of castigation,
Drede God, do law, loue trouth and worthinesse,
And wed thy folke ayen to stedfastnesse.

EXPLICIT.

A BALLADE

OF THE VILLAGE WITHOUT PAINTING.

PLAINTIFE TO FORTUNE.

This wretched worldes transmutation,
As wele and wo, now poor, and now honour
Without order or due discretion,
Gouerned is by Fortunes errour,
But nathelesse the lacke of her fauour
Ne may not doe me sing, though that I die,
I'ay tout pardu, mon temps et labour,
For finally fortune I defie.

Yet is me left the sight of my reasoun,
To know friend fro foe in thy mirrour,
So much hath yet thy tourning vp and doun
Ytaught me to knowen in an hour,
But truly no force of thy reddour
To him that ouer himselfe hath maistre,
My suffisaunce shall be my succour,
For finally fortune I defie.

O Socrates thou stedfast champion,
She might neuer be thy turmentour,
Thou neuer dredest her oppression,
Ne in her chere found thou no fauour,
Thou knew the deceit of her colour,
And that her most worship is for to lie,
I know her eke a false dissimulour,
For finally fortune I defie.

THE ANSWERE OF FORTUNE.

No man is wretched, but himselfe it wene,
Ne that hath in himselfe suffisaunce,
Why saist thou than I am to thee so kene,
That hast thy selfe out of my gouernance?
Say thus, graunt mercy of thine habundance
That thou hast lent or this, thou shalt not striue,
What wost thou yet how I thee woll auance,
And eke thou hast thy best friend aliue.

I haue thee taught deuision betweene
Friend of effect, and friend of countenaunce,
Thee needeth not the gall of an hine,
That cureth eyen darke for hir pennaunce
Now seest thou clere that were in ignoraunce,
Yet holt thine anker, and yet thou maist arriue
There bounty beareth the key of my substance,
And eke thou hast thy best friend aliue.

How many haue I refused to sustene,
Sith I haue thee fostred in thy pleasaunce,
Wolt thou than make a statute on thy quene,
That I shall be aye at thine ordinaunce,
Thou born art in my reigne of variaunce,
Abont the whele with other must thou driue,
My lore is bet, than wicke is thy greuaunce,
And eke thou hast thy best friend aliue.

THE ANSWERE TO FORTUNE.

Thy lore I dampne, it is aduersity,
My friend maist thou not reue blind goddesse,
That I thy friends know, I thanke it thee,
Take hem againe, let hem go lie a presse,
The niggardes in keeping hir richesse,
Pronostike is, thou wolt hir toure assaile,
Wicke appetite commeth aye before sicknesse,
In general this rule may not faile.

FORTUNE.

Thou pinchest at my mutability,
For I thee lent a droppe of my richesse,
And now me liketh to withdraw me,
Why shouldest thou my royalty oppresse,
The sea may ebbe and flow more and lesse,
The welken hath might to shine, rain, and hail,
Right so must I kithe my brotilnesse,
In generall this rule may not fail.

THE PLAINTIFE.

Lo, the execution of the majesty,
That all purueigheth of his rightwisenesse,
That same thing fortune clepen ye,
Ye blind beasts full of leaudnesse,
The heauen hath property of sikernesse,
This world hath euer restlesse trauaile,
The last day is end of mine entresse,
In generall this rule may not faile.

THENUOYE OF FORTUNE.

Princes I pray you of your gentilnesse
Let not this man and me thus cry and plain,
And I shall quite you this busines,
And if ye liste releue him of his pain,
Pray ye his best frende of his noblesse,
That to some better state he may attain.

LENUOY.

To broken been the statutes hie in Heauen,
That create were eternally tendure,
Sithe that I see the bright goddes seuen,
Mowe wepe and waile, and passion endure,
As may in yearth a mortall creature:
Alas, fro whens may this thing procede,
Of which errour I die almost for drede.

By word eterne whilom was it shape,
That fro the fifth cercle in no manere,
Ne might of teares doune escape,
But now so weepeth Uenus in her sphere,
That with her teares she wol drench vs here,
Alas Scogan this is for thine offence,
Thou causest this deluge of pestilence.

Hast thou not said in blaspheme of the goddis,
Through pride, or through thy gret rekelnes,
Such things as in the law of loue forbode is,
That for thy lady saw not thy distresse,
Therfore thou yaue her vp at Mighelmesse?
Alas Scogan of olde folke ne yong,
Was neuer erst Scogan blamed for his tong.

Thou drew in scorne Cupide eke to record,
Of thilke rebell word that thou hast spoken,
For which he woll no lenger be thy lord,
And Scogan, though his bow be not broken,
He woll not with his arowes be ywroken
On thee ne me, ne none of our figure,
We shall of him haue neither hurte ne cure.

Now certes frend I drede of thine vnhape,
Lest for thy gilte the wreche of loue procede
On all hem that been here and round of shape,
That be so likely folke to spede,
Than we shall of our labour haue our mede,
But well I wot thou wolt answere and say,
Lo old Grisell list to renne and play.

Nay Scogan say not so, for I me excuse,
God helpe me so, in no rime doubtles,
Ne thinke I neuer of sleepe wake my Muse,
That rusteth in my sheath still in pees,
While I was yong I put her forth in prees,
But all shall passe that men prose or rime,
Take euery man his tourne as for his time.

Scogan thou knelest at the stremes hedde
Of grace, of all honour, and of worthiness,
In thende of which I am dull as dedde,
Forgotten in solitary wildernesse,
Yet Scogan thinke on Tullius kindness,
Mind thy frende there it may fructifie,
Farewel, and looke thou neuer eft loue defie.

EXPLICIT.

Go forth king, rule thee by sapience,
Bishop be able to minister doctrine,
Lorde to true counsaile yeue audience,
Womanhode to chastity euer encline,
Knight let thy deedes worship determine,
Be righteous judge in sauing thy name,
Rich do almose, lest thou lese bliss with shame.

People obey your king and the law,
Age be ruled by good religion,
True seruaunt be dredful and kepe thee vnder aw,
And thou poore, fie on presumpcion,
Inobedience to youth is vtter destruction,
Remember you how God hath set you lo,
And doe your part as ye be ordeined to.

T. OCCLEVE TO HIS EMPTY PURSE.

To you my purse and to none other wight
Complaine I, for ye be my lady dere,
I am sorry now that ye be light,
For certes ye now make me heauy chere,
Me were as lefe laid vpon a bere,
For which vnto your mercy thus I crie,
Be heauy againe or els mote I die.

Now vouchsafe this day or it be night,
That I of you the blissful sowne may here,
Or see your colour like the Sunne bright,
That of yelowness had neuer pere,
Ye be my life, ye be my hertes stere,
Queene of comfort and of good compaine,
Be heauy againe, or els mote I die.

Now purse that art to me my liues light,
And sauiour, as downe in this world here,
Out of this towne helpe me by your might,
Sith that you woll not be my treasure,
For I am shaue as nere as any frere,
But I pray vnto your curtesie,
Be heauy againe, or els mote I die.

EXPLICIT.

OCCLEVE UNTO THE KING.

O CONQUEROUR of Brutes Albion,
Which that by line and free election
Been very king, this to you I send,
And ye that may all harmes amend,
Haue minde vpon my supplicacion.

EXPLICIT.

A BALLAD OF GOOD COUNSAIL,

TRANSLATED OUT OF LATIN VERSES INTO ENGLISH BY DAN JOHN LIDGATE, CLEPED THE MONK OF BURY.

CONSIDER well every circumstaunce,
Of what estate ever thou bee,
Riche, strong, or mighty of puissaunce,
Prudent or wise, discrete or besie,
The dome of folkes in soch thou may not fly,
What ever thou doest trust well this,
A wicked tonge woll alway deme amis.

For in thy porte or in apparaile,
If thou be cladde and honestly be saine,
Anone the people of malice woll not faile,
Without aduice or reason for to sain,
That thine array is made or wrought in vain.
Suffer hem speake, and trust right wel this,
A wicked tonge wol alway deme amis.

Thou will to kings be equipolent,
With great lordes evin and peregall,
And if thou be torne, all to rent,
Than woll they say, and jangle over all,
Thou art a slougarde that never thrive shall,
Suffre hem speke, and trust right well this,
A wicked tonge woll alway deme amis.

If it befall that thou take a wife,
They woll falsly say in their entent,
Thou art likely ever to live in strife,
Voide of all rest, without aledgment,
Wifes ben maistres, this is their judgment,
Suffren all their spech, and trust right well this,
A wicked tonge woll alway deme amis.

If thou be faire and excellent of beaute,
Yet woll they say that thou art amourous,
If thou be foule and vgly on to see,
They woll affirme that thou art vicious,
The people of language is so dispitous,
Suffre all their spech, and trust right well this,
A wicked tonge woll alway deme amis.

If so be that of parfitenesse,
Thou hast vowed to live in chastitee,
Than woll folke, of thy person expresse,
Thou art impotent tengendre in thy degree,
And thus where thou be chaste or dessavy,
Suffre hem speake, and trust right well this,
A wicked tongue woll alway deme amis.

If thou be fatte other corpolent,
Than wol they sain thou art a great gloton,
A devourer, or els vinolent,
If thou be leane or megre of fashion,
Call thee a nigard in their opinion,
Suffre them speake, and trust right wel this,
A wicked tonge woll away deme amis.

If thou be rich, some woll yeve thee laude,
And say it commeth of prudent governaunce,
And some wol saine it commeth of fraude,
Other by sleight, or false chevisaunce,
To sain the worst, folke have so great pleasaunce,
What suffre hem say, and trust right wel this,
A wicked tonge woll alway deme amis.

If thou be sadde or sobre of countenaunce,
Men woll sain thou thinkest some treason,
And if thou be glad of dalinunce,
Men woll deme it desolution,
And call faire speach adulacion,
Yet let hem speak, and trust right well this,
A wicked tonge wol alway deme amis.

Who that is holy by perfection,
Men of malice woll clip him ypocrite,
And who is mery of clene entention,
Men sain in riot he doth him delite,
Some mourn in blacke, some love in clothes white,
Suffre men speake, and trust right well this,
A wicked tonge woll alway deme amis.

Honest aray men deme it pompe and pride,
And who goeth poore, men cail him a waster,
And who goeth still men mark him on that side,
Seine that he is a spy or agiler:
Who wasteth not, men sain he hath treasour,
Whereof conclude and trust right well this,
A wicked tonge will alway deme amis.

Who speketh moch men clepeth him prudent,
Who that debateth, men saine that he is hardy,
And who saith litel with great sentement,
Some folke yet wol wite him of foly,
Trouth is put down, and vp goth flattery,
And who that list plainly know the cause of this,
A wicked tonge woll alway deme amis.

For though a man were as pacient,
As was David throw his humilite,
Or with Salomon in wisedome as prudent,
Or in knighthode egall with Josue,
Or manly proved, as Judas Machabe,
Yet for al that, trust right well this,
A wicked tonge woll alway deme amis.

And though a man had the prowesse
Of worthy Hector, Troys champion,
The love of Troylus, or the kindnesse,
Or of Cesar the famous high renoun,
With all Alexaunders dominacioun,
Yet for all that trust right well this,
A wicked tonge woll alway deme amis.

Or though a man of high or low degree,
Of Tullius had the sugred eloquence,
Or of Seneca the moralitee,
Or of Caton forsight and providence,
The conquest of Charles, Artures magnificence,
Yet for all that trust right well this,
A wicked tonge woll alway deme amis.

Touching of women, that parfit innocence
Though that they had, of Hester the noblenesse,
Or of Gresilde, the humble pacience,
Or of Judith, the preuid stablenesse,
Or Polixcenes virginall clennesse,
Yet dare I seine, and trust right wel this,
Some wicked tong would deme of them amis.

The wifely trouth of Penelope
Though they it had in hir possession,
Helenes beauty, the kindnesse of Medee,
The loue vnfayned of Martia Caton,
Or Alcestes trewe affection,
Yet dare I saine and trust right well this,
A wicked tonge wol alway deme amis.

Than sooth it is that no man may eschew
The swerd of tonges, but it will kerve and bite,
Full hard it is a man for to remew,
Out of their daunger him for to aquite,
Wo to the tonges that hemselfe delite,
To hinder or slaunder, and set their study in this,
And their pleasaunces to deme alway amis.

Most noble princes, cherishers of vertue,
Remembreth you of high discretion,
The first vertue most pleasing to Jesu,
(By the writing and sentence of Caton)
Is a good tonge in his opinion,
Chastise the reverse of wisedome do this,
Voideth your hearing from al that deme amis.

A BALLAD

IN THE PRAISE AND COMMENDATION OF MASTER GEFFERY CHAUCER, FOR HIS GOLDEN ELOQUENCE.

Maister Geffray Chaucer, that now lithe in grave,
The noble rhetoricion, and poet of Great Britaine,
That worthy was that laurer of poetry to have
For this his labour, and the palme to attain,
Which first made to distil, and rein,
The gold dewe dropes, of speech and eloquence,
Into English tonge, through his excellence.

EXPLICIT.

HERE FOLLOWETH CERTAIN

WORKS OF GEFFREY CHAUCER,

ANNEXED TO THE IMPRESSIONS PRINTED IN THE YEARS 1561, AND 1602. ALL COLLECTED AND ADJOYNED TO HIS FORMER WORKS BY JOHN STOWE.

A BALLAD

MADE BY CHAUCER, TEACHING WHAT IS GENTILNESS, OR WHOM IS WORTHY TO BE CALLED GENTILL.

The first stocke father of gentilnes,
What man desireth gentil for to bee,
Must followe his trace, and all his wittes dreis,
Uertue to love, and vices for to flee,
For vnto vertue longeth dignitee,
And not the revers falsly dare I deme,
All weare he miter, crowne or diademe.

This first stocke was full of rightwisnes,
Trew of his worde, sober, pitous and free,
Clene of his goste and loved besinesse,
Against the vice of slouth in honeste,
And but his eyre love vertue as did he,
He is not gentill though he rich seme,
All weare he miter, crowne or diademe.

Uicesse may well be heir to old richesse,
But there may no man, as men may wel see,
Byquethe his eyre his vertues noblenesse,
That is appropried vnto no degree,
But to the first father in majestee,
That maketh his eyres them that him queme
All weare he miter, crowne or diademe.

EXPLICIT.

A PROVERB

AGAINST COVETISE AND NEGLIGENCE.

What shall these clothes manifold
Lo this hote somers day,
After great heat commeth cold,
No man cast his pilch away,
Of all this world the large compasse
It will not in mine armes twaine,
Who so mokel woll enbrace,
Litel thereof he shall distraine.

EXPLICIT.

A BALLAD

WHICH CHAUCER MADE AGAINST WOMEN UNCONSTANT.

Madame, for your new fangleness,
Many a servaunt have you put out of your grace,
I take my leave of your unstedfastness,
For well I wote, while ye to live haue space,
Ye cannot love full half yere in a place,
To new things your lust is ever kene,
In stede of blew, thus may ye wear all grene.

Right as a mirrour that nothing may enpresse,
But lightly as it cometh, so mote it passe,
So fares your love, your works bear witnes
There is no faith may your herte enbrace
But as a wedercocke, that turneth his face
With euery wind, ye fare, and that is seene,
In stede of blew, thus may ye weare all grene.

Ye might be shrined, for your brothilnes,
Better than Dalyda, Cresseide, or Candace,
For ever in changing stondeth your sikernes,
That catche may no wight, from your herte a race,
If ye lose one, ye can wel twein purchace
Al light for somar, ye wot well what I meene,
In stede of blew, thus may ye weare all grene.

EXPLICIT.

HERE FOLLOWETH

A BALLAD

WHICH CHAUCER MADE IN THE PRAISE, OR RATHER DISPRAISE, OF WOMEN, FOR THEIR DOUBLENESS.

This world is full of variaunce,
In euery thing who taketh hede
That faith and trust, and all constance,
Exiled been this is no drede,
And saue onely in womanhede,
I can see no sekerness,
But for all that, yet as I rede,
Beware alway of doubleness.

Also that freshe somer floures,
White and rede, blewe and greene,
Been sodenly, with winter shoures,
Made feinte and fade, without wene:
That trust is none as ye may seene,
In no thing, nor no stedfastness,
Except in women, thus I-meene,
Yet aye beware of doubleness.

The croked Mone, this is no tale,
Some while yshene and bright of hewe,
And after that full derke and pale,
And euery moneth chaungeth newe,
That who the veray soth knewe,
All things is bilt on brotleness,
Saue that women aye be trewe,
Yet aye beware of doubleness.

The lusty freshe sommers day,
And Phebus with his beames clere,
Towards night they drawe away
And none lenger list appere,
That in this present life now here,
Nothing abideth in his faireness,
Saue women aye be found intere,
And deuoide of doubleness.

The sea eke, with his sterne wawes,
Eche day floweth new againe,
And by concours of his lawes
The ebbe floweth in certaine:
After grete drought, there cometh a raine,
That farewel here all stabelness,
Saue that women be hole and plaine,
Yet aye beware of doubleness.

Fortunes whele goeth round about,
A thousand times, day and night,
Whose course standeth euer in doubt,
For to transmew, she is so light,
For which aduerteth in your sight,
The vntrust of worldy fikelness,
Saue women, which of kindly right,
Ne hath no teche of doubleness.

What man may the wind restraine,
Or hold a snake by the taile,
Or a slipper ele constraine,
That it will voide, without faile,
Or who can driue so a naile,
To make sure new fongleness,
Saue women that can gie their saile,
To row their boote with doubleness.

At euery hauen they can ariue,
Where as they wote is good passage,
Of innocence they can not striue,
With wawes nor no rockes rage,
So happy is their lodemanage,
With needle and stone their course to dress,
That Salomon was not so sage,
To find in them no doubleness.

Therefore who so them accuse,
Of any double entencion,
To speake, rowne, other to muse,
To pinch at their condicion,
All is but false collusion,
I dare rightwell the sothe express,
They haue no better protection,
But shrowd them vnder doubleness.

So well fortuned is their chaunce,
The dice to turne vp so doune,
With sise and sincke they can auaunce,
And than by reuolucion,
They set a fell conclusion,
Of lombes, as in soothfastness,
Though clerkes make mencion,
Their kinde is fret with doubleness.

Sampson had experience,
That women were full trew yfound,
Whan Dalyda of innocence,
With sheeres gan his heere to round,
To speake also of Rosamound,
And Cleopatris faithfulness,
The stories plainly will confound,
Men that apeche their doubleness.

Single thing ne is not praised,
Nor of old is of no renoun,
In balaunce whan they be peised,
For lacke of waight they be bore doun,
And for this cause of just reason.
These women all of rightwiseness,
Of choise and free election,
Moste loue eschaunge and doubleness.

LENUOYE.

O ye women which been enclined,
By influence of your nature,
To been as pure as gold yfined,
In your truth for to endure,
Arme your selfe in strong armure,
Least men assaile your sikerness,
Set on your brest your selfe to assure,
A mighty shield of doubleness.

EXPLICIT.

THIS WORK FOLLOWING WAS COMPILED BY CHAUCER, AND IT IS CALLED

THE CRAFT OF LOVERS[1].

Moral is a *similitude* who liste their balades sewe,
The craft of loues curious arguments,
For some been false and some been founden trewe,
And some been double of entendements,
Thus louers with their *morall* documents,
And eloquent langage they can examplifie,
The craft of loue what it doth signifie.

Who list vnto this balades have inspection,
Thinke that loves lordships excellent,
Is remedy for disease and correction,
To wofull herte and body impotent,
Suppose the maker that he be negligent
In his compilyng hold him excusable,
Because his spirites be sory and lamentable.

" Most soverain lady surmounting your noblenes,
O intenuate ienipre and daisie delicious
My trust, mine helth, my cordiall foundres,
O medicine sanatife to sores langorous,
O comfortable creature of lovers amorous,

[1] Ritson attributes this to Lydgate.

O excellent herber of lovely countenaunce,
Ye regester my love in your remembraunce."

" Certes sir your painted eloquence,
So gay, so fresh and eke so taleatife,
It doth transcend the wit of dame Prudence,
For to declare your thought or to discrive,
So gloriously glad langage ye contrive,
Of your conceit, your thought, and your entent,
I will beware for drede or I be stent."

" O rubicunde rose, and white as the lilly,
O clarified christal of worldly portraiture,
O courfin figure resplendent with glory,
O gem of beaute, o carboncle shining pure,
Your fairnes excedeth the craft of dame Nature
Most womanly behaving your lovely countenaunce,
Ye regester my love in your remembraunce."

" What availeth sir your proclamacion,
Of curious talking, not touching to sadnes,
It is but winde, flattering, and adulacion,
Imesurable thought of worldly wildnes,
Which is cheife cause of ghostly feblenes,
Your wil, your thought, your double entendement,
I wil beware of drede, or I be shent."

" My wit, my thought, and mine invencion,
Is for to please you my lady soverain,
And for your love throw many a region
I would be exiled, so that ye wold not disdain
To have pity on me whan I complain,
In wele and wo to suffre perturbaunce,
So that ye woll have me in remembraunce."

" What is your will plainly ye do expresse,
That maketh this curious supplicacion,
Say on sir on hertely tendernesse,
Beth well advised of vaine delectacion,
At your beginning thinke on the terminacion,
Pass not your boundes be not too negligent,
And ever beware for drede or ye be shent."

" Your goodly behaving your beaute and countenaunce
Maketh me incline to do you reverence,
Your lovely loking your glorious governance
Overcometh my spirits my wit and my prudence
Some drop of grace, of your magnificence,
Unto your servaunt ye shew attendaunce,
And regester my love in your remembraunce."

" O comberous thought of mans fragility,
O fervent will of lustes furious,
O cruel corage causing adversity,
Of womens corrupcion and eke contrarious,
Remember man that chaunge is perilous,
To breke the virginity of virgines innocent,
Wherfore beware wankind or thou be shent."

" My peine is preuy, impossible to deserne
My lamentable thoughts by casting mourning,
O general judge Jesu sitting superne,
Graciously convert that loue of my swete thing,
O amiable lady gracious and beninge,
I put me wholy in your gouernaunce,
Exile me not out of your remembraunce."

" Me semeth by langage ye be some protestate
Or else some curious gloser disceuable,
What is your name mekely I make regrate,
Or of what science or craft commendable,
I am a lady excellent, and honorable,
He must be gay that should be to mine entent,
Wherefore I will be ware or I be shent."

" Lord God this is a sharpe examinacion,
Of her that is most in my memory,
Unto you lady I make certificacion,
My name is trew loue of carnal desidery,
Of mans copulacion the very exemplary,
Which am one of your seruaunts of pleasaunce,
I must be cheefe called to remembraunce."

" I haue sought true loue of yeres great proces,
Yet found I neuer loue but for a season,
Some men be diuerse and know no gentilnes,
And some lacke both wisedome and reason,
In some men is trust, in some men is treason,
Wherfore I will conclude my auisement,
And ever beware for drede that I be shent."

" The rectour Tullius so gay of eloquence,
And Ovide that sheweth the craft of loue expres,
With habundaunce of Salomons prudence,
And pulcritude of Absalons fairenesse,
And I were possessed with Jobs great richesse
Manly as Sampson my person to auance,
Yet shuld I submit me in your remembrance."

" Now sir if that it pleaseth your noblenesse
To give aduertence to my question,
What thing is pleasure of sweetnesse,
And is most bitter in final succesion?
Or what thing giveth man occasion
In tender age for to be concupiscent?
Resolue this question or drede sir ye be shent."

" My soueraigne lady, Ouide in his writing
Saith that desire of worldly concupiscence
As for a time is sweete in his worching,
And in his end he causeth great offence:
Notwithstanding my lady dame Prudence,
Green flowring age, a manly countenaunce
Causeth ladies to haue it in remembraunce."

" Your goodly answer so notable in substaunce,
Wold cause the herte of womanhede conuert
Unto delite of natural pleasaunce:
But of one thing I wold faine be expert,
Why mens langage wol procure and transuert
The will of women and virgines innocent?
Wherefore I am aferd or I be shent."

" Let neuer the loue of true loue be losed,
(My soueraine lady) in no maner wise,
In your confidence my wordes I haue closed,
My amiable loue to you I do promise,
So that ye knit the knot of exercise,
Both lock and key ye haue in gouernance,
Emprint my loue in your remembrance."

" O very trust and I were certefied,
The plain entention of your hertes cordiall,
Me seemeth in blisse than were I glorified,
Unto your pleasure I would be at your call,
But euer I feare of chaunces casuall,
Of fraude, disceipt, and langage insolent,
Than were I sure maidenhed should be shent."

" Ther was neuer tresour of terrestrial riches,
Nor precious stones rekened innumerable,
To be of comparison vnto your high goodnes,
Aboue all creatures to me most amiable,
Trust not the contrary I was neuer disceuable,
Keep well true loue, forge no dissemblance,
And graciously take me to your remembrance."

Me semeth by feiture of womanly properte,
Ye shuld be trusty and trewe of promis,
I finde in you no false duplicite,
Wherefore true loue ye haue my herte I wis,
And euermore shall endure so haue I blis,
The federasie made with good auisement,
God graunt grace that nether of vs be shent."

Whan Phebus fresh was in chare splendent,
In the moneth of May erly in a morning,
I hard two louers profer this argument,
In the yeere of our Lord a M. by rekening,
CCCXL. and UIII. yeere following,
O potent princesse conserue true louers all,
And grant them thy region and blisse celestiall.

EXPLICIT THE CRAFT OF LOUERS.

A BALLAD.

Of their nature they greatly them delite,
With holy face feined for the nones,
In saintwary their frends to visite,
More for reliques than for saincts bones,
Though they be closed vnder precious stones,
To gete them pardon like their old vsages,
To kissē no shrines but lusty quike images.

Whan maidens are wedded and houshold haue take,
All their humility is exiled away,
And the cruel hertes beginneth to awake,
They do all the besie cure that they can or may,
To vexe their houshold maisters that soth for to say
Wherfore ye yong men I rede you for thy,
Beware alway, the blind eats many a fly.

Of this mater I dare make no lenger relacion,
For in default of slepe my spirits wexen faint
In my study I haue had so long an habitacion
That my body and my gost are greuously attaint
And therfore of this proces I make no lenger complaint
But whether that blind eat flesh or fish
I pray God keepe the fly out of my dish.

Now I make an end, and lay me doun to rest,
For I know by experience verament,
If maidens and wiues knew and wist,
Who made the matter he should be shent,
Wherefore I pray God omnipotent,
Him saue and keepe both night and day.
Written in the lusty season of May.

EXPLICIT.

THE

TEN COMMANDMENTS OF LOVE.

Certes ferre extendeth yet my reason,
This matter as it should be, to discriue,
But I trust your grace will in this season,
Consider how with conning that I striue,
For in his fauour coud I neuer arriue,
Eloquence this ballad hath in great despite,
The maker lacketh maner to endite.

Of Loues commandments x. is the number,
As afterward shall rudely be rehearsed,
And louers in no wise depart asunder,
Where as they be obserued and redressed,
Daunger and vnkindnesse been oppressed,
And that is commaunded this to make,
Is your owne all other to forsake.

FAITH.

Faith is the first and principally to tell,
Uery loue requireth soch credence,
That eche beleue other as true as the gospel,
Without adulacion or flattering audience,
In true meaning and trusty confidence,
Paint not your conning with colour ne fable,
For than your loue must needs be vnstable.

ENTENCION.

In the second to treate of entencion,
Your louer to please do your busie cure,
For as min author Romance maketh mencion,
Without entent your loue may not endure,
As women will thereof I am right sure,
Endeuour with herte, will, and thought,
To please him onely that hir loue hath sought.

DISCRECION.

In your dealing euer be discrete,
Set not your loue there as it shall be losed,
Aduertise in your mind whether he be mete,
That vnto him your herte may be disclosed,
And after as you find him than disposed,
Point by discretion your hour, time and place,
Conueniently meting with arms to embrace.

PACIENCE.

Of these commandments, the iv. is pacience,
Tho by irous corage your louer be meued,
With soft wordes and humble obedience,
His wrath may sone be swaged and releued,
And thus his loue obteined and acheued,
Will in you roote with greater diligence,
Bicause of your meke and womanly pacience.

SECRETNESSE.

Secretly behaue you in your werks,
In shewing countenance or meuing of your iye,
Though soch behauor to some folk be derke,
He that hath loued will it soone aspie,
Thus your selfe your counsaile may descrie,
Make priuy to your deling as few as ye may
For iii. may keep a counsel if twain be away.

PRUDENCE.

Let prudence be gouernor of your bridel reine,
Set not your loue in so feruent wise,
But that in goodly hast ye may refreine,
If your louer list you to dispise,
Romaunce mine auctour wold you this aduise,
To slacke your loue, for if ye do not so,
That wanton lust will tourne you into wo.

PERSEUERANCE.

Stablish your loue in so stedfast wise,
If that ye thinke your louer will be trew,
As entirely as you can denise,
Loue him onely and refuse all new,
Than shall not your worship change his hew,
For certes masteres than is he to blame,
But if that he will quite you with the same.

PITY.

Be piteous to him as womanhod requireth
That for your loue endureth paines smart,
Whom so sore your pleasaunt looke enfireth,
That printed is your beauty in his hart,
And wounded lieth without knife or dart,
There let your pity spred without restraint,
For lacke of pity, let not your seruaunt faint.

MEASURE.

Take mesure in your talking, be not outrage
For this rehearseth Romance de la Rose,
A man endued with plenteous langage,
Oft time is denied his purpose,
Take measure in langage, wisedom in grose,
For mesure as right well proued is by reason
Things vnseasonable setteth in season.

MERCY.

Soch daunger exile him vtterly,
Ouer all mercy to occupy his place,
To piteous complaints your eares apply,
And receiue your seruaunt in grace,
To him that bound is in loues lace,
Shew fauour lady and be not merciless,
Least ye be called a common murderess.

LENUOYE.

Whan ye vnto this balade haue inspection,
In my making holde me excusable,
It is submitted vnto your correction,
Consider that my conning is disable,
To write to you the figure vniable,
All deuoide of conning and experience,
Maner of inditing, reason and eloquence.

Trust it well the maker your owne,
You to obey while his life may endure,
To do you seruice as a man vnknowne,
No guerdone desiring of yearthly treasure,
But if it might accord with your pleasure,
For true seruice him to auaunce,
And call him into your remembraunce.

EXPLICIT THE TEN COMMAUNDEMENTS OF LOVE.

THE NINE LADIES WORTHY.

QUEENE SINOPE.

PROFULGENT in preciousnesse, O Sinope queen,
Of all feminine bearing the scepter and regaly,
Subduing the large country of Armenia as it was sene,
Maugre their mights thou brought them to apply,
Thine honour to encrease, thy power to magnify,
O renomed Hercules with all thy pompous boste,
This princes tooke the prisoner and put to flight thine hoste.

LADY IPOLITE.

Yet Hercules wexed red for shame, whan I spake of Ipolite,
Chief patrones and captain of the people of Sinope,
Which with amorous cher and coragious might,
Smote thee to ground for all thy cruelty,
Wherfore the dukeship of Diomedes and dignity,
Unto her great laud and glory perpetuall,
Attributed is with triumph laureall.

LADY DEIFILE.

The noble triumphe of this lady Deifile,
In releue and succor of the great duke of Athenes,
She chastised and brought into perpetual exile,
The aureat citezeins of mighty Thebes,
The strong brasen pillers there had no reles,
But she with her sister Argia them did doun cast,
And with furious fire that citee brent at last.

LADY TEUCA.

O pulchrior sole in beauty full lucident,
Of all femine most formous flour,
In Italy reigning with great chevalry right feruent,
Chastised the Romains as maistres and conqueror
O lady Teuca moch was thy glory and honor,
Yet moch more was to comend thy benignite
In thy parfite liuing and virginall chastitie.

QUEENE PANTASILE.

O ye Trogeans for this noble quene Pantasile
Sorow her mortality with dolorous compassion
Her loue was to you so pregnant and fertile,
That against the proud Grekes made defension
With her victorious hand was al her affection
To lash the Greks to ground was her hertes joy,
To reuenge the coward death of Hector of Troy.

QUEENE THAMIRIS.

O thou rigorous quene Thamiris inuincible,
Upon the strong and hideous people of citees reining,
Which by thy power and wits sensible
Thou tokest in battail Cyrus the great king
Of Perce and Mede, his head of in blood lying,
Thou badest him drink that blood had thursted,
And xxii. M. of his host there were distressed.

LADY LAMPEDO.

The famous trump of gold forged so bright,
Hath blowen so vp the fame and glory enuiron,
Of this lady Lampedo with her sister Marthelit
That al the land of Feminie, Europe, and Epheson
Be yelden and applied lowly to her subjection,
Many an high toure she raised, and built toures long
Perpetuelly to last with huge wals strong.

QUEENE SEMIRAMYS.

Lo here Semiramys quene of great Babilon,
Most generous gem and floure of louely fauor,
Whose excellent power fro Mede vnto septentrion
Florished in her regally as a mighty conqueror
Subdued al Barbary: and Zorast that king of honor
She slue in Ethiop, and conquerd Armony in Inde,
In which non entred but Alexander and she as I finde.

LADY MENALIP.

Also the lady Menalip thy sister dere,
Whose marcial power no man coud withstand,
Through the worlde was not found her pere,
The famous duke Thesus she had in hand,
She chastised him and all his land,
The proude Greekes mightely she did assaile,
Ouercame and vanquished them in battaile.

EXPLICIT THE BALLADES OF THE NINE WORTHIES OF LADIES.

Alone walking
In thought plaining
And sore sighing } All desolate.

Me remembring
Of my liuing
My death wishing } Both early and late.

Infortunate
Is so my fate
That wote ye what } Out of measure.

My life I hate:
Thus desperate
In such poore estate } Doe I endure.

Of other cure
Am I not sure,
Thus to endure } Is hard certain.

Such is my vre
I you ensure,
What creature } May haue more pain.

My truth so plaine
Is take in vaine
And great disdaine } In remembraunce.

Yet I full faine
Would me complaine
Me to abstaine } From this penance.

But in substaunce
None allegeaunce
Of my greuaunce } Can I not finde.

Right so my chaunce
With displesaunce
Doth me auaunce. } And thus an end.

EXPLICIT.

A BALLAD.

In the season of Feuerere whan it was full cold,
Frost, and snow, hail, rain, hath dominacion,
With changeable elements, and winds manifold,
Which hath ground, flour, and herb, vnder jurisdiction,
For a time to dispose after their correction,
And yet Aprill with his pleasaunt shours,
Dissolueth the snow, and bringeth forth his flours.

Of whose inuencion ye louers may be glad,
For they bring in the kalends of May,
And ye with countenaunce demure, meke and sad,
Owe for to worship, the lusty floures alway,
And in especiall one is called see of the day,
The daisee, a floure white and rede,
And in French called *La bele Margarete*.

O commendable floure and most in mind,
O floure so gracious of excellence,
O amiable Margarite exalted of natife kind,
Unto whom I must resort with all my diligence
With herte, wil, and thought, with most lowly obedience
I to be your seruant, and ye my regent,
For life ne death neuer to repent.

Of this processe now forth will I proceed,
Which happeth me with great disdaine,
As for the time thereof I take lest heed,
For vnto me was brought the sore pain,
Therfore my cause was the more to complain,
Yet vnto me my greuaunce was the lesse,
That I was so nigh my lady and maistresse.

There where she was present in this place,
I hauing in herte great aduersitee,
Except onely the fortune and good grace
Of her, whose I am, the which releeueth mee,
And my great dures vnlased hath shee,
And brought me out of the fearful greuance,
If it were her ease, it were to me pleasance.

As for the wo which I did endure,
It was to me a very pleasaunt pain,
Seing it was for that faire creature,
Which is my lady and souerain,
In whose presence to rest I would be fain,
So that I wist it were her pleasure,
For she is from all distaunce my protectour.

Though vnto me dredful were the chance,
No maner of gentilnes oweth me to blame:
For I had leuer suffer of death the penance,
Than she shuld for me haue dishonor or shame,
Or in any wise lose a drop of her good name,
So wisely God for his endlesse mercy,
Grant euery true loue, to haue joy of his lady.

EXPLICIT.

A BALLAD.

O mercifull and O merciable,
King of kinges, and father of pitee,
Whose might and mercy is incomperable,
O Prince eterne, O mighty Lord say we,
To whom mercy is giuen of property,
On thy seruaunt that lieth in prison bound,
Haue thou mercy or that his herte be wound.

And that thou wilt graunt to him thy prisoner,
Free liberty, and lose him out of pain,
All his desires and all his heauy chere,
To all gladnesse they were restored again,
Thy high vengeance, why shold thou not refrain
And shew mercy, sith he is penitent,
Now helpe him lord, and let him not be shent.

But sith it is so, there is a trespasse done,
Unto mercy let yeeld the trespassour,
It is her office to redresse it sone,
For trespasse to mercy is a mirrour,
And like as the swete, hath the price by sour,
So by trespasse, mercy hath all her might,
Without trespasse, mercy hath lacke of light.

What shold phisike do but if sikenes were,
What nedeth salue, but if there were sore,
What nedeth drink, wher thirst hath no power
What should mercy do, but trespas go afore,
But trespas be, mercy woll be little store,
Without trespas neuer execucion,
May mercy haue ne chiefe perfection.

The cause at this time of my writing,
And touching mercy to whom I make mone,
Is for feare lest my soueraigne and sweting,
I meane her that louelier is none,
With me is displeased for causes more than one,
What causes they be that knoweth God and she,
But so do not I alas it forthinketh me.

What see she in me, what defaut or offence,
What haue I do that she on me disdain,
How might I doe come to her presence,
To tell my complaint whereof I were fain,
I drede to looke, to speake, or to complain,
To her that hath my herte euery deale,
So helpe me God I wold al thing wer weale.

For in this case came I neuer or now,
In loues daunce so farre to hold the trace,
For with mine ease, scape I ne mow
Out of this daunger except her good graee,
For though my countenaunce be mery in her face,
As semeth to her by word or by chere,
Yet her good grace sitteth mine herte ful nere.

And if that my soueraine haue any meruaile,
Why I to her now and afore haue wrote,
She may well thinke it is no great trauaile
To him that is in loue brought so hote:
It is a simple tree that falleth with one stroke,
That mean I, though that my souerain toforn,
Me hath denied, yet grace may come to morn.

But maistres for the good will that I haue you ought,
And euermore shal as long as my life dureth,
Pity your seruant and keep him in your thought
And giue him som comfort or medicin, and cureth
His feruent ague, that encreaseth that renueth,
So greuous ben his pains and his sighs sore,
That without your mercy, his dayes be all forlore.

Go little bill, go forth and hie thee fast,
And recommand me, and excuse me as thou can,
For very feeblenesse thus am I at the last,
My pen is woren, my hew is pale and wan,
My iyen been sonken, disfigured like no man,
Till death his dart, that causeth for to smart,
My crops haue consumed, than farwel sweet hart.

O doughter of Phebus in vertuous apparence,
My loue elect in my remembrance,
My careful herte distrained cause of absence,
Till ye my emprise me release my greuance,
Upon you is set my life and mine attendance,
Without recure I wis votill
Ye graunt true herte to haue his will.

Thus my dere sweting in a traunce I do lie,
And shal til sum drops of pity from you spring,
I meane your mercy that lieth my herte nie,
That me may rejoyce, and cause me for to sing
These termes of loue, lo I haue won the ring,
My goodly mastres. Thus of his good grace
God grant her blis in Heauen to haue a place.

EXPLICIT.

HERE FOLLOWETH HOW MERCURY WITH JUNO, VENUS, AND MINERVA, APPEARED TO PARIS OF TROY, HE SLEEPING BY A FOUNTAIN.

PALLAS LOQUITUR AD PARISUM DE TROIA.

Sonne of Priamus gentil Paris of Troie,
Wake of thy sleep, behold vs godds three,
We haue brought to thee encrease of joye,
To thy discrecion reporting our beauty,
Take here this apple, and well deuise thee,
Which of vs is fairest in thy sight,
And giue thou it we pray thee gentil knight.

JUNO LOQUITUR PRIMO.

If so be thou give it vnto me Parise,
This shall I giue vnto thy worthinesse,
Honour, conquest, nobley, lose and prise,
Uictory, courage, force, and hardinesse,
Good auenture, and famous manlinesse,
For that apple all this giue I to thee,
Consider this Parise, and giue it vnto mee.

VENUS LOQUITUR AD PARISUM.

Nay giue it me and this shall I you giue,
Glad aspect with fauour and faireneese,
And loue of ladies also while that ye liue,
Famous stature, and princely seemelinesse,
According to your natife gentilnesse,
Understand this gift well I you aduise,
And giue it me hardly Parise.

MINERVA LOQUITUR AD PARISUM.

Ye ye Paris take hede vnto me,
Thou art a prince borne by discent,
And for to rule thy royall dignity,
I shall the giue first intendement,
Discrecion, prudence in right judgement,
Which in a prince, is thing most conenable,
Giue it me I am to haue it able.

EXPLICIT.

A BALLAD PLEASANT.

I haue a lady where so she bee,
That seldome is she soueraine of my thought,
On whose beauty whan I behold and see,
Remembring me how well she is wrought,
I thank fortune that to her grace me brought,
So faire is she but nothing angelike,
Her beauty is to none other like.

For hardly and she were made of brasse,
Face and all, she hath enough faireneese,
Her eyen been holow and greene as any grasse,
And rauinish yelow is her sounitresse,
Thereto she hath of euery comelinesse
Such quantity giuen her by nature,
That with the least she is of her stature.

And as a bolt her browes been ybent,
And betill browed she is also withall,
And of her wit as simple and innocent,
As is a child that can no good at all,
She is not thicke, her stature is but small,
Her fingers been little, and nothing long,
Her skin is smooth as any oxes tong.

Thereto she is so wise in daliaunce,
And beset her words so womanly,
That her to heare it doth me displeasaunce,
For that she saith, is said so conningly,
That whan there be no mo than she and I,
I had leuer she were of talking still,
Than that she should so goodly speach spill.

And sloth none shall ye haue in her entresse,
So diligent is she and vertulesse,
And so busie aye all good to vndresse,
That as a she ape she is harmelesse,
And as an harnet meke and pitilesse,
With that she is so wise and circumspect,
That prudence none her folly can infect.

Is it not joy that such one of her age,
Within the bounds of so great tendernesse,
Should in her werke be so sadde and sage,
That of the wedding sawe all the noblesse
Of queene Jane, and was tho as I gesse,
But of the age of yeeres ten and fiue,
I trowe there are not many such aliue.

For as Iesu my sinfull soule saue,
There nis creature in all this world liuing,
Like vnto her that I would gladly haue,
So pleaseth mine herte the goodly sweet thing,
Whose soule in hast vnto his blisse bring,
That first her formed to be a creature,
For were she well, of me I did no cure.

EXPLICIT THE DISCRIUING OF A FAIRE LADY.

ANOTHER BALLADE.

O mossie quince hanging by your stalke,
The whiche no man dare plucke away nor take,
Of all the folke that passe forth by or walke,
Your floures fresh be fallen away and shake:
I am right sorry maistresse for your sake,
Ye seem a thing that all men haue forgotten,
Ye be so ripe, ye waxe almost rotten.

Your vgly cheare deinous and froward,
Your greene eyen frowning, and not glad,
Your chekes enbolned like a mellow costard,
Colour of orenge, your brestes satournad,
Gilt vpon warrantise, the colour wil not fade,
Bawsin buttocked, bellied like a tonn,
Men cry S. Barbary at the losing of your gonn.

My louely leud maistres take consideration,
I am so sorrowfull there as ye be absent,
The flour of the barkfat, the foulest of all the nation,
To loue you but a little is mine entent,
The swert hath yswent you, the smoke hath you shent,
I trow ye haue ben laid vpon some kell to dry,
You do me so much worship there as ye be present,
Of all women I loue you best a m. times fie.

EXPLICIT.

A BALLADE,

WARNING MEN TO BEWARE OF DECEITFUL WOMEN.

BY LYDGATE.

Loke well about yee that louers bee,
Let not your lusts lead you to dotage,
Be not enamoured on all things that ye see,
Sampson the fort, and Salomon the sage
Deceiued were for all their great courage,
Men deme it right that they see with eie,
Beware therfore, the blind eateth many a flie.

I meane of women for all their cheres queint,
Trust them not too much, their truth is but geason,
The fairest outward well can they paint,
Their stedfastnesse endureth but a season,
For they fain frendlines, and worchen treason,
And for they are chaungeable naturally,
Beware therfore, the blind eateth many a flie.

What wight on liue trusteth on their cheres,
Shal haue at last his guerdon and his mede,
For women can shaue neerer than rasors or sheres,
Al is not gold that shineth, men take hede
Their gall is hid vnder a sugred wede,
It is full queint their fantasie to aspie,
Beware therfore, the blind eateth many a flie.

Though all the world doe his busie cure
To make women stand in stablenesse,
It would not be, it is against nature,
The world is do whan they lack doublenes,
For they can laugh and loue not, this is expres,
To trust on them it is but fantasie,
Beware therfore, the blind eateth many a flie.

Women of kind hath condicions three,
The first is, they be full of disceit,
To spinne also is their property,
And women haue a wonderfull conceit,
For they can weepe oft, and all is a sleit,
And euer whan they list, the tear is in the eie,
Beware therfore, the blind eateth many a flie.

In sooth to say, though all the erth so wanne
Were parchment smooth, white, and scribabell,
And the great sea, that called is the ociane,
Were tourned into ink blacker than sabell,
Euery stick a pen, each man a scriuener abell,
Not coud they write womans trechery,
Beware therfore, the blind eateth many a flie.

EXPLICIT.

THESE VERSES

NEXT FOLLOWING WERE COMPILED BY GEFFREY CHAUCER, AND IN THE WRITTEN COPIES FOLLOW AT THE END OF THE COMPLAINT OF PITY.

The long nights, whan euery creature
Should haue their rest in somewhat as by kind,
Or els ne may their life not long endure:
It falleth most into my wofull mind,
How I so farre haue brought my self behind,
That safe the deth ther may nothing me lisse,
So dispaired I am from all kin blisse.

This same thought me lasteth till the morow,
And from the morow forth till it be eue,
There needeth me no care for to borrow,
For both I haue good laiser and good leue,
There is no wight that will my wo bireue,
To weepe ynough, and wailen all my fill:
The sore spark of my pein now doth me spill.

Tis loue that hath me set in such a place,
That my desier will neuer fulfill:
For neither pity, mercy, neither grace
Can I not find, yet from my sorrowful hart,
For to be dede, I can it not arace,
The more I loue, the more she doth me smart,
Thorow which I see without remedy,
That from the death I may no wise astart.

Now sothly what she hight I woll reherse,
Her name is Bounty, set in womanhede,
Sadnes in youth, and beauty pridelesse,
And plesaunce, vnder gouernance and drede:
Her surname is eke faire Ruthelesse,
The wise eknit vnto good auenture,
That for I loue her, she sleeth me guiltlesse,
Her loue I best, and shall while I may dure.

Bet than my self a hundred thousand dele,
Than all this worlds riches or creature:
Now hath not loue me bestowed wele,
To loue there I neuer shal haue part,
Alas right thus, is turned me the wheele:
Thus am I slaine with loues furious dart,
I can but loue her best my swetest fo,
Loue hath me taught no more of all his art,
But serue alway, and stinten for no wo.

In my true carefull herte there is
So much wo and so little blisse,
That wo is me that euer I was bore,
For all that thing which I desire, I misse,
And all that euer I would not I wisse,
That find I ready to me euermore:
And of all this I not to whom me plaine,
For she that might me out of this bring,
Ne recheth nought whether I weep or sing,
So little ruth hath she vpon my paine.

Alas, whan sleeping time is, lo than I wake,
Whan I should daunce, for fere lo than I quake:
This heauy life I lede lo for your sake,
Though ye thereof in no wise heed do take,
Mine hertes lady, and hole my liues quene,
For truly durst I say, as that I fele,
Me seemeth that your sweet herte of stele
Is whetted now against me to kene.

My dere herte, and best beloued fo,
Why liketh you to do me all this wo,
What haue I done, that greueth you, or said,
But for I serue and loue you and no mo,
And whilest I liue I will euer do so:
And therefore swete, ne bethe not euill apaid,
For so good and so faire as ye be,
It were right great wonder but if ye had
Of all seruaunts both of good and bad,
And best worthy of all them I am he.

But neuerthelesse, my right lady swete,
Though that I be vnkonning and vnmete
To serue as I coud best aye your highness,
Yet is there none fairer, that would I hete,
Than I, to do you ease or else bete,
What so I wist that were to your bighness,
And had I might as good as I haue will,
Than should ye fele where it were so or none:
For in this world liuing than is there none,
That fainer would your hertes will fulfill.

For both I loue and eke drede you so sore,
And algates mote and haue done you full yore,
That better loued is none ne neuer shall:
And yet I would beseech you of no more,
But leueth well, and be not wroth therefore,
And let me serue you forth, lo this is all,
For I am nought so hardy ne so wood,
For to desire that ye should louen me,
For well I wote alas that may not be,
I am so little worthy and ye so good,
For ye be one the worthiest on liue,
And I the most vnlikely for to thriue.

Yet for all this, weteth ye right well,
That ye ne should me from your seruice driue,
That I ne will aye with all my wits siue
Serue you truly, what wo so that I fele,
For I am set so hie upon your wheele,
That though ye neuer will upon me rew,
I must you loue, and been euer as trew,
As any man can or may on liue.

But the more that I love you goodly free,
The lasse find I that ye loue me,
Alas whan shall I that hard wit amend,
Where is now all your womanly pite,
Your gentlenesse and your debonairte,
Will ye nothing thereof upon me spend,
And so hole sweet as I am yours all,
And so great will as I haue you to serue,
Now certes, and ye let me thus sterue,
Yet haue ye wonne thereon but small.

For at my knowing I do nought why,
And thus I will beseech you hertely,
That euer ye find whiles ye liue
A truer seruant to you than am I,
Leueth than, and sleeth me hardely,
And I my death to you will all forgiue,
And if ye find no truer verely,
Woll ye suffer than that I thus spill,
And for no manner gilt but my good will,
As good were than vntrue as true to be.

EXPLICIT.

A BALLAD,

DECLARING THAT WOMENS CHASTITY DOTH MUCH EXCELL ALL TREASURE WORLDLY.

In womanhede as auctours do all write,
Most thing commended is their honesty,
Thing most slaunderous their nobles to atwite,
As whan women of hasty fraelty,
Exceeden the bonds, of wifely chastity,
For what anaileth linage or royall blood,
Whan of their liuing the report is not good.

The holy bed defoyled of marriage,
For ones defoiled may not recouered be,
The vice goeth forth, and the froward language
By many a realme, and many a great cite,
Sclaunder hath a custome, and that is great
True or fals, by a contrarious soune,
Ones areised it goeth not lightly downe.

For whan a lechour by force or by maistry,
Defouled hath of virgines the cleanesse,
Widdowes oppressed, and lie in aduoutry,
Assailed wiues that stood in stablenesse,
Who may than their slaundrous harme redresse,
Whan their good name is hurt by such report,
For fame lost ones, can neuer haue his resort.

A thefe may rob a man of his richesse,
And by some meane make restitucion,
And some man may disherite and oppresse
A poore man from his possession,
And after make againe satisfaction,
But no man may restore in no degree,
A maid robbed of her virginite.

A man may also beat a castell doun,
And built it after more fresh to the sight,
Exile a man out of his regioun,
And him reuoke whether it be wrong or right,
But no man hath the power ne the might,
For to restore the palais virginall
Of chastity whan broken is the wall.

Men may also putten out of seruice,
And officers remeue out of their place,
And at a day whan fortune list deuise,
They may again restored be to grace,
But there nis time nother set down, ne space,
Nor neuer in story, neither rad ne saine,
That maidenhed lost, recouered was againe.

For which all men should haue a conscience
To rewen in their herte, and repent sore,
And have remorse of such a great offence,
To rauish thing, which they may not restore:
For it is said, and hath be said full yore,
The emeraud greene, of parfite chastite,
Stole ones away, may not recouered be.

And hard it is to rauish a treasour,
Which of nature is not recuparable:
Lordship may not, of king nor emperour,
Reforme a thing which is not reformable:
Rust of defame is inseperable,
And maidenhede once lost of new or yore,
No man of liue may it again restore.

The Romanes old thorough their patience
Suffered tyraunts in their tyrannies
On their cities to do great violence,
The people to oppresse, with their robberies:
But to do punish, they set great espies,
On false auouterers, as it is well couth,
Which widowes rauish, and maidens in their youth,

EXPLICIT.

JACK UPLAND.

In this treatise is set forth the blind ignorance and variable discord of the church-men, how rude and unskilful they were in matters and principles of our christian institution. This is thought to be that crede which the Pellican speaketh of in the Plowmans Tale, in these words:

Of freers I haue told before,
In a making of a crede,
And yet I could tell worse and more,
But men would werrien it to rede.

IACK Upland make my mone to very God and to all true in Christ, that antichrist and his disciples (by colour of holines) walking and disceiuing Christs church by many false figures, wherethrough (by antichrist and his) many vertues been transposed to vices.

But the felliest folke that euer antichrist found, been last brought into the church, and in a wonder wise, for they been of diuers sects of antichrist, sown of diuerse countries and kindredes. And all men knowne well, that they be not obedient to bishops, ne legemen to kings: neither they telle, ne sowen, weden, ne reapen wood, corn, ne grasse, neither nothing that man should helpe; but only themselues their liues to sustain. And these men han all manner power of God, as they sein, in Heauen and in Yearth, to sell Heauen and Hell to whom that hem liketh, and these wretches wet neuer where to been themselues.

And therefore (freer) if thine order and rule been grounded on Goddis law, tell thou me Iack Upland, that I aske of thee, and if thou be or thinkest to be on Christes side, keepe thy pacient.

SANT Paule teacheth, that all our deedes should be do in charitie, and els it is nought worth, but displeasing to God and harme to our own souls. And for that freers challenge to be greatest clerkes of the church, and next following Christ in liuing: men should for charitie aske them some questions, and pray them to ground their answeres in reason and holy writ, for els their answer would nought be woorth, be it flourished neuer so faire, and as me thinke men might skilfully aske thus of a freer.

1. FREER, how many orders be in earth, and which is the perfectest order? Of what order art thou? Who made thine order? What is thy rule? Is there any perfecter rule than Christ himself made? If Christs rule be most perfect, why rulest thou thee not thereafter? Without more, why shall a freer be more punished if he breake the rule that his patron made, than if he break the hests that God himself made?

2. Approoueth Christ any more religions than one, that S. Iames speaketh of? If he approueth no more, why hast thou left his rule, and taketh another? Why is a freer apostata that leueth his order, and taketh another sect, sith there is but one religion of Christ?

3. Why be ye wedded faster to your habits than a man is to his wife? For a man may leaue his wife for a year or two, as many men done: and if you leaue your habit a quarter of a year, ye should be holden apostataes.

4. Maketh your habit you men of religion or no? If it doe, than euer as it weareth, your religion weareth, and after that your habit is better, your

religion is better, and whan ye haue liggen it beside, than lig ye your religion beside you, and been apostataes: why buy ye you so precious clothes, sith no man seeketh such, but for vaine glory, as S. Gregorie sayth.

What betokeneth your great hood, your scaplerie, your knotted girdle, and your wide cope?

5. Why use ye all one colour, more than other christian men do? What betokeneth that ye been clothed all in one manner clothing?

If ye say it betokeneth loue and charitie, certes than ye be oft hypocrites, whan any of you hateth another, and in that that ye wol be said holy by your clothing.

Why may not a freer weare clothing of another sect of freers, sith holinesse stondeth not in the cloths?

6. Why hold ye silence in one house more than another, sith men ought ouer all to speake the good and leaue the euil?

Why eat you flesh in one house more than in another, if your rule and your order be perfect, and the patron that made it?

7 Why get ye your dispensations to haue it more easie? Certes, either it seemeth that ye be unperfect, or he that made it, so hard, that ye may not hold it. And siker, if ye hold not the rule of your patrons, ye be not than hir freers, and so ye lie vpon your selues.

8. Why make you as dede men, whan yee be professed, and yet ye be not dede, but more quicke beggars than you were before? and it seemeth euil a dede man to go about and beg.

9. Why will ye not suffer your nouises hear your councels in your chapter house, ere that they haue ben professed, if your councels been true, and after Gods law?

10. Why make yee you so costly houses to dwell in? sith Christ did not so, and dede men should haue but graues, as falleth it to dede men, and yet ye haue more courts than many lords of England: for ye now wenden through the realme, and ech night will lig in your own courts, and so mow but right few lords doe.

11. Why heire you to ferme your limitours, giuing therefore each yeare a certain rent, and will not suffer one in anothers limitation, right as yee were your selues lords of countries?

Why be ye not vnder your bishops visitations, and *leegemen to our king*?

Why aske ye no letters of bretherheads of other *mens* praiers, as ye desire that other men should aske letters of you?

If your letters be good, why grant ye them not generally to all manner of men for the more charitie?

12. Mowe ye make any man more perfect brether for your prayers, than God hath by our beleeue? by our baptisme and his owne grant? if ye mow, certes than ye be aboue God.

Why make ye men beleeue that your golden trentall sung of you, to take therefore ten shillings, or at least fiue shillings, woll bring souls out of Hell, or out of purgatorie? if this be sooth, certes ye might bring all souls out of paine, and that woll ye nought, and than ye be out of charitie.

13. Why make ye men beleeue, that he that is buried in your habit, shall neuer come in Hell, and ye weet not of your selfe whether ye shall to Hell or no? and if this were sooth, ye should sell your high houses to make many habites for to saue many mens soules.

14. Why steal ye mens children for to make hem of your seet, sith that theft is against Gods hests, and sith your sect is not perfect? yee know not whether the rule that ye bind him to, be best for him or worst.

15. Why vnderneme ye not your brethren for their trespasse after the law of the gospel, sith that vndermening is the best that may be? but ye put them in prison oft, whan they do after Gods law, and by S. Augustines rule: If any doe amisse, and would not amend him, ye should put him from you.

16. Why coueit ye shrift, and burying of other mens parishens, and none other sacrament that falleth to christen folke?

Why busie ye not to heare to shrift of poor folke, as well as of rich lords and ladies, sith they mow haue more plenty of shrift fathers than poor folke mow?

Why say ye not the gospel in houses of bedred men, as ye do in rich mens, that mow goe to church and heare the gospell?

Why couet you not to bury poor folk among you? sith that they ben most holy, (as ye saine that ye been for your pouerty?)

17. Why will ye not be at hir diriges as ye haue been at rich mens? sith God praiseth hem more than he doth other men.

What is thy prayer worth? sith thou wilt take therefore, for all the chapmen yee need to bee most wise for dread of simony.

What cause hast thou, that thou wilt not preach the gospel, as God saith that thou shouldst? sith it is the best lore and also our beleeue.

Why bee ye euill apaid that secular priestes should preach the gospel? sith God himselfe hath bodden hem.

18. Why hate ye the gospell to be preached, sith ye be so much hold thereto? for ye win more by yeare with *in principio*, than with all the rules that euer your patrones made, and in this ministrels been better than ye, for they contrarien not to the mirths that they maken, but ye contrarien the gospell both in word and deed.

19. Freer, whan thou receiuest a peny for to say a masse, whether sellest thou Gods body for that peny, or thy prayer, or els thy trauell? if thou saist thou wolt not trauell for to say the masse, but for the peny, that certes if this be sooth, than thou *louest too* little meed for thy soule: and if thou sellest Gods body, other thy prayer, than it is very simony, and art become a chapman worse than Iudas, that sold it for thirty pence.

20. Why writest thou hir names in thy tables that yeueth thee mony? sith God knoweth all thing: for it semeth by thy writing, that God would not reward him, but thou writest in thy tables, God would els forgotten it.

Why bearest thou God in hand and slanderest him that he begged for his meat? sith he was Lord ouer all, for than had he been vnwise to haue begged, and haue no need thereto.

Freer, after what lawe rulest thou thee? where findest thou in Gods lawe that thou shouldest thus beg?

21. What maner men needeth for to beg?

For whom oweth such men to beg?

Why beggest thou so for thy brethren?

If thou saist, for they haue need, than thou dost it for the more perfection, or els for the least, or els for the meane. If it be the most perfection of all, than should all thy brethren do so, and than no man needeth to beg but for himself, for so should no man beg but him needed. And if it be the least perfection, why louest thou than other men more than thy selfe? For so thou art not well in charity, sith thou shouldest seek the more perfection after thy power, liuing thy self most after God. And thus leauing that imperfection, thou shouldst not so beg for them. And if it is a good mean thus to beg as thou dost, than should no man do so, but they been in this good mean, and yet such a mean granted to you may neuer be grounded on Gods law, for than both lerid and leaud that been in mean degree of this world, should go about and beg as ye do. And if all should do so, certes well nigh all the world should go about and beg as ye done, and so should there be ten beggers against one yeuer.

Why procurest thou men to yeue thee their almes, and saist it is so needful, and thou wilt not thy selfe win thee that meed?

22. Why wilt thou not beg for poor bedred men, that been poorer than any of your sect, that liggen and mow not go about to help himselfes, sith we be all brethren in God, and that bretherhed passeth any other that ye or any man could make, and where most need were, there were most perfection, either els ye hold them not your pure brethren, but worse, but than ye be vnperfect in your begging?

Why make ye so many maisters among you, sith it is against the teaching of Christ and his apostles?

23. Whose been all your rich courts that ye han, and all your rich jewels? sith ye seen that ye han nought ne in proper ne in common. If ye saine they been the popes, why gather ye than of poore men and lords so much out of the kings hand to make your pope rich? And sith ye sain that it is great perfection to haue naught in proper be in common, why be ye so fast about to make the pope, that is your father, rich, and put on him imperfection? sithen ye saine that your goods been all his, and he should by reason be the most perfect man, it semeth openlich that ye been cursed children so to slander your father; and make him imperfect. And if ye saine that the goods be yours, than do ye ayenst your rule; and if it be not ayenst your rule, than might ye haue both plough and cart, and labour as other good men done, and not so to beg by losengery, and idle as ye done. If ye say that it is more perfection to beg, than to trauell or to worch with your hand, why preach ye not openly, and teach all men to do so? sith it is the best and most perfect life to the help of their souls, as ye make children to beg that might haue been rich heirs.

Why make ye not your feasts to poor men, and yeueth hem yefts, as ye done to the rich? sith poor men han more need than the rich?

What betokeneth that ye goe tweine and tweine togither? if ye be out of charity, ye accord not in soule.

Why beg ye and take salaries therto more than other priests? sith he that most taketh, most charge hath.

24. Why hold ye not S. Francis rule and his testament? sith Francis saith, that God shewed him this liuing and this rule: and certes if it were Gods will the pope might not fordo it: or els Francis was a lier, that saied in this wise. And but this testament that he made, accord with Gods will, or els erred: he is a lier that were out of charitie: and as the law saith, he is accursed that letteth the rightful last wil of a dead man. And this testament is the last will of Francis that is a dead man, it seemeth therefore that all his freers been cursed.

25. Why will ye not touch no coined money with the crosse, ne with the kings head, as ye done other jewels both of gold and siluer? certes if ye despise the crosse or the kings head, than ye be worthy to be despised of God and the king: and sith ye will receiue mony in your hertes, and not with your hands, and it seemeth that yee hold more holinesse in your hands than in your hertes, and than be false to God.

26. Why haue ye exempt you from our kings laws, and visiting of our bishops more than other christen men that liuen in this realm, if ye be not guiltie of traitorie to our realme, or trespassers to your bishops? But ye will haue the kings laws for the trespasse doe to you, and ye will haue power of other bishops more than other priests, and also haue leaue to prison your brethren as lords in your courts more than other folks han that ben the kings leegemen.

27. Why shall some sect of you freers pay eche a yere a certaine to hir generall prouincial or minister, or els to hir souereines: but if he steale a certaine number of children (as some men saine) and certes if this ben sooth, than yee be constreined upon certein pain to do theft against Gods commaundement, *Non furtum facies.*

28. Why be ye so hardie to grant by letters of fraternitie to men and women, that they shall haue part and merite of all your good deeds, and ye weten neuer whether God be apayed with your deeds because of your sin? Also yee witten neuer whether that man or woman be in state to be saved or damned, than shall he haue no merit in Heauen for his owne deeds ne for none other mans. And all were it so, that he shold haue part of your good deeds: yet should he haue no more than God would giue him after that he were worthie, and so much shall each man haue of Gods yeft without your limitation. But if ye will say that ye been Gods fellowes, and that he may not doe without your assent, than be ye blasphemers to God.

29. What betokeneth that yee haue ordeined, that whan such one as ye haue made your brother or sister, and hath a letter of your seale, that letter mought bee brought in your holy chapter, and there be rad, or els yee will not pray for him. And but ye willen pray especially for all other that were not made your brethen or sistren, than were ye not in right charitie, for that ought to be commen, and namely in ghostly things.

30. Freer, what charity is this, to ouercharge the people by mightie begging, vnder colour of preaching or praying, or masses singing? Sith holy write biddeth not thus, but euen the contrary: for all such ghostly deeds should be done freely, as God yeueth them freely?

31. Freer, what charitie is this, to beguile children or they commen to discretion, and bind hem to your orders, that ben not grounded in Gods

law, against hir friends will? Sithen by this follie been many apostataes, both in will and deed, and many beene apostataes in hir will during all hir life, that would gladly be discharged, if they wist how, and so many ben apostataes, that shoulden in other states haue been true men.

32. Freer, what charitie is this, to make so many freers in euery country to the charge of the people? sith parsons and vicars alone, ye secular priests alone, ye monkes and cannons alone, with bishops aboue them, were ynough to the church to doe the priests office. And to adde more than ynough, is a foule errour, and great charge to the people, and this openly against Gods will, that ordained all thyngs to be done in weight, number, and measure. And Christ himselfe was apaied with twelve apostles and a few disciples, to preach and doe priests office to all the whole world, than was it better doe than is now at this time by a thousand dele. And right so as foure fingers with a thombe in a mans hand, helpeth a man to worch, and double number of fingers in one hand should let him more, and so the more number that there were passing the measure of Gods ordinaunce, the more were a man letted to worch: right so (as it seemeth) it is of these new orders that ben added to the church, without ground of holy write and Gods ordinance.

33. Freer, what charity is this, to the people to lie, and say that ye follow Christ in pouertie more than other men done? and yet in curious and costly housing, and fine and precious clothing, and delicious and liking feeding, and in treasure and jewels, and rich ornaments, freers passen lords and other rich worldly men, and soonest they should bring her cause about (be it neuer so costly) though Gods lawe be put aback.

34. Freer, what charitie is this, to gather vp the books of holy write, and put hem in tresorie, and so emprison them from secular priests and curats, and by this cautel let hem to preach the gospel freely to the people without worldly meed, and also to defame good priests of heresie, and lien on hem openly for to let hem to shew Gods law by the holy gospel to the christian people?

35. Freer, what charity is this, to faine so much holines in your bodily clothing (that ye clepe your habit) that many blind fools desiren to die therein more than in another? and also that a freer that leueth his habit late founden of men, may not be assoiled till he take againe, but is apostata as ye saine, and cursed of God and man both? The freer beleeueth truth, and patience, chastity, meeknesse and sobriety, yet for the more part of his life he may soon be assoiled of his prior, and if he bring home to his house much good by the yeare (bee it neuer so falsely begged and pilled of the poore and needy people in countries about) he shall behold a noble freer, O Lord whether this be charity?

36. Freer, what charity is this, to prease vpon a rich man, and to intice him to bee buried among you from his parish church, and to such rich men giue letters of fraternity confirmed by your generall seale, and therby to bear him in hand that he shal haue part of all your masses, mettens, preachings, fastings, wakings, and all other good deeds done by your brethren of your order (both whilest he liueth, and after that he is dead) and yet he witten neuer whether your deeds be acceptable to God, ne whether that man that hath that letter be able by good liuing to receiue any part of your deeds, and yet a poore man (that ye wite well or supposen in certen to haue no good of) ye ne giuen to such letters, though he be a better man to God than such a rich man: neuerthelesse, this poore man doth not retch therof. For as men supposen, such letters and many other that freers behoten to men, be full false deceits of freers, out of all reason, and Gods law and Christian mens faith.

37. Freer, what charity is this, to be confessors of lords and ladies, and to other mighty men, and not amend hem in hir living? but rather as it seemeth, to be the bolder to pill hir poore tenants and to liue in leohery, and there to dwell in your office of confessor for winning of worldly goods, and to be hold great by colour of such ghostly offices? this seemeth rather pride of freeres, than charity of God.

38. Freer, what charity is this, to sain that who so liueth after your order, liueth most perfectly, and next followeth the state of apostles in pouerty and penance, and yet the wisest and greatest clerks of you wend or send, or procure to the court of Rome to be made cardinals or bishops of the popes chaplens, and to be assoiled of the vow of pouerty and obedience to your ministers, in the which (as ye sain) standeth most perfection and merit of your orders, and thus ye faren as Pharisees that sain one and do an other to the contrary.

Why name ye more the patron of your order in your *Confiteor* when ye begin masse, than other saints, apostles, or martyrs, that holy church hold more glorious than hem, and clepe hem your patrons and your auowries?

Freer, whether was St. Francis in making of his rule that he set thine order in, a foole and a liar, or else wise and true? If ye sain that he was not a foole, but wise: ne a liar, but true: why shew you contrary by your doing, whan by your suggestion to the pope ye said, that your rule that Francis made was so hard, that ye mow not liue to hold it without declaration and dispensation of the pope, and so by your deed? Ne let your patron a foole that made a rule so hard that no man may well keepe, and eke your deed prooueth him a liar, where he saith in his rule, that he tooke and learned it of the Holy Ghost. For how might ye for shame pray the pope vndo that the Holy Ghost bit, as whan ye prayed him to dispense with the hardnesse of your order?

Freer, which of the foure orders of friers is best to a man that knoweth not which is the best, but would faine enter into the best, and none other? If thou saiest that thine is the best, than saiest thou that none of the other is as good as thine, and in this ech freer in the three other orders wooll say that thou liest, for in the self-same maner ech other freer wooll say that his order is best. And thus to ech of the foure orders bin the other three contrary in this point: in the which if any say sooth, that is one alone, for there may but one be the best of foure. So followeth it, that if ech of these orders answered to this question as thou doest, three were false, and but one true, and yet no man should wite who that were. And thus it seemeth, that the most part of freers bin or should be liars in this point, and they should answere thereto. If you say that another order of the freers is better than thine, or as good; why tooke ye not rather thereto as to the better, whan thou

mightst haue chose at the beginning? And eke why shouldst thou be an apostata to leaue thine order and take thee to that is better, and so why goest thou not from thine order into that?

Freer, is there any perfecter rule of religion than Christ Godds sonne gaue in his gospel to his brethren? Or than that religion that St. James in his epistle maketh mention of? If you say yes, than puttest thou on Christ (that is the wisedome of God the father) vnkunning, vnpower, or euill will: for than he could not make his rule so good as an other did his. And so he had be vnkunning, that he might not so make his rule so good as an other man might, and so were he vnmighty, and not God, as he would not make his rule so perfect as an other did his, and so he had bin euill willed, namely to himselfe.

For if he might and could, and would haue made a rule perfect without default, and did not, he was not Gods sonne almighty. For if any other rule be perfecter, than Christes, than must Christes rule lacke of that perfection by as much as the other weren more perfecter, and so were default, and Christ had failed in making of his rule: but to put any default or failing in God, is blaspheme. If thou say that Christes rule, and that religion which St. James maketh mention of, is perfectest; why holdest thou not thilke rule without more? And why elepest thou the rather of St. Francis or St. Dominiks rule or religion or order, than of Christes rule or Christes order?

Freer, canst thou any default or assigne in Christes rule of the gospell (with the which he taught all men sikerly to be saued) if they kept it to hir ending? If thou say it was too hard, than saiest thou Christ lied; for he said of his rule: My yoke is soft, and my burden light. If thou say Christes rule was too light, that may be assigned for no default, for the better it may be kept. If thou saist that there is no default in Christes rule of the gospell, sith Christ himself saith it is light and easie: what need was it to patrons of freers to adde more thereto? and so to make an harder religion to saue freers, than was the religion of Christes apostles and his disciples helden and were saued by. But if they woulden that hir freers saten aboue the apostles in Heauen for the harder religion that they keepen here, so would they sitten in heauen aboue Christ himselfe, for their more and strict obseruations, than so should they be better than Christ himself with mischance.

Go now foorth and fraine your clerks, and ground ye you in Gods law, and gif Jacke an answer, and whan ye han assoiled me that I haue said sadly in truth, I shall soile thee of thine orders, and saue thee to Heauen.

If freers kun not or mow not excuse hem of these questions asked of hem, it seemeth that they be horrible gilty against God, and hir euen christian; for which gilts and defaults it were worthy that the order that they call their order were fordone. And it is woonder that men susteine hem or suffer hir liue in such maner. For holy write biddeth that thou do well to the meeke, and giue not to the wicked, but forbed to giue hem bread, least they be made thereby mightier through you.

THE

STORY OF THEBES,

COMPILED BY JOHN LIDGATE, MONK OF BURY.

THE PROLOGUE.

Whan bright Phebus passed was the Ram
Midde of Aprill, and into the Bull came,
And Saturne old, with his frosty face,
In Uirgine taken had his place,
Melancolike, and slough of motion,
And was also in the opposition
Of Lucina the Moone, moist and pale,
That many shoure fro Heauen made auaile,
Whan Aurora was in the morrow redde,
And Iupiter in the Crabs hedde,
Hath take his paleis and his mansion,
The lusty time, and joly fresh season,
Whan that Flora the noble mighty queene
The soile hath clad in new tender greene,
With her floures craftely meint,
Braunch and bough with red and white depeint,
Fleeting the baume on hils and on vales,
The time in sooth, whan Canterbury tales,
Complet and told at many a sundry stage
Of estates in the pilgrimage,
Eueriche man like to his degree,
Some of disport, some of moralitie,
Some of knighthood, loue, and gentillesse,
And some also of parfite holinesse,
And some also in sooth of ribaudry,
To make laughter in the company,

Ech admitted for none would other greue,
Like as the Cooke, the Miller, and the Reue,
Aquite hemselfe, shortly to conclude
Boistously in hir tearmes rude,
Whan they hadden well dronken of the boll,
And eke also with his pilled noll,
The Pardoner beardlesse all his chin,
Glasie eyes, and face of cherubin,
Telling a talle to anger with the Frere,
As openly the story can you lere
Word by word, with euery circumstance,
Echone ywrit, and put in remembrance,
By him that was, if I shall not faine,
Floure of poetes, throughout all Bretaine,
Which soothly had most of excellence
In rhetorike, and in eloquence,
Rede his making, who list the trouth find,
Which neuer shall appallen in my mind,
But alway fresh been in mine memory,
To whom be youe prise, honour, and glory
Of well seeing, first in our language,
Cheef registrer in this pilgrimage,
All that was told, forseting nought at all,
Feined tales, nor thing historiall,
With many prouerbes diuers and vncouth,
By rehearsaile of his sugred mouth,
Of ech thing keeping in substaunce
The sentence hole, without variaunce,
Uoiding the chaffe, soothly for to saine,
Enlumining the true piked greine,
By crafty writing of his sawes swete,
Fro the time that they did mete.

First the pilgrimes soothly euerychone,
At Tabarde assembled one by one,
And fro Southwerke, soothly for to sey,
To Canterbury riding on hir wey,
Telling a tale, as I rehearse can,
Liche as the host assigned euery man,
None so hardy, his bidding disobey,
And thus while that the pilgrimes ley,
At Canterbury, well lodged one and all,
I not in sooth what I may it eall,
Hap or fortune, in conclusioun,
That me befell, to enter into the toun,
The holy saint plainely to visite,
After my sickenesse vowes to aequite,
In a cope of blacke, and not of grene,
On a palfary, slender, long, and lene,
With rusty bridle, made not for the sale,
My man toforne, with a void male,
That of fortune tooke mine inne anone,
Where the pilgrims were lodged euerychone,
The same time hir gouernour the host,
Stonding in hall, full of wind and bost,
Liche to a man wonder sterne and fers,
Which spake to me, and said anon dan Pers,
Dan Dominike, dan Godfray, or Clement,
Ye be welcome newly into Kent,
Thogh your bridle haue nother boos ne bell,
Beseeching you, that ye will tell
First of your name, and what countre,
Without more, shortly that ye be,
That looke so pale, all deuoid of blood,
Upon your head a wonder thredbare hood,
Well arrayed for to ride late?'"

I answered, my name was Lidgate,
Monke of Bury, nie fifty yeare of age,
Come to this toune to doe my pilgrimage,
As I haue hight, I haue thereof no shame.
" Dan Iohn" (quod he) "well brouke ye your name,
Thogh ye be sole, beeth right glad and light,
Praying you to soupe with vs this night,
And ye shall haue made at your deuis
A groat pudding or a round hagis,
A franche moile, a tanse, or a froise,
To ben a monke, slender is your coise,
Ye haue been sicke, I dare mine head assure,
Or let feed in a faint pasture,
Lift vp your head, be glad, take no sorrow,
And ye should home ride with vs to morrow,
I say whan ye rested haue your fill,
After supper sleepe will done none ill,
Wrap well your head clothes round about,
Strong nottie ale will make you to rout,
Take a pillow, that ye lie not low,
If need be, spare not to blow,
To hold wind, by mine opinion,
Will engender Colles passion,
And make men to greuen on hir rops,
Whan they haue filled hir maws and hir crops,
But toward night eat some fennell rede,
Annis, commin, or coriander sede,
And like as I power haue and might,
I charge you rise not at midnight,
Though it so be the Moone shine clere,
I will my selfe be your orlogere,
To morrow earely whan I see my time,
For we will forth parcell afore prime,
Accompany parde shall doe you good,
What looke vp monke, for by cockes blood
Thou shalt be merry, who so that say nay,
For to morrow anone as it is day,
And that it ginne in the east to daw,
Thou shalt be bound to a new law,
At going out of Canterbury toun,
And lien aside thy professioun,
Thou shalt not chese, nor thy selfe withdraw,
If any mirth be found in thy maw,
Like the custome of this company,
For none so proud, that dare me deny,
Knight nor knaue, chanon, priest, ne nonne
To tell a tale plainely as they conne,
Whan I assigne, and see time oportune,
And for that we our purpose woll contune,
We will homeward the same custome vse,
And thou shalt not plainely thee excuse:
Be now well ware, study well to night,
But for all this, be of herte light,
Thy wit shall be the sharper and the bet."
And we anon were to supper set,
And serued well vnto our pleasance,
And soone after by good gouernance,
Unto bed goeth euery manner wight,
And toward morrow, as soon as it was light,
Euery pilgrime, both bet and wors,
As bad our host, tooke anone his hors,
Whan the Sunne rose in the east full clere,
Fully in purpose to come to dinere
Unto Ospring, and breake there our fast.
And whan we werne fro Canterbury past,
Nought the space of a bowe draught,
Our host in hast hath my bridle raught,
And to me saied, as it were in game,
" Come forth dan Iohn, by your christen name,
And let vs make some manner mirth or play,
Shete your ports a twenty deuill way,
Is no disport so to patere and say,
It woll make your lips wonder dray,
Tell some tale, and make thereof a jape,
For by my rouncie thou shalt it not escape,

But preach not of none holinesse,
Ginne some tale of mirth or of gladnesse,
And nodde not with thine heauy becke,
Tell vs some thing that draweth to effect,
Onely of joy make no lenger let."
And whan I saw it would be no bet,
I obeyed vnto his bidding,
So as the law me bound in all thing,
And as I coud, with a pale cheare,
My tale I gan anone, as ye shall heare.

Finitur prologus de Thebe. Et sequitur quoque pars prima libri.

HERE BEGINNETH THE HISTORY OF THE

DESTRUCTION OF THE CITY OF THEBES.

Sirs (quod I) sith of your courtesie
I entred am into your companie,
And admitted a tale for to tell,
By him that hath power to compell,
I meane our host, gouernour and guide
Of you echone riding here beside:
Though that my wit barrain be and dull,
I will rehearse a story wonderfull,
Touching the siege and destruction
Of worthy Thebes, the mighty royall toun,
Built and begonne of old antiquitie,
Upon the time of worthy Iosue,
By diligence of king Amphion,
Cheefe cause first of his foundation,
For which his fame, which neuer shall away,
In honour floureth yet vnto this day,
And in story remembred is and preised,
But how the wals were on height reised,
It is wonder and merueile for to here,
But if you list, I shall you platly lere
The manner hole, platly in sentence,
Under support of your patience,
As write mine author, and Bochas both two,
Rede hir bookes, and ye shall find it so,
How this king, this prudent Amphion,
With his sweetnesse and melodious soun,
The city built, that whylome was so strong,
By armonie of his sweet song,
And vertue onely of the werbles sharpe
That he made in Mercuries harpe,
Of which the strengs were not touched soft,
Whereby the wals reised were aloft,
Without craft of any mans hand,
Full yore ago, midde of Greekes land,
Which is a thing of poets told,
Neuer yseine nother of yong nor old,
But as Bocchas list to specifie,
Cleare expouning this darke poesie,
Sith Mercury, god of eloquence,
Yafe by the might of heauenly influence,
Unto this king, at his nativite,
Through glad aspects, that he should be
Most excellent, by craft of rhetorike,
That in this world was none to him like,
Which signifieth, to hem that ben prudent,
The musical, the lusty instrument,
I mean the harpe most melodious,
Yove to this king by Mercurious,
And his song, this author can you teach,
Was nothing but the crafty speech
Of this king, ycalled Amphion,
Whereby he made the countries environ
To have such lust in his words sweet,
That were so pleasant, favourable, and meet
In hir eares, that shortly there was none,
Disobeisaunt with the king to gone,
Wheresoeuer that him list to assigne:
His chere, his port was eft so benigne,
That through his stering and exhortatioun
With him they went first to build this toun,
And forsooke ech man his country,
By one assent to make this city
Royall and rich, that liche was none,
And thus the wals, made of lime and stone,
Were reised first by singing of this king,
Liche as poetes feine in hir writing,
Passing rich, and royall of entaile,
Here may ye see how much may availe
The goodlihede, and the lowliuesse of a king,
And specially in cheare and in speaking
To his lieges, and to bearen him faire
In his apport, and shew him debonaire,
And not to been to strange ne solein,
In countenaunce outward, ne disdein,
Which causeth oft, who that can advert,
Great hatred in the peoples herte,
And therevpon prively woll rowne,
Whan a prince doth vpon hem frowne,
Shortly deme for all his excellence,
Emong hemselfe out of his presence,
Everiche conclude liche his fantasie,
And thus full oft gendred is enuy
In folkes hertes, of soleinte and pride,
For such as list not ones to looke aside,
To reward hem whan they low loute,
And againe kind it is out of doute,
That any head, by record of the wise,
Should the foot of disdaine despise,
Which beareth him vp, who so can take heed,
And susteineth in his most need,
As his piller, and his supportaile:
For finally, ne were the pooraile
Hir bearer vp, and supportation,
Farewell lordship and domination,
Throughout the land, of every high estate:
Wherefore me seemeth, more is fortunate
Of Mercury, the soote sugred Harpe,
Than Mars swerd whetted kene and sharpe,
More accepted, with aspects good,
Than is this God, with his lookes wood:

What the goodlihead of a prince availeth, to win the hertes of his people.

For humble speech, with glad countenance
May a prince soothly aduance,
Emong his people hertes for to win
Of inward love, which will not twin,
Than gold, richesse, pride, or tyranny,
Other disdaine, daunger, or surquedy,
For of lords, clerkes can report,
But that loue hir crowne doe support,
The fine is not, in conclusion,
I take record of king Amphion,

Example good of king Amphion.

That built Thebes, by his eloquence,
More than of pride, or of violence,
Noble and rich, that like was no where none,
And thus the wals made of lime and stone,

Were reised first by singing of this king,
Like as poets feinen in hir writing.

How, after the opinion of some authours, king Cadmus built first the city of Thebes.

But soothly yet, some expositours
Grounding hem upon old authours,
Saine that Cadmus, the famous old man,
Full long afore the city first began,
And the ground of building sette,
And the bounds by compasse out mette,
With thongs out kerue of a buls side,
Which enuiron, stretch might wide,
To get in land a full large space,
Whereupon to build a dwelling place.

How the country of Boece took first its name of a bulls skin, and after called Thebes. And how king Cadmus was exiled out of Thebes, by prowess of king Amphion.

And called was the soile thus getten in,
Whylome Boece, of the buls skin,
The name after into Thebes tourned:
But Cadmus hath not there long sojourned,
Like in story as it is compiled,
For shortly, he fro thence was exiled,
Never after for to dwell in the toun,
By the knighthood of this Amphioun,
Which vp perfourmeth, rich for the nones,
The city Thebes, of mighty square stones,
As I you told a lite heretoforne,
And Cadmus thus his kingdome hath lorne,
Scepter and crowne, and his power roiall,
Now have I told vnto you ground of all,
That ye well know by information
Clerely the pith and the exposition
Of this matter, as clerkes can you tell,
It were but vain lenger for to dwell,
To tarry you on this mattere,
Sith my tale, which that ye shall here
Upon our way, will last a long while;
The space in sooth as I suppose of vii. mile:
And now ye know first how Amphion
Built and began this city and this toun,
Reigning there long after, as I rede.
Of him no more, for I will procede
To my purpose, that I first began,
Not telling here how the line ran

How the line of Amphion by descent was conveyed to king Laius.

Fro king to king by succession,
Conveying downe by the stock of Amphion
Seriously by line all the discent:
But leaue all this, plainly of intent
To tell forth, in bookes as I rede,
How Laius by processe gan succede

Here beginneth the story of king Laius, and Iocasta his wife.

To beare the crowne in this mighty land,
Holding the scepter of Thebes in his hand,
Manly and wise during all his life,
And Iocasta called was his wife:
Full womanly the story saith certaine
For a time, though she were barraine,
Till Laius in full humble wise,
To have a child did sacrifice
First to Apollo in his chaire so bright,
And Iupiter, that hath so great a might,
Beseeching hem with devout reuerence,
To graunt only through hir influence,
That his request executed may be,
And specially to goddesses three,
He besought Pallas, and Iuno,
And Diane, for to help also,
That he be not defrauded of his boon:
And his prayer accepted was full soone,
That finally through his rites old,
Even like as his herte would,
The queen Iocasta hath anone conceived,
Which whan the king fully hath perceived,
He made in haste, him list not to abide,
Through his kingdome messengers ride
Fro coast to coast, the story can deuise,
For divinours and philosophers wise,
For such as were famous phisiciens,
And well expert astronomiens,
To come in hast vnto his presence,
To find out shortly in sentence
By craft onely of calculation,
The childs fate and disposition,

How the astronomiens and philosophers of Thebes calcled out the fate of Edippus.

And thereupon to yeue a iudgement,
The root I take, at the ascendent
Truly sought out by minute and degre,
The selfe houre of his natiuite
Not foryet, the heauenly mansions,
Clearely searched by smale fractions,
First by seconds, terces, and eke quartes,
On augrime stones, and on white cartes
Ipriued out by diligent labour,
In tables correct, deuoid of all errour;
Iustly sought, and found out of both two,
The yeares collect, and expanse also,
Considred eke by good inspection,
Euery houre, and constellation,
And each aspect and looke eke diuers,
Which were good, and which also peruers,
Where they were toward, or at debate,
Happy, wilfull, or infortunate:

The cursed constellation and disposition of the Heaven at the nativity of Edippus.

And finally, in conclusion
They found Saturne in the Scorpion,
Heauie chered melancolike and loth,
And wood Mars furious and wroth,
Holding his sceptre in the Capricorne,
The same houre whan this child was borne,
Uenus direct, and contrarious,
And depressed in Mercurious hous,
That the dome and judgement finall
Of these clerkes to speake in speciall
By fatall sort, that may not be withdraw
That with his swerd his father shall be slaw,

How the fate of Edippus disposed, that he should slea his own father.

There may no man helpe it ne excuse,
On which thing the king gan sore muse,

And cast he would on that other side
Againe hir dome for himselfe prouide
Shape away, and remedy toforne,
Bidding the quene, whan the child wer borne,
Without mercy or moderly pite
That he be dead it may none other be,
And in all hast, like as he hath sent,
She obeied his commaundement
With wofull herte, and pitous looke,
And face pale, her yong sonne she tooke,
Tender and grene both of flesh and bones,
To certaine men ordained for the nones,
Fro point to point in all manner thing,
To execute the bidding of the king,
They durst not delay it, nor abide,
But to a forrest that stood there beside,
They tooken hir way, and fast gan hem speed,
The kings will to performe indeed,
Hauing thereof passing heauinesse?
But whan that they beheld the fairenesse
Of the child, and excellent beautie,
In hir herte they had great pitie,
And plainly cast, emong hem was no strife,
That the child should haue his life,
And anone high upon a tree,
In place that no man might it see,
They heng him vp, the story can reherce,
But first his feet they gan through perce,
And on bowes tender, tough, and smale,
They knitte him vp shortly this is no tale,
Him to preserue from beasts wild and rage,
And after that they tooken hir voyage
Toward Thebes, in all the hast they may:
But of fortune, thilke same day
With hir hounds searching vp and doun,
The hunts went of king Polibon
Through the forrest, gan for to find
Some aforne, and some come behind,
And gan search and seake wonder sore
Emong the hills, and the holts hore,
And as they rengen the trenches by and by,
They heard a noise, and a pitous cry

How the hunts of king Polibon found the child in the forrest, and presented him unto the king.

Of this child honging on a tree:
And all at ones drough hem for to see,
And left not, till they haue him found,
And tooke him doune, and his feet vnbound,
And bare him home vnto Polibon,
King of Archadie the famous region:
And whan that he the child first can see,
Of his wounds he had great pitee
To behold his tender feet so blede,
And called him Edippus, as I rede,
Which is to saine platly, this is no fage,
Bored the feet, as in that language.
And first the king in his royall hall
Made his men a norice for to call,
This young child to foster and to keepe
With her milke, that he mought ne weepe,
And his leeches he charged eke also,
Till he were whole, hir deuoir for to do,
Fully in purpose, for this child was feire,
After his day to maken him his heire,
For cause onely, who so taketh heed,
Sonne had he none, by line to succeed,
And that he had a wife or none,
I find it not, and therefore I let it gone,
But by processe of daies and of yeres,
This Edippus, emong his playing feares,
Was in port passing full of pride,
That none with him might in peace abide,
In herte he was so inly surquidous,
Melancolike and contrarious,
Full of despite, and of high disdaine,
That no wight durst shortly him withsaine,
Till on a day, he gan with one debate,
To whom he had specially great hate,
Which of rancour, and of hasty tene,
As he that might his pride not susteine,
Gan vpon him cruelly to braid,
And vnto him felly thus he said:
"Whereto" (quod he) "art thou so proud of port,
Contrarie also euer in any disport,
Froward and fell, lasting euer in one,
As thou were lord of vs euerichone,
And presumest fully in werking,
Like as thou were sonne vnto the king,
And discended of his royall blood?
But whether so thou be wroth or wood,
Thou art nothing, if thee list take hede,
Appertaining vnto his kinrede,
But in a forrest founden and vnknow
Whan thou wer yong, therfore bear thee low,
And vtterly remember thee if thee list,
Thy birth and blood are both two vntwist,"
This is the fine shortly of my tale,
Wherewith Edippus gan to wexe pale,
And chaunge also cheare and countenaunce,
And gan apeint in his remembraunce
Word by word, and forgat right nought,
And felly mused on this, and aboue thought,
And cast he would, without more tarrying,
The trouth enquire of Polibon the king:
And whan he saw oportune space,
And the king in a secret place,
He him besought lowly on his knee,
To his request benignely to see.

The request of Edippus unto the king Polibon.

And that he would plainly, and not spare,
Of his birth the true ground declare,
And make him sure of this thing anone,
If he were his very sonne or none?
And Polibon onely of gentillesse,
Whan he beheld the great heuinesse
Of Edippus, and the wofull paine,
He gan dissimule, and in a manner faine,
Liche as he had ben verely his heire:
But more and more he falleth in dispeire,
And downe ayen on knees gan fall,
Him conjuring by the gods all,
To tell trouth and nothing to hide,
Affirming eke, he will not abide
Lenger with him, but riden and enquere,
Till time he may the very sooth lere
In any part of hap or of fortune,
And for that he was so importune
In his desire, the king without abode
Curiously told him how it stode.

The answer of the king unto Edippus.

In a forrest first how he was found
Upon a tree by the feet ybound,
And how he cast in conclusion
To make him king of that region

After his day, shortly for to tell,
But Edippus would no lenger dwell,
But tooke leaue, and in hast gan ride
To a temple fast there beside
Of Apollo, in story as is told,
Whose statue stood in a chaire of gold,
On wheeles foure, burned bright and shene,
And within a spirit full vncleane
By fraud onely, and fals illusion,
Answere yafe to euery question,
Bringing the people in full great errour,
Such as to him did false honour,
By rites vsed in the old dawes,
After the custome of paganims lawes,
And Edippus with full humble chiere
To Apollo made his priere,
Beseeching him on his knees low
By some signe, that he might know
Through euidence, shortly comprehended
Of what kinred that he was discended?
And whan Edippus by great deuotion
Finished had fully his orison,
The fiend anon, within inuisible,
With a voice dredefull and horrible,
Bad him in hast take his voyage
Toward Thebes, where of his linage
He hearen shall, and be certified:
And on his way anone he hath him hied
By hasty journey, so is his horse constrained
Day by day, till he hath attained
Unto a castle, pilotes ycalled,
Rich and strong, and wele aboue ywalled,
Adjacent by site of the country
And apertinent to Thebes the city,
King Laius being there present,
For to hold a manner of turnement,
With his knights yong and couragious,
And other folke, that were desirous
To preue hemselfe, shortly for to tell,
Who that by force other might excell,
Or get a name, through his prowesse,
Euerich of hem did his businesse
On horsebacke, and eke on foot,
All be that some found it full vnsoot,
Rather a play of warre than of peace:
Where Edippus put himselfe in preace,
As he that was aie ready to debate,
Enforcing him to enter in at gate,
Maugre all tho that him would let,
And in the preace, of auenture, he met

How Edippus slough his father by ignorance, at the castle of Pilotes.

King Laius, and cruelly him slough,
Though the story telleth not hough,
Ne no wight can of all the company,
By no signe, it verily aspy
By whose hond the king was slaw,
For Edippus gan him in hast withdraw,
And kept him coy of entencioun,
Great was the noise and pitous soun
In the castell, for slaughter of the king,
Dole and complaint, sorrow, and weeping.
But for they saw that heauines and thought,
Ayenst death auaileth lite or nought,
They ordaine with rites full royall,
For the feast called funerall,
And eke the custome of the days old,
The corps they brent into ashes cold,
And in a vessell round made as a ball,
They closed him in gold and metall,
And after that did hir busie cure,
In Thebes to make a sepulture,
And richly, hem list no lenger let,
The ashes they did enclose and shet,
Of this matter there is no more to sayen,
But to Edippus I will retourne ayen,
Which him enhasteth aie from day to day,
Toward Thebes, in all that euer he may,
Brenning in herte as whote as any fire,
The fine to know of his fatall desire,
But for that he failed of a guide,
Out of his way went fer aside,
Through a wild and a wast countree,
By a mountaine that stood vpon the see.

How Edippus passed by the hill where the monster lay, that was called Sphinx.

Where that monsters, of many diuers kind
Were conuersant, in story as I find,
Among which soothly there was one,
So inly cruell that no man durst gone,
For dread of death forth by that passage,
This monster was so mortall in his rage,
Which had also by discripcion,
Body and foot of a fierce lion,
And like a maid, in soth, was head and face,

The destruction of the foul monster.

Fell of his looke and cruell to manace,
And odious of countenaunce and sight,
And as I rede Sphinx that monster hight,
Worse than tigre, dragon, or serpent,
And I suppose by enchauntement,
He was ordained on the hill tabide,
To slea all tho that passeden beside,
And specially, all that did faile
To expoune his misty deuinaile
His probleme eke, in words plaine and bare,
Without auise fully to declare:
Or with the life he might not escape,
This is very sooth plainly and no jape:
And if that he by declaration,
Yaue therevpon cleare exposicion,
He should in haste there was none other meue,
Slaen this monster for all his cruell tene,
There may of mercy be none other graunt,
But of all this Edippus ignoraunt,
This dreadful hill, stonding on a roch
Or he was ware, ful nigh gan approch,
More perillous platly than he wend:
And sodainly the monster gan descend,
To stoppen his way and letten his passage,
Thus abreding with a fell courage

The words of the foul monster.

Said, "I haue in herte inly great disport,
That fortune hath brought thee to my fort,
To make a preefe if thou may endure
The fatall end of this auenture,
Set at a fine, soothly, by days old:"
And by and by all the case him told,
Charging him "to be well ware and wise,
Get the palme and beare away the prise,
Touching this thing set atweene vs tweine,
Of life or death, which we shall dreine,"

And this monster, with a dispitous cheare,
His probleme gan thus as ye shull heare.

The probleme that Sphinx put to Edippus.

" There is a beast merueilous to see,
The which in sooth at his natiuitee
Is of his might so tender and so grene,
That he may himselfe not sustene
Upon his feet, though he had it sworne,
But if that he be of his moder borne,
And afterward by processe of age,
On foure feet he maketh his passage,
And than vpon three if I shall not faine,
And alderlast he goeth vpright on twaine,
Diuers of port and wonderfull of cheares,
Till by length of many sondry yeares,
Naturally he goeth aynen on three,
And sithen on foure, it may none other bee,
And finally this is the trouth plein,
He recouereth kindly ayein,
To the matter which that he came fro,
Lo here my probleme is all ido,
Muse hereupon without warre or strife,
It to declare, or els lese thy life."
And whan Edippus can this thing aduert,
Well assured in his manly herte,
Gan in his herte, serch vp and doun,
And of prudence cast in his reasoun
By great auise, what thing this may bee,
Seing also, that he may not flee,
And how there was counsaile non ne rede,
To tell trouth or els to be dede,
Aud by full good deliberacion,
Thus he answered, in conclusion:
" Thou Sphinx" (quod he) " false and fraudolent,
Thou foule monstre, thou dragon, thou serpent,
That on this hill like as I conceiue,
Liest in waite folkes to deceiue,
But trust well for all thy sleghty witt,
Thy false fraud shall anone be quitt,
Me liste not to whispre neither roune,
But thy probleme I shall anon expoune,
So openly, thou shalt not go therefro,
Lo this it is take good heed thereto:

How Edippus expounded the probleme that Sphinx put to him.

Thilke beast thou spake of here toforne,
Is euery man in this world iborne,
Which may not go his limmes be so soft,
But as his moder beareth him aloft
In her armes, whan he doeth crie, or weepe:
And after that he ginneth for to creepe
On fower feet, in his tender youth,
By experience as it ofte couth,
Aforne irekened his hands both two:
And by processe thou maiest consider also,
With his two feete for all thy fell tene,
He hath a staffe himselfe to susteine,
And than he goeth shortly vpon three,
And alderlast, as it must needs bee,
Uoidyng his staffe he walketh vpon tweine,
Till it so be through age he attaine
That luste of youth wasted be and spent,
Than in his hand he taketh a potent,
And on three feete thus he goeth ayen,
I dare affirme thou maiest it not withsein.
And sone after through his vnweldy might,
By influence of natures right,
And by experience as euery man may know,
Like a child on fower he crepeth low,
And for he may here no while sojourne,
To yearth ayen he must in hast retourne,
Which he came fro, he may it not remew,
For in this world no man may eschew,
This very soth shortly and no doubt,
Whan the wheele of kind cometh about,
And naturally hath his cours ironne,
By circuite as doeth the shere Sonne,
That man, and child, of high and low estate,
It gaineth not to make more debate,
His time isette that he must fine,
Whan Atropos, of malice doeth vntwine
His liues thred, by Cloto first compouned.
Lo here thy probleme is expouned,
Af euery metyng as I toke on honde,
To the law that thou must needs stonde,
And in all haste of mine honds deie,
For of reason thou canst it not withseie."
And this Sphinx awaped and amate,
Stood all dismayed and disconsolate,
With chere doun cast heauy as any ledde,
And Edippus anone smote of the hedde
Of this fende stinking and vnswete,
And the countree set holly in quiete,
Whereby he hath soch a price wonne,
That his fame in euery coast is ronne,
Through al the lond that this monster was slaw:
And line right to Thebes he gan draw,
Well receiued for his worthinesse,
For his manhood and his prowesse,
And for they seigh he was a seemely knight,
Well fauoured in euery mans sight,
And saw also Thebes, the mighty toun,
Not onely they but all the regioun
Were destitute of a gouernour,
Ayen hir foon hauing no succour,
Hem to defend, but the queene alone,
Emong hemselfe making full great mone,
For there was none as bookes specifie,
The sceptre and croune to occupie,
For which the lords all by one assent,
Within the toune set a parlement,
Shortly concluding if it might been,
Prudently to treate with the queen,
Namely they that held hem selfe most sage,
To condescend by way of mariage,
She to be joyned to this manly knight,
Passing prudent and famous eke of might,
Most holle man, as they can discerne,
The worthy citee to keepe and gouerne:
And through counsail of the lords all,
To their desire plainly she is fall,
And accorded without more tarying,
That of Thebes, Edippus shall be king,
By full assent was none that sayed nay,
And time set, ayein a certain day,
Emong hem selfe, and finally deuised,
The wedding was in Thebes solempnized,
Full rially, that needs must vnthriue,
Onely for he, his moder tooke to wiue,
Unwist of both he was of her blood,
And ignoraunt shortly how it stood,
That he toforne had his father slaw,
For which this wedding was against the law,
And tofore God is neither faire ne good,
Nor acceptable blood to touch blood,
Which cause hath be of great confusion
In many a lond, and many a region,

Ground and root of vnhap and mischaunce,
The fine concluding alway with vengeaunce,
As men haue sein by clere experience,
And holy writ recordeth in sentence,
How Herode falsly in his life,
By violence tooke his brothers wife,
For she was fayre, and pleasaunt to his sight,
And kept her still by force through his might,
Although to her title had he non,
And for her sake the holy man sainct Iohn
For his trouth in prison lost his hedde,
Wherefore I rede euery man take hede,
Whether so he be lord, prince, or king,
That he beware to eschue soch wedding,
Ere that the swerde of vengeance him manace,
Lest he lese hap, fortune, and grace,
Taking ensample in all maner thing,
Of Edippus, in Thebes crouned king,
All be that he wrought of ignoraunce,
Full derke and blind of his wofull chaunce,
And if vnwist, that he of innocence,
As ye haue herde fell in soch offence,
For which he was punished and brought low,
What are they worthy that hir errour know,
And from the knot list not to absteine,
Of such spousaile to God and man vnclene,
I can not sem ne more thereof deuise,
Demeth your self that prudent been, and wise,
And eke Edippus, haueth emong in mind,
Of whom the wedding like as ye may find,
Unhappy was and passing odious,
Infortunate, and eke vngracious,
I am werie more thereof to write,
The hatefull processe also to endite,
I passe ouer fully of entent,
For Imeneus was not there present,
Nor Lucina list not there to shine,
Ne there was none of the muses nine,
But one accord to maken melody,
For there song not by beauenly armony,
Neyther Clio, nor Caliope,
None of the sustren in nomber thrise three,
As they did whan Philolaie,
Ascended vp high aboue the skie,
To be wedded, this lady vertuous,
Unto her lord the god Mercurious,
And as Matrician, inamed de Copelle,
In his booke of wedding can you tell,
There concluding in his marriage,
The poete, that whilom was so sage,
That this lady called Sapience,
Iwedded was vnto Eloquence,
As it sat well by heauenly purueiaunce,
Hem to be joyned by knot of alliaunce,
But both two soothly of entent,
At wedding in Thebes were absent,
That caused after great aduersity,
For finall end of that solempnity,
Was sorrow and wo, and destruction,
Utter ruine of this roiall toun,
There may no man helpe it ne succour,
For a time in joy though they floure.

The names of the people, being at the wedding of the king Edippus, and of Iocasta the queen.

But at his wedding plainly for to tell,
Was Cerberus, chief porter of Hell,
And Herebus, fader to Hatred,
Was there present with his holle kinred,
His wife also with her browes blacke,
And her doughters sorow for to make,
Hidously chered and vgly for to see,
Megera, and Thesiphonee,
Alecto eke, with Labour and Enuie,
Drede, Fraude, and false Tretcherie,
Treason, Pouert, Indigence and Nede,
And cruell Death in his rent wede,
Wretchednesse, Compleint, and eke Rage,
Fearfull, Pale, Dronkenesse, croked Age,
Cruell Mars, and many a tigre wood,
Brenning Ire, and vnkind blood,
Fraternall hate deepe set in the roote,
Saufe onely Death, that there nas no boote,
Assured othes at fine untrew,
All these folke were at weddyng new,
To make the toune desolat and bare,
As the story after shall declare:
But aie in Thebes, with his walles strong,
Edippus reigneth many a day and long,
And as mine aucthor write in words plain,
By Iocasta he had sonnes twain,
Ethiocles, and also Polimite,
And in bookes as sondry clerkes write,
Doughters two, full goodly on to see,
Of which that one hight Antigonee,
And that other called was Imein,
Of her beauty, inly souerein,
Edippus aie deuoid of warre and strife,
With Iocasta ledde a merry life,
Till Fortune of her iniquity
Had enuy of his prosperity,
For whan he shone most rich in his renoun,
From her whele she plunged him adoun,
Out of his joy into sodein wo,
As she is wont frowardly to do,
And namely hem that setten her affiaunce
Of hertely trust in her variaunce:
For whan the king passing of great might,
Sat with the quene vpon a certain night,
Casuelly, whan his folkes echone,
Out of chamber sodeinly were gone,
Ere he was ware Iocasta gan behold
The carectes of his wounds old,
Upon his feet, emprented wonder depe,
Tournyng her face brest out for to wepe,
So secrely, he might it not espie,
And she anon fell into a fantasie,
Aie on this thing musing more and more,
And in her bedde gan to sighen sore,
And whan the king conceiueth her distresse,
He gan enquire of her heauinesse,
Fully the cause and thoccasion,
For he will wite in conclusion
What her eileth, and why she fareth so.
"My lord" (quod she) "without wordes mo,
Percell cause of this sodein rage,
Is for that I in my tender age,
Had a lord inamed Laius,
King of this toune, a man right vertuous,
By whom I had a sonne right wonder feire,
Likely to been his successour and heire,
But bicause his diuinours told
At his birth sothly that he should,
If he had life, by fatall destinee,
Slaen his fader it might none other be:
For which the king his fate to eschue,
Bad men in hast as him thought due,
To slea the child, and haue thereof no roth,
And I anon bad without sloth,

To certain men vp pein of judgement,
To execute the commaundement
Of the king as I yaue hem in charge,
And forth they gone to a forest large,
Adjacent vnto this countree,
Persing his feet, and heng him on a tree,
Not performyng thexecution,
On him they had such compassion,
Left him there, and resorted home ayen,
Beyng in doubt and vncertein,
At their repeire as they tolden all,
Of this child what afterward is befall,
Saufe they said huntes had him found,
Which ladden him forth and his feet vnbound,
But to what coast they coud not declare:
Which perced is of mine euil fare,
Ground and cause of mine heauy chere,
Considered eke the wounds that appere
Upon your feet, and wot not what they mene:
And o thing aie is at mine herte greene,
My lord alas but of new date,
King Laius slaine was but late,
At a castell nigh this countree;
Upon your comming into this citee,
All this yweied and rekened into one,
Maketh mine herte as heauie as a stone,
So that I can counsell none ne red,"
And with that word the king lift vp his hed,
And abreid with sharpe sighes smert,
And all this thing by order can aduert,
Curiously by good auisement,
And by signes clere and euident,
Conceiueth well and sore gan repent,
It was himself that Iocasta ment:
And whan the king sigh in maners pleine,
By her goddes she gan him constreine
To shew out the cause of his affray
And it expoune and make no delay,
Croppe and rote shortly why that he
Entred first into that countre,
From whens he came, and from what region,
But he her put in delusion,
As he had doen it for the nones,
Till at last he brast out at ones,
Unto the queene, and gan a processe make,
First how he was in the forest take,
Wounded the feet, and so forth euery thing,
Of his cherishing with Polibon the king,
And holle the cause why he him forsooke,
And in what wise he the way tooke
Toward Thebes as Apollo bad,
And of fortune how that he was lad
Where that Sphinx kept the mountein,
And how that he also slowe in certeine
King Laius at castell gate,
Toward night whan it was full late,
And how to Thebes that he gan him spede,
To find out the stocke of his kinrede,
Which vnto him gan wexe couth,
For by processe of his greene youth,
He found out wele by rekening of his life,
That she was both his moder, and his wife:
So that all night and suyng on the morrow,
Betweene hem two began a new sorrow,
Which vnto me were pitous for to tell,
For thereupon yif I should dwell,
A long space it would you occupy,
But ye may read in a tragedy

Tragedia Senecæ de Egypto Reg. Thebar.

Of moral Senek fully his ending,
His dool, his mischief, and his compleining,
How with sorrow, and vnweldie age,
This Edippus fell in dotage,
Lost his witte and his worldly delite,
And how his sonnes had him in despite,
And of disdaine tooke of him no keepe,
And eke bookes saine, his iyen out he wepe,
And as mine aucthour liketh to deuise,
As his sonnes rebuke him and despise,
Upon a day in a certaine place,
Out of his hedde, his iyen he gan race,
And cast at hem, he can no other boote,
And of malice they trade him vnder foote,
Fully deuoid both of loue and dread,
And whan Edippus for mischief was thus ded
Within a pitt made in the earth low,
Of cruelty his sonnes gan him throw,
Worse than serpent, or any tigre wood;
But of cursed stock commeth vnkind blood,
As in storie ye may rede heretoforne,
Although the rose grow out of the thorne.
Thus of Edippus whan he was blind and old,
The wretched end I haue you plainly told.
For which shortly to man and child I rede,
To be wele ware and take hede,
Of kindly right and of conscience,
To doe honour and due reuerence

How every man ought of duty, to do reverence to his father and mother, Or else there will fall vengeance.

To father and moder of what estate they bee,
Or certaine els they shull neuer thee:
For who that is not to hem debonaire,
In speach, in porte, for to treat hem faire,
Hem to obey, in honesty and drede,
And hem to cherish of what they have nede,
I dare affirme excepting none estate,
That he shall first be infortunate,
In all his werke both on sea and lond,
And of what thing that he take in hond,
For the time froward to him and contrarie,
Wast of his goods plainly and appaire,
Finde plenty of conteke, warre, and strife,
Unhappy end and shortnesse of life,
And gracelesse of what he hath to do,
Hatred of God, and man also:
Therefore no man be thereof recheles,
But make your mirrour of Ethiocles,
And his brother called Polinite,
Which in soch things greatly were to wite,
As he shall here of hem how it fill,
And whan we been descended doun this hill,
As I passed here the lowe vaile,
I shall begin the remnaunt of my tale.

EXPLICIT PRIMA PARS ISTIUS CODIALLI.

IMMEDIATE SEQUITUR SECUNDA PARS EJUSDEN.

Passed the Thrope of Broughton on the blee,
By my kalender I gan anon to see,
Through the Sunne, that full clere gan shine,
Of the clooke that it drew to nine,
And sawe also as siluer dropes shene,
Of the dewe like perles on the grene,
Uapoured vp into the aire aloft,
Whan Zepherus with his blowing soft,

The weder made lustie, smooth, and faire,
And right attempre was the holsome aire:
The same houre all the holle route
Of the pilgrimes riding round aboute,
In my tale whan I gan procede,
Rehearsing forth as it was in dede,
Whan Edippus buried was and graue,
How his sonnes the kingdome for to haue,

How the sons of Edippus, debated for the crown.

Emong hemselfe by full mortall hate,
For the croune, gonne for to debate,
Which of hem justly shall succede,
And the scepter of the toune possede,
Auerting nought, neither to right ne wrong,
But eche of hem to make his partie strong,
And his querele proudly to susteine,
From whose hertes was deuoided clene,
Of brotherhood the faithfull alliaunce,
False couetise so made hem at distaunce,
Fully werching into destruction,
And ruine of this noble toun,
So hote beent of hatred and enuy,
Of both two through pompous surquedy,
That neither would pleinly in a poinct,
Other forbeare, they stode in soch disjoinct,
Like as they had of birth been foreins:
Till of the toune the noble citezeins,
Knights, barons, with many a worthy lord,
Shope a way to make hem of accord,
And to set hem in quiete and in pees:
But for his part this Ethiocles,
Alledge gan, that he was first borne,
For which he ought of reason go toforne
In the citee, to be crouned king,
Sith by law there was no letting,
For vnto him longeth the heritage
By discent, and by title of age.

The controversie of the two brethren.

But Polimite of full high disdaine,
All openly gan reply againe,
And for his part said in especiall,
Reason was none that he should haue all,
Both regaly and dominatioun,
And the lordship wholly of the toun,
And he right nought out of the city,
But liue in sile and in pouerty,
Concluding without fere or drede,
Rather than it suffer, he would be dede,
And thus alas, through hir enuious strife,
At ende euerich lost his life,
At great mischief as ye shall after here,
But thilke time the lords all in fere,
Full besily did hir diligence,
By great auise, and full high prudence,
To set hem in quiet and in rest,
Counsailyng hem plainly for the best,
To leue hir strife, of wisedome and of reason,
And condescend to some conclusion,
Which to both might most auaile,
And finally through hir gouernaile

The common union between these two brethren.

The lordes all, tho being present,
Haue hem brought to been of one assent,
Of one herte, as brother vnto brother,
Euerich of hem to reigne after other,
Yeere by yeere, as it commeth about,
So that the toun shall absent hint out,
Fully that yeere and himself gie,
By his manhood and his chiualrie,
Haunt himself, in deeds marciall,
While his brother in his see riall,
Holdeth his sceptre the citee to gouerne:
And whan the yeere his cours hath run yerne,
And is come out, he shall haue repeire,
To reigne in Thebes like as lord and heire,
There to receiue fully his dignitee,
While that other voideth the citee,
Paciently taking his auenture,
Till he ayen his honour may recure,
Thus enterchange, euery yeere they shall,
That one aseendeth that other hath a fall,
They must obey of herte and take it well,
Like as that one resorteth of the wele,
For this was holle the composicion,
Betwene the brethren, and conuencion
Fully knit vp by great auisement,
Tofore the goddes by othe of sacrament,
Neuer after to grutche ne to varie,
But accomplish shortly, and not tarie
Like as thaccord, enrolled in the toun,
From poinct to poinct, made mencioun.
But alderfirst by reason of his age,
Ethiocles had the auantage,
To reigne aforne, and weare the croune,
Polimite him hasting out of toune,
During that yere it may none other be,
Whiles his brother satte in his rialte,
Full richely vpon Fortunes whele.
And rode him forth armed bright in stele.
This Polimite sothly as I rede,
Himselfe alone on a riall stede,
Without guide all the long day,
Being aferde to keepe the high way,
In his herte hauing suspecion,
To his brother, of malice and treason,
Lest he pursue through fals and vnkind blood,
To haue him dedde for couetise of good,
That he alone might haue possessioun,
During his life fully of the toune:
For which in hast, hauing no felaw,
Polimite aside gan him withdraw,
By a forest joyning to the see,
Knowing right naught the site of the countre,
Full of hilles and of high mounteines,
Craggie roches, and but few pleines,
Wonder dreadfull and lothsome of passage,
And therewithall full of beasts rage,
Holding his way of herte nothing light,
Mate and wery, till it draweth to night,
And all the day beholding enuiron,
He neither saw castel, toure, ne toun,
The which thing greueth him ful sore,
And sodenly the see began to rore,
Winde and tempest hidiously tarise,
The raine doun bete in full grisly wise,
That many a beast thereof was adrad,
And nigh for fere gan to wexe madd,
As it sempte by the wofull sownes
Of tigres, beres, and liones,
Which for refute, hem selfe for to saue,
Euerich in hast, draweth vnto his caue,
But Polymite, in this tempest huge,
Alas the while, findeth no refuge,

Ne him to shrowde saw nowhere no succour,
Till it was passed almost midnight hour
A large space that the sterres clere,
The cloudes voided, in Heauen did appere,
So that this knight out of the forest large,
Gan approch, into the londe of Arge.

How Polimite first came into the lond of Arge.

Seing a palaice mighty of building,
Of which Adrastus, called was the king,
A lusty man, rich, and wondre sage,
And yronne was somdel into age,
Borne of the isle that called is Chifon,
And somtime sonne of the king Cholon,
And for his witte in story as is couth,
He chosen was in his tendre youth,
Of Arge to be crouned king,
Chefe of all Greece, be record of writing,
Not by descente nor succession,
And but alonely of free election,
He held of Arge, the sceptre in his hand,
As most worthy of all Greekes land,
Loued and drade, for wisdome and iustice:
And as the story plainly can deuise,
This worthy king had doughters two,
Passing faire, and right good also,
It were to long, hir beaute to descriue.

Argiue and Deiphile, the doughters tweine of king Adrastus.

And the eldest called was Argiue,
Deiphile ynamed the second:
And Adrastus, like as it is found,
This worthy king had sonne none,
To succede after he be gone,
For which he was during all his life
Triste in herte and passingly pensife,
But holy his trust and his hope stood,
By alliaunce of some worthy blood,
Brought in by mene of his doughters twein,
That he shal be relessed of his peine,
Through recomfort of some high mariage,
And sothly yet full oft in his courage,
He troubled was by occasion
Of a swenene and of a vision,

The dream of king Adrastus of a wild boar and a fers lion.

Shewed to him vpon a certein night,
For as him thought, his inward sight,
While he slept, by clere inspection,
A wild boore and a fers lion,
Possede shul, these bestes in hir rage,
His doughters two by bond of mariage,
In short time within a certein day:
Which brought his herte in full great affray,
But thing in soth that destine hath shape,
Here in this world ful hard it is tescape,
And marueilous a man to eschue his fate.
And Polimite of whom I spake late,
With the tempest bete, and all berined,
By grace onely the citie hath atteined,
Where Adrastus full stately of degree,
Thilke time held his roiall see,
The troubled night, merke and obscure,
Hath brought this knight only by auenture
Through the citie enclosed with a wall,
Unto the palaice chiefe and principall,
Where as the king in his chambre aloft,
Lay in his bed and slept wonder soft,
Eke al his folke had hir chambres teke,
Like as fortune parauenture had shape,
The selfe time because it was so late,
And casuely the porter at the gate,
As it had by right for the nones,
And in a porch built of square stones,
Full mightely enarched enuiroun,
Where the domes and ples of the toun
Were executed, and lawes of the king,
And there this knight without more tarying,
Wery and mate, from his stede alight,
Hanging the reine in all the hast he might,
Upon his arme, sure him for to keepe,
And leid him doun and gan anon to slepe,
As him semed that time for the best:
And while that he lay thus for to rest,
Of auenture there came a knight riding,
One of the worthiest of the world liuing,
Curteis, lowly, and right vertuous,
As saith mine auctour, called Tideus,
Uirous in armes and manly in werking,
Of his birth sonne vnto the king
Of Callidoine, a lond of great renoun,
As he alas, out of that regioun
Exiled was, for he his brother slow,
As the stage of Thebes writ the manere how,
Al be that he to him no malice ment:
For on a day as they on hunting went,
In a forest for harte and for hind,
So as he stood under a great lind,
And casuely lete his arow slippe,
He slough his brother called Menelippe,
Through mortall sort his hand was begiled,
For which he was banished and exiled,
As the law narow sette his charge:
As for this caas he came first to Arge,
Into the porch where Polimite did slepe,
Of auenture ere he toke any kepe,
The same night hidously besein,
With the tempest of thondre and of rein,
And felt also anoy and great damage,
Through the forest holding his passage,
As Polimite had do toforne,
In perrell oft likely to be lorne,
With bestes rage set on euery side,
Till of grace without any guide,
He rode through Arge the great mighty toun,
Streght vnto the palaice, and to the chief dongeon,
Like as I told, where Polimite lay,
And at his comming made a great affray,
For he was blind through derkenes of the night,
And him to giue he ne foud no light,
Whan he came in, of priket ne of torche,
Till he vnwarely entred in to the porche,
And would haue take there his herbergage:
But Polimite sterte vp in a rage,
Sodenly awaked as I rede,
With the nying of his proud stede,
And first of all whan that he beheld,
A knight armed, and on his brest a sheld,
And gan the manere of this ray aduerte,
Of veray ire vpon his horse he sterte,
And cruelly gan Tideus enquere,
Whans he come, and what he did there,
And bad in hast his answere to deuise.
And Tideus in full humble wise,
Answered ayen of verray gentillesse,
And said, in sooth of high distresse

Of the tempest and the derke night;
He driueu was, like an errant knight,
Of need onely and great necessity,
And him constrained of great aduersity,
To take lodging whereso that he might,
And in that court therfore he alight,
Without more thinking none outrage,
Ne to no wight meaning no damage.
Than Polimite of malice, and of pride,
Told him shortly he should not abide,
Ne lodge there, though he had it sworne,
" For I" (quod he) " toke it vp beforne,
And will it keepe during al this night,
I sey thee platly maugre all thy might."
(Quod Tideus) " Than it is no curtesie,
Me to deuoid but rather villenie,
Yfe ye take hede that seeme a gentill knight,
And as I suppose ye haue no title of right,
To this lodging by way of heritage,
More than haue I, for all your fell rage,
And parde yet it shal be no disease,
Till to morrow though ye do me ease,
Of gentillesse onely with your leue,
To suffre me it shall but litel greue;"
But aye the more Tideus spake faire,
Polimite was froward and contrarie,
And shortly saith, it geineth not to striue,
That of force he shall deuoid bliue,
Or vtterly atweue hem both two,
This thing to try he must haue do.
And Tideus seing no better mene,
Ful like a knight in stele armed clene,
Without abode fast gan him spede,
Wonder liuely for to stride his stede,
And thus these knights pompous and elate,
For litel cause fellen at debate.

How Tideus and Polimite striuen for hir lodging.

And as they ronne togider on horsebacke,
Either on other first his spere brake,
And after that full surquedous of pride,
With sharpe swerdes they togider ride,
Full irously these mighty champions,
In hir fury, like tygres or lions,
As they hurtel, that al the palaice shooke,
And king Adrastus out of his sleepe wooke,
And made in hast his chambreleins call,
And through the court his worthy knights al,
Commaunding hem to discend and see,
And report what it might bee,
This wonderful noice in his court by night,
And whan he seigh two strang knights fight,
In plates thicke, and bright maile,
Without iudge, they had great merualle,
And were dismaied of this vncouth thing,
And as they found told to the king,
And Adrastus for darknesse of the night,
From his chambre with many torches light,
Into the court is discended downe,
All his meine stonding enuiron,
Of these knights hauing great wondre,
And of manhode he put hem first asondre,
Hem commanding like a gentill king,
To leuen hir strife and cessen of fighting,
And entred in with a knightly looke,
And first from hem hir swerdes both he tooke,
Affirming eke as to his fantasie,
It was a rage and a great folie,
So wilfully hir liues jeopart,
Withouten iudge hir quarel to depart;
And specially in the derke night,
Whan neither might of other haue sight,
Charging hem vp peine of hir life,
To disseuere and stinten of hir strife.
And tho Tideus in all the hast he might,
Full humbly from his stede alight,
And right mekely with chere and countenance,
Put him holly in the gouernance
Of Adrastus, in all manere thing,
And Polimite eke made no tarying,
To high him also, and would not withsey
The kings bidding, lowly to obey,
So as him ought with due reuerence:
And as they stood both in his presence,
He gan enquere first of hir estate,
The cause also why they were at debate,
Of hir countrees sothly, and hir age,
And asked hem eke touching hir linage,
By descent of what stocke they were born?
And Tideus, his answere yaue beforn,
Told plainly and made no lesing,
How he was sonne vnto the king,
Of Calcidoine, and rightfull heire thereto,
And of his exile the cause he told also,
As ye heue herd in the story rad.
And Polimite with chere and face sad,
Unto the king touching his countree,
Said he was borne in Thebes the citee,
And Iocaste the great famous queene,
His moder was without any wene,
But of his father whilom king and lord,
For veray shame he spake neuer a word,
Onely, for yif I shall not feine,
His fader was, and brother, both tweine,
The which in soth he was full loth to tell,
And eke the king would him not compell,
Of gentillesse, but bad without blame,
Of his birth for to haue no shame,
For holly the caas he knew euery dele,
Touching his kin he knew the ground ful wele,
Like as it was by full cleere report:
Enforcing him for to do comfort,
With all his might, and all besie peine,
This manly king to these knights tweine,
And to hem said, before him as they stood,
He wist well that of full worthy blood
They were descended, touching hir kinred,
And made in hast his officers lede,
The straunge knights being at debate,
Through his palaice, to chamber of estate,
Ech by himself for to take his ease,
And euery thing in soth that might hem please,
Was offred hem like hir estates,
And whan they were disarmed of hir plates,
Cushens, greues, and hir sabatons,
Hir harneis voided, and hir habergeons,
Two mantels vnto hem were brought,
Frette with perle, and rich stones wrought,
Of cloth of gold and violet crimsin,
Full richely furred with ermin,
To lap hem in ayens the cold morrow,
After the rage of hir nights sorrow,
To take hir rest till the Sonne arise,
And whan the king in full prudent wise,
First of al he was not rekeles,
The knights hertes for to sette in pees,
That euer after I dare affirme it wele,
Ech was to other trew as any stele,
During hir life both in word and dede,
Undre a knotte bound of brotherhede.

And Adrastus the worthy king famous,
A feast made rich and plenteous,
To these knights, himselfe thereat present,
And after mete full goodly he hath sent,
This noble king, for his doughters dere,
Of gentillesse for to make chere,
To the knights come fro so ferre:
And like in soth as Lucifer the sterre,
Gladeth the morrow at his vprising,
So the ladies at hir in comming,
With the stremes of hir eyen clere,
Goodly apport and womanly manere,
Countenances, and excellent fairenesse,
To all the court broughten in gladnesse,
For the freshnesse of hir heauenly cheres,
So agreable was vnto the straungeres,
At hir entree, that in especial,
Hem thought it like a thing celestial,
Enhasting hem in full knightly wise,
Ayenst hem goodly to arise,
And as they met with humble countenaunce,
Ful conningly did hir obseruaunce,
Hem conueying in to hir sitting place,
But sothely I haue leiser none ne space,
To reherse and put in remembraunce,
Holly the manere of hir daliaunce,
It were to long for you to abide,
But well I wot that the god Cupide,
By influence of his mighty hond,
And the feruence of his firy brond,
Hir meeting first fortuned hath so wele,
That his arowes of gold, and not of stele,
Yperced han the knights hertes tweine,
Through the brest with such a lusty peine,
That ther abode sharpe, as spere, or launce,
Depe yficched the point of remembraunce,
Which may not lightly rased be away,
And thus in joy they driue forth the day,
In pley and reuel for the knights sake,
And toward night they hir chambre take,
At due time as hir fader bad,
And on hir weie the knights hem lad,
Reuerently vp by many a staire,
Taking leue gan anon repaire,
To hir lodging in ful stately a toure,
Assigned to hem by the herbeiour,
And after spices plenty, and the wine
In cuppes great, wrought of gold full fine,
Without tarying, to bedde straight they gon,
Touching hir rest wheder they sleepe or non,
Demeth ye louers, that in such maner thing,
By experience haue fully knowledging,
For it is not declared in my booke,
But as I find, the king all night wooke,
Thoughtfull in herte the story specifies,
Musing sore and full of fantasies,
First aduerting the great worthinesse
Of these knights and the semelinesse,
Hir lusty youth, hir force, and hir manhode,
And how they were come of roial blode,
And this he gan to reuolue about,
And in his herte hauing a maner of doubt,
Atwene two hanging in a balance,
Wheder he should make an aliance
Atween his doughters and the knights tweine,
For one thing ay his herte gan constreine,
The remembraunce of his auison,
Of which aforne made is amencion,
Touching the lion and the wild bore,
It nedeth not to reherse it no more,
Casting alway in his fantasie,
What it might clerely signifie,
This darke dreame, that was hid and close.
But on the morow Adrastus vp arose,
And to the temple the right way he tooke,
And gan pray deuoutly on his booke,
To the goddes of his dreme to specifie,
And they him bede homward for to hie,
And to behold in the knights sheeldes,
The fell beasts painted in the fields,
Which shall to him be cleere inspection,
Full plainly making declaracion
Of his dreme which he had on the night:
And Adrastus enhasted him full right,
In hir sheelds wisely to behold,
Where that he saw as the goddes told,
In the sheelds hanging vpon hookes,
The beasts rage with hir mortall crookes,
And to purpos like as write Bochas,
Polimite ful streite enbraced was,
In the hide of a fierce lioun,
And Tideus aboue his habergeoun,
A gipoun had, hidous sharpe and hoor,
Wrought of the bristels of a wild boore,
The which beasts as the story leres,
Were wrought and bete vpon hir baneres,
Displaide brode whan they should fight,
Wherefore the king whan he had a sight,
At his repayre in herte was full glad,
And with a face full demure and sad,
With his lords that he about him had,
To the temple he the knights lad,
And whan they had with all circumstaunces,
Of rites old done hir obseruaunces,
Home to the court they retourne ayein,
And in hall, rich, and well besein,
This worthy king of herte liberall,
Made a feast, solempne and riall,
Which in deintees surely did excell,
But it were vein euery cours to tell,
Hir straunge sewes and other soteltees,
Ne how they sat like hir degrees,
For lacke of time I let ouerslide,
And after meate, Adrastus took aside
The knights two, and like a prudent man,
In secree wise thus his tale he gan.

How Adrastus spake to the knights in secret touching the marriage of his daughters.

"Sirs" (quod he) "I ne doubt it nought,
That it is fresh and grene ay in your thought,
How that first by goddes ordinaunce,
And after next through fates purueiance,
And by werking of fortunes hond,
How ye were brought in to this lond,
Both tweine, but now this last night,
Of whos comming I am full glad and light,
First in my selfe shortly to expresse,
Whan I consider and see the likelinesse
Of your persones with the circumstaunces,
And holle the maner of your gouernaunces,
Seing full well whereto should I feigne,
Yee been likely hereafter to atteigne
To great estate and habundance of good,
Through your birth and your rial blood,
Ye may not faile but ye haue wrong,
For ye are both manly and right strong:
And for to set your hertes more at rest,
My purpose is I hope for the best,

So that in you be no variance,
To make a knot as be alliance,
Atwene you and my doughters two,
Yf your hertes accord wele thereto,
And for I am fully in despeire,
To succede for to haue an heire,
Therefore ye shall haue possession,
During my life of halfe my region,
Forth with in hond, and all after my day,
There is no man that thereto shal say nay,
And sothly after whan that I am graue,
Eeh of you shall his part haue
Of this kingdome as I haue prouided,
This is to say, it shall be diuided
Atwene you two euerich to be crouned,
Your properties be equite compouned,
So egaly, in euery mans sight,
That ech of you enjoy shall his right,
And in your witte ye shall the lond amend,
And of manhood knightly it defend,
Ayens our enemies and our mortall foon,
And for the dayes passed been and goon,
Of my desires and my lusty youth,
I am full set for to make it couth;
That ye shall haue like mine opinioun,
The gouernaunce of all this regioun.
"To this entent me seemeth for the best,
Ye to gouerne and I to liue in rest,
Fully to follow the lust of my desires,
Hunte, and hauke, in woods and riuers,
Whan so euer I haue thereto pleasance,
And for to haue none other attendance
Unto nothing but to mine ease,
For which shortly yif it agree and please,
That I haue said to you that ben so wise,
And be according vnto your auise,
Delayeth not but in wordes plein,
That you seemeth yeue answere ayen."
And whan Adrastus had his tale fined,
Tideus with hed full low euclined,
As he that was a veray gentill knight,
With his power and his full might,
Full humbly thanked the king,
Touching his profre and so high a thing,
And for his party said he would assent,
Fully of herte neuer to repent,
To all that euer the king hath said:
And Polimite was also appaid,
In the story as it is comprehended,
On euery part fully is holle descended,
The kings will to fulfill in dede,
From point to point and there vpon procede,
Whether so that euer they winne or lese,
And Tideus mad his brother chese,
Of gentilnesse and of curtesie,
Which that was most to his fantasie,
Of the sisters for to haue to wiue,
And he in soth chosen hath Argiue,
Which eldest was full womanly to se,
And Tideus tooke Deiphile,
Of her beauty most souereigne excellent.
Adrastus throughout his lond hath sent,
For his lords, and his baronage,
To be present at the mariage
Of the knights, and make no letting,
And they ech one come at his bidding,
In goodly wise, meke and full benigne,
Ayein the day that he did assigne,
And thidre come full many a lusty knight,
Full wele besein, and many a lady bright,
From euery coste and many a fresh squier,
The story seith and many a commuuer,
To behold the great rialto,
And the manere of this solempnite,
But to tell all the circumstaunces,
Of just, reuel, and the diuers daunces,
The feasts riche, and the yeftes great,
The peinfull sighes and the feruent heat
Of loues folke, brenning as the glede,
And deuise of many a solein wede,
The touches stole, and the amorous lokes,
By sotell craft leide out lines and hokes,
The iclous folke to traien and begile,
In their awaites with many a sondry wile,
All this in soth descriuen I ne can,
But wele I, the new fame ranne
This meane while with some swift passage,
Unto the Thebes, of this marriage,
And be report trew and nof fained,
Tho whan thereof the eares hath attained,
Mine auctour writ of Ethiocles,
Touching the honour and the great encres,
Of Polimite highly magnified,
And that he newly was allied
With Adrastus in the lond of Arge,
The which thing he greatly gan to charge,
Dreading inly, that this marriage
Shall after time turne to his dammage,
Sore musing, and casting vp and doun
The great power and the high renoun
Of Adrastus, the which of Grecks lond
Had all the power soget to his hond,
Least that he for Polimites sake,
Would vpon him a new warre make,
But if that he like the conuentioun,
At time set deliuer vp the toun
To his brother, by bond of oth sworne,
And by couenaunt assured here toforne,
If ye remember, late as I you told,
Which he was in purpose for to hold,
But for his best, cast him for to vary,
And thereupon list no lenger tary,
Liche his desires to shape remedies,
And first he sent for his next allies,
In whom he had his most affiaunce,
For his lords that had gouernaunce
Of his kingdome, to come to him anon,
And whan they weren present euerichon,
He said plainly wening for the best,
That his herte shall neuer be in rest,
But in sorrow and in a maner of dread,
Till his brother vtterly be dead,
That he in Thebes in his roiall sete
Might alone reigne in quiete,
He meant himselfe, shortly and none other,
Unpertourbed of Polimite his brother,
And at his counseil diuerse of entent,
I find written thre folkes were present,
Some in soth that faithfull were and trew,
And some also that can change of new,
And other eke that betwene tweine,
Couertly could undre colour feine.

Commendation of trouth.

The first seid, aboue all thing,
Trouth should long vnto a king,
Of his worde not be variable,
But plein and hool, as a contre stable.

How trouth is preferred in the book of Esdre aforne kings, women, and wine.

For trouth first without any wene,
Is chief piller that may a king susteine
In joy and honour for to lede his life,
For trouth sometime had a perogatife,
As of Esdre, the booke can specifie,
Record I take of prudent Neemie,
That worthy kings for all hir great pride,
Wine, and women, been eke set aside,
With all power and dominacion,
Hauing reward in comparison
To trouths might, and trouths worthinesse,
For as Esdre pleinly doth expresse,
Who so taketh hede in the same place,
The influence sothly and the grace,
Of trouth alone this old Neemie,
Gat him licence to reedifie
The walles new of Hierusalem,
Which is treasure chief of euery realme,
For Salomon write, how that things tweine,
Trouth and mercy, linked in a cheine

Trouth and mercy preserven a king from all adversity.

Preserue a king, like to his decree,
From al mischiefe and all aduersitee:
Alas therefore that any doublenesse,
Uariaunce, or elles vnsikernesse,

Chaunge nor doubleness should not be in a king.

Change of word or mutabilite,
Fraud or disceite, or instabilite,
Should in a king haue domination,
To causen after his destruction.
Of kings redeth the story doun by rowe,
And seeth how many haue been ouertrowe
Through hir falshod, from Fortunes whele,
For vnto God it pleaseth neuer adele
A king to be double of entent,
For it may happe that the world is went,
Ful oft sith, by sleight of hir werking;
But thus the truth God seeth in euery thing,
Right as it is, for there may be no cloude,
Toforne his sight, trouth for to shroude,
It may be clipsed and derked by deceipt,
By false engine ligging in aweite,
As a serpent for to vndermine,
But at last it will cleerly shine,
Who that saith nay, and shew his bright beames,
For it in soth of kingdomes and of realmes,
Is bearer vp and conservatrice,
From al mischief and sothfast mediatrice,
To God aboue who so list to se,
To keepe a king in prosperitie,
On euery side as I afferme dar,
For which ye kings and lords beeth wele war,
Your behests justly for to hold,
And thinketh how Thebes, with his walles old,
Destroied was platly this is no les,
For the doublenesse of Ethiocles,
That with his people sore after bought,
Onely for that he nat by conseil wrought,
Of hem that were both trew and wise,
Him list not werke by hir auise,
But left trouth, and set his fantasie
To be gouerned by false flatterie,

The counsell of false flatterers.

That bad him thinke how he was a knight,
And to hold of force more than of right,
During his life the lordship of the toun,
And not to lese his possession,
For no bonde nor hestes made toforn,
But let his brother blowe in an horne
Where that him list, or pipe in a rede
This was the counsell platly and the rede
Of soch as list not to say the soth,
But falsly flatre, with hir words smoth.
And whan they hadde holle hir tale fined,
Ethiocles fully is enclined,
Whosoeuer therat laugh or weepe,
Like hir counseil, possession to keepe,
Who that saith nay, or grutcheth there ayein
Him to contrarie, him thought was but vein.

How the year was come out that Ethiocles reigned in Thebes.

But in this while that the sheene Sonne,
The xii. signes round about had ronne,
Sith Ethiocles by just rekening,
In Thebes was crouned lord and king,
Holding the scepptre and the diademe,
That by reason as it would seeme,
The time was full complete and the space
Of couenant he should void his place,
And Polimite eke his journey make
Toward Thebes possession to take,
Of due title but he had wrong,
Which thought in soth, the yere was wondre long:
Of his exile or that it come about
And for he had in herte a maner of doubt,
Least in his brother were falsehed found,
To acquite himselfe like as he was bound,
To Adrastus he gan declare his herte,
Beseching him this matter to aduert,
And therevpon to yeue counsell sone,
Touching his right what was best to done,
Whether it were best to go or to abide,
Or like a knight, manly to ride
Himself alone and make no message,
For to chalenge his rightfull heritage,
Within Thebes either by pees or strife,
And thereupon to jeoperd his life,
Thus was he set, for all his fers brother:
But Adrastus sothly thought another
Bet was to send, than himself to gone,
Lest he were trapped among his mortal fone,
Hauing his brother suspect in this caas,
That by fraude or by some fallas,
He would werke his destructioun,
If he were hardy to entre into the toun,
For which he bad him prudently take heed,
Fully concluding how it were more speed
That some other be to Thebes sent,
To perceiue fully thentent
Of Ethiocles inward by some signe,
And if that he his crowne will resigne,
For thilke yeere like as he made his oth,
And whan he knew now his purpose goth,
Thereupon to werken and procede,
And thus Adrastus wisely gan him rede.

How Tideus took upon him to do the message of Polimite his brother.

And while they treat vpon this mattere,
Tideus with a manly chere,

Said vtterly for his brothers sake,
This message he would vndertake,
With whole themprise of thanbassiate,
Were it welefull or infortunate,
He will not spare whatsoeuer betide.
But Adrastus, on that other side,
And Polimite in conclusion,
Were contraire to that opinion,
And said soothly as hem thought right,
Sith that he was so well a proued knight,
And discended of so worthy blood,
That they nold for none yearthly good,
For all Thebes with the regalty,
Put his body in such jeopardy:
But all this thing auaileth him right nought,
For he wil forth, how deare that it be bought,
Taking leaue first of all the estates,
And armed him in maile, and sure plates,
And shope him forth vpon his journie,
Who made than sorrow, but Deiphile.

The sorrow of Deiphile, when Tideus went toward Thebes the city.

With bitter teares dewed all her face,
Full oft sithes, swouning in the place,
Trist and mourning in her blacke wede:
And whan she saw that he tooke his stede,
So inwardly encreased gan her mone,
Seeing her lord so riding forth alone
Upon his way, this worthy Tideus:
And in all hast, the story telleth vs,
He speedeth him so, making no delaies,
That in the space of few daies
The high toures of Thebes he gan see,
And entred is into that citee,
Wisely enquiring where the pallaice stode,
And like a knight thider streight he rode,
Marked full well in many a mans sight,
Like Mars himselfe, in stele armed bright,
Till he attained hath the cheefe dongeon,
Where as the king held his mansion,
And throgh the palaice with a knightly looke
Into the hall the right way he tooke,
From his stede, whan he alight adoun,
Not aferde but hardy as lioun,
Where as the king with lords a great rout,
In the hall sitting round about,
He entred in, most manfull of courage,
To execute the fine of his message,
And as him thought, conuenient and due,
Full cunningly he gan the king salue,
Requiring him of kingly excellence,
In goodly wise to yeue him audience,
And not disdaine, neither, in port ne chere,
Sith he was come as a messangere
From Polimite his owne brother dere,
Ginning his tale thus as ye shall here.

How wisely and how knightly Tideus did his message

Quod he, "Vnto your worthinesse
My purpose is breefly to expresse
The effect holly, as in sentement,
Of the message, why that I am sent,
It were long processe to make,
But of my mattere the very ground to take,
In eschuing of prolixity,
And void away all superfluity,
Sith your selfe best ought to vnderstond
The cause fully, that we haue on hond,
And eke conceiue the entent of my meaning,
Of rightwisenesse longing to a king:
First considered, if that ye take hede,
Whan Edippus the old king was dede,
How that your selfe, and your brother bliue,
For the crowne contagiously gan striue,
As mortall foen, by full great hatrede,
Which of you two should first succede,
Till that ye were by meanes reconciled,
Ye to reigne, and he to been exiled
Out of this toune for a yeares space,
And than ayeine resort into his place,
To reigne as king; and ye to voiden out,
So as your tourn by processe cometh about,
Eueriche of you patiently tendure
Thentrechaunging of his auenture,
Who were put out, or stood in his estate,
Thereupon to make no debate,
Liche the couenaunt and conuentioun,
Enrolled vp by lords of the toun,
Which of reason may not be denied,
Sithen ye haue a yeare occupied:

The request that Tideus made in the name of Polimite, under the title of convention.

Polimite requireth you of right,
To acquite you as a true knight,
In eschuing of mortall warre and strife,
Sith ye had a prerogatife,
As eldest brother, for to reigne aforne,
And thinketh how that ye arne sworne
Your oth to keepe, and make no tarrying,
Holly aduert, liche a prudent king,
That trouth is more in compasison,
Than all the treasour of your region,
More acceptable vnto God and man,
Than all the richesse that ye reken can,
Wherefore in hast, and let there be no slouth,
Quiteth your selfe justely in your trouth
Unto your brother, auoiding this citee,
And let him reign in his royall see,
The crowne of Thebes a yeare to occupie,
Than will all Greece praise and magnifie
Your high renoun, and may say none other,
But ye acquite you justly to your brother:
This whole theffect of all that I will sain,
Answer expectant what ye will send ayain."
Whan Tideus had told his tale,
Ethiocles triste and wonder pale,
His conceit first in maner hath refreined,
Dissimuling vnder colour feined,
Shewing a chere in maner debonaire,
To his intent wonderly contraire,
Inward in herte wood and furious,
Tourning his face towards Tideus,
He gan abreid and at last out spake,
And euen thus vnto him he spake.

The answer of king Ethiocles.

"I haue great marueile" (quod he) "in my thought,
Of the message which that thou hast brought,
That my brother, as thou hast expouned,
Desireth so in Thebes to be crowned,
Hauing regard to the abundaunce,
The great plenty, and the suffisaunce,
That he hath now with the king of Arge,
That me seemeth he should little charge
To haue lordship or dominioun
In the bounds of this little toun,

Sith he reigneth so freshly in his flours,
Surmounting all his predecessours,
By new encrease, through fortunes might:
Wherfore in herte I am right glad and light,
Fully trusting, if I had nede,
To his helpe, that without drede,
Like a brother, that I should him find
To me ward faithfull, true, and kind,
Supposing plainely euermore,
Of this reigne he set but little store,
Nor casteth him not for so short a while,
As for a yeare his brother to exile,
To liue in pouerty, and in great distresse,
He will not suffer it of his high noblesse,
It were no token of no brotherhede,
But a signe rather of hatrede,
To interrupt my possession
Of this little poore region."
All that he spake, who so coud aduert,
Of very scorne rooted in his herte,
As hem seempt, the story can you teach,
By the surplus soothly of his speach,
He might no lenger him restreine,
But plainely said, " As betwene vs tweine,
I meane thus, Polimite and me,
There is no bond nor surete,
Ne faith ymade, that may him auaile,
As he claimeth, to yeue the gouernaile
Of this city, neither yeare ne day,
For I shall let him, soothly if I may,
That he shall not by title of his bond,
Enjoy in Thebes halfe a foot of lond,
Let him keepe that he hath wonne,
For I purpose, as I haue begonne,
To reigne in Thebes henceforth all my liue,
Maugre all hem that thereayen striue,
And in despite of his friends all,
Or the counsaile that him list to call,
Let him besure, and know this right wele,
His manacing I drede neuer a dele,
And sikerly, as to my deuise,
It sheweth well that thou art not wise,
But suppressed with a manere of rage,
To take on thee this surquedous message,
And presumest to doe so high offence,
So boldely to speake in my presence,
But all in fere, auaile shall right nought,
For the tithings that thou hast brought
Shall vnto him be disencreace,
He better were to haue been in peace,
Than of folly and presumption,
Ayenst me to seech occasion,
For I liue, and thereto here mine hond,
As I said erst, he winneth here no lond,
While the wall of this toun may stond,
For plainely I doe thee to vnderstond,
That they shull first be beat down full low,
And all the toures to the earth ythrow,
Ere he in Thebes haue any thing ado,
Lo here is all, retourne and say him so."
Whan Tideus saw the feruent ire
Of the king with anger set on fire,
Full of despite, and of melancolie,
Conceiuing eke the great fellonie
In his apport, like as he were wood,
This worthy knight a little while stood
Sad and demure, ere he would ought seine,
But at last thus he said ayeine.

The knightly answer that Tideus yaue ayeine to the king.

" Certes" (quod he) " I conceiue of new,
About thee thy counsaile is vntrew,
I dare it saine, and vow it at best,
Ne thou art not faithfull of thy behest,
Stable of thy word that thou hast said toforne,
But deceiuable, and falsely eke forsworne,
And eke perjurate of thine assured oth:
But whether so be that thou be lefe or wroth,
I say thee shortly, hold it for no fage,
All this shall tourne vnto thy damage,
Trist it well, and in full cruell wise
All Greekes lond shall vpon thee arise,
To be auenged, and manly to redresse
The great vntrouth and the high falsenesse
Which that thou hast ayen thy brother wrought,
It shall full dere after this be bought,
And verily indeed, as thou shalt lere,
King Adrastus will meddle in this matere,
And all the lords about him enuiron,
That bounden be to his subjection,
Princes, dukes, and many a noble knight,
In susteining of thy brothers right,
Shall on a day with spere and with shield
Ayenst thee be gadred in a field,
Knightly to preue all by one assent,
That thou art fals, and double of entent,
Of thy promise atteint, and eke outrayed,
And leue me well, it shall not be delayed,
But in all hast execute in deede:
Like thy desert, thou shalt haue thy meede,
For God aboue and his rightwisenesse,
Such open wrong shall in hast redresse,
And of his might all such collusion
Reforme ayeine, and all extortion,
For this the fine, falshood shall not vaile,
Ayenst trouth in field to holden battaile,
Wrong is crooked, both halt and lame,
And here anone in my brothers name,
As I that am his next allie,
At his querele, shortly I defie,
Fully auised, with all mine hole entent,
And ye lords, that been here present,
I you require of your worthinesse,
To say trouth and beare witnesse
Whan time commeth, justly to record,
How your king falsely gan discord
From his hest of false variaunce,
And thinke on, how ye of faith and ligeaunce
Are bound echone, ye may not go therefro,
For to obey and serue both two
This next yeare, now anone following,
As to your lord, and to your true king
Polimite, though he be now absent,
By just accord made in Parliament,
At your deuise, which sitten here a row,
Engrossed was vp, as it is well know,
And enrolled onely for witnesse
In your registers to void all falsenesse,
That none of you vary may of new
From that I say, but if he be vntrew,
For which I rede your selfe to acquite,
Let no time lenger lie in respite,
But at ones without more tarrying,
Of manly force fet home your king,
Maugre your fone, like as ye are bound,
And let in you no slouth be found

To put him justly in possession,
This is my counsaile in conclusion."

How manly Tideus departed from the king.

Whan Tideus had his message saied,
Like to the charge that was on him laied,
As he that list no lenger there sojourne,
Fro the king he gan his face tourne,
Not astonied, nor in his herte aferde,
But full proudely layed hond on his swerde,
And in dispite, who was lefe or loth,
A sterne pace through the hall he goth
Through the court, and manly toke his stede,
And out of Thebes fast gan him spede,
Enhasting him, till he was at large,
And sped him forth toward the lond of Arge.
Thus leaue I him riding forth a while,
Whiles that I retourne ayeine my stile
Unto the king, which in the hall stood
Emong his lords, furious and wood,
And his herte wroth, and euill apaied
Of the words that Tideus had saied,
Specially hauing remembrance
On the proud dispitous defiance,
Whiles that he sat in his royall see,
Upon which he would auenged bee
Full cruelly, what that euer befall,
And in his ire he gan to him call
Cheefe constable of his chiualrie,
Charging him fast for to hie,
With all the worthy choise of his houshold,
Such as he knew most manfull and bold,
In all hast Tideus for to sue,
Tofore or he out of his lond remue,
Up peine of life, and lesing of hir head,
Without mercy anone that he be dead.

How falsely Ethiocles laid an ambushment in the way to have slain Tideus in his repair.

And of knights fifty were in number,
Mine author saith, vnwarely him to comber,
Armed echone in maile and thicke stele,
And therewithall yhorsed wonder wele,
At o posterne forth they gonne to ride,
By a gein path, that lay out aside,
Secretly, that no man hem aspy,
Onely of treason, and of fellony,
They hast hem forth all the long day
Of cruell mallice, for to stop his way,
Through a forrest, all of one assent,
Full couertly for to lay a bushment
Under an hill at a strait passage,
To fallen on him at more auantage,
The same way that Tideus gan draw,
At thilke mount where the Sphinx was slaw,
He nothing ware in his opinion,
Of the compassed conspiration,
But innocent, like a gentle knight,
Rode aye forth, till it drow to night,
Sole by himself without companie,
Hauing no man him to wise or gie,
But at last, lifting vp his hede,
Toward eue he gan to take hede,
Mid of his way, right as any line,
Thought he saw ayenst the Moone shine
Shields fresh, and plates burned bright,
The which enuiron, cast a great light,
Imagining in his fantasie,
There was treason or conspiracie
Wrought by the king, his journey for to lette,
And of all that he nothing sette,
But well assured in his manly herte,
List not ones aside to diuert,
But kept his way, his shield vpon his brest,
And cast his spere manly in the rest:

How worthy Tideus outrayed fifty knights, lying in await for to slaen him.

And the first platly that he mette,
Through the body proudly he him smette,
That he fell dead, cheefe maister of hem all,
And than at ones they vpon him fall,
On euery paas, by compasse enuiron,
But Tideus through his high renoun,
His bloody swerde let about him glide,
He sleeth and killeth vpon euery side,
In his ire and his mortall tene,
That meruell it was how he might so sustene,
Ayenst hem all on euery halfe beset,
But his swerde was so sharpe whet,
That his fomen found it full vnsoot,
But he alas was made light on foot,
By force grounded in full great distresse,
But of knighthood and of high prowesse
Up he rose, maugre all his fone,
And as they came, he slough hem one by one,
Like a lion rampant in his rage,
And on this hill he found a narrow passage,
Which that he tooke, of full high prudence,
And liche a bore stonding at his defence,
As his fomen proudely him assaile,
Upon the plein hir blood he made to raile,
All enuiron, that the soile waxe redde,
Now here, now there, as they fellen dedde,
That here lay one, and there lay two or three,
So mercilesse in his crueltee.
Thilke day he was vpon hem found,
And at ones his enemy did confound,
Where as he stood, this mighty champion,
Beside he saw with water tourned doun,
An huge stone, large, round and square,
And sodainly ere that they were ware,
As it had lien there for the nones,
Upon his foen he rolled it at ones,
That ten of hem wenten unto wracke,
And the remenaunt amased, drew abacke,
For one by one they went to mischance:
Thus finally he brought to outrance
Hem euerychone, Tideus as bliue,
That none but one left of hem aliue,
Himselfe yhurt and ywounded kene,
Through his harneis bleeding on the grene,
The Theban knights in compas round about,
In the valley slaine all the whole rout,
Which pitously againe the Moone gape,
For none of hem shortly might escape,
But dead echone, as they haue deserued,
Saue one except, the which was reserued
By Tideus, of this entention
To the king to make relation,
How his knights haue on hir journey sped,
Euerich of hem his life left for a wed,
And at meting how they haue hem borne,
To tellen all, he assured was and sworne,
To Tideus, fully lowly on his knee,
By which ensample openly ye may see,

How truth with little multitude hath euer in the fine, victory of falshood.

Ayens trouth falshood hath no might,
Figh on querels, not grounded vpon right,
Without which may be no victory,
For euery man haue this in memory,
That great power shortly to conclude,
Plenty of good, or great multitude,
Sleight or engine, force or fellony,
Arne too feeble to hold a champarty
Ayenst trouth, who that list take heed
For attend falshood may not speed
Tendure long, ye shall find it thus,
Record I take of worthy Tideus,
That arted his hond throgh troths excellence,
Fifty knights slough in his defence,
But one except as I late told,
Sworne and assured, with his hand vphold,
The king tenforme how they were atteint:
And Tideus of bleeding was wonder feint,
Mate and weary, and in great distresse,
And ouerlayd of very feeblenesse,
But as he might tho himselfe sustene,
He tooke his horse stonding on the grene,
Worthed vp, and forth he gan to ride
An easie paas, with his wounds wide,
And soothly yet, in his opinion,
He was alway aferde of treason,
But anguishous, and full of busie peine,
He rode him forth, till he did atteine
Into the bounds of Ligurgus lond,
A worthy king, and manly of his hond,

How Tideus all to wounded, came into Ligurgus lond.

And he full pale onely for lacke of blood,
Tideus saw where a castle stood,
Strong and mighty, built vpon a rocke,
Toward which fast he gan approche,
Conueighed thider by clerenesse of the stone,
That by night ayens the Moone shone,
On high toures, with crestes marciall,
And joyning almost to the wall,
Was a gardein, little out beside,
Into which Tideus gan to ride
Of aduenture, by a gate small,
And there he found, for to reken all,
A lusty erber, vnto his deuise,
Sweet and fresh, like a paradise,
Uery heauenly of inspectioun,
And first of all he alight adoun,
The goodly place whan that he beheld,
And from his necke he voided hath his sheld,
Drew the bridle from his horse hede,
Let him go, and tooke no manner hede,
Through the garden that enclosed was,
Him to pasture on the soot gras,
And Tideus more heauy than is ledde,
Upon the hearbes greene, white, and redde,
As him thought that time for the best,
He layd him downe for to take his rest,
Of wearinesse, desirous to sleepe,
And none await his body for to keepe,
And with dreames grudged euer emong,
There he lay till the larke song
With notes new, high vp in the aire,
The glad morrow rody and right faire,
Phebus also casting vp his beames,
The high hils gilt with his streames,
The siluer dew vpon the hearbes round,
There Tideus lay vpon the cold ground,
At vprist of the shene Sunne,
And stoundmeale his greene wounds runne
Round about, that the soile depeint
Was of the greene with the red meint.

How Ligurgus doughter found Tideus sleeping in the herber, all forwounded.

And euery morrow, for holesomnes of aire,
Ligurgus doughter did make her repaire
Of custome aye emong the floures new
In the garden, of many a diuers hew,
Such joy had she for to take hede,
On her stalkes for so seene hem sprede,
In the alures walking to and fro:
And whan she had a little while go,
Her selfe alone casting vp her sight,
She beheld where an armed knight
Lay to rest him on the hearbes cold,
And him beside she gan eke behold
His mighty stede walking here and there,
And she anon fell in a manner fere,
Specially whan she saw the blood
Sprad on the greene, about there she stood,
But at last she caught hardinesse,
And womanly gan her for to dresse
Toward the knight, hauing a manner drede,
And great doubt least that he were dede:
And of her will soothly this was chiefe,
That she thought for to make a priefe,
How that it stood of this man full oft,
And forth she goeth, and toucheth him soft,
Where as he lay, with her honds smale:
And with a face deadly bleike and pale,
Liche as a man adawed in a swough,
He vp stert, and his swerde drough,
Not fully out, but put it vp ayeine,
Anone as he hath the lady seine,
Beseeching her onely of her grace,
To haue pity on his trespace,
And rew on him of her womanhede,
For of a fray he was fall in drede,
Least he had been assayled of new
Of the Thebanes, preued full vntrue,
For drede of which he was so rechlees,
Full humbly him yeelding to the pees,
Trist in himselfe, that he passed had his bounds.
And whan that she saw his mortall wounds,
She had routh, of very gentillesse,
Of his disease and his distresse,
And bad he should be nothing dismaied,
Nor in herte sorrifull nor affraied,
Discomfort him in no manner thing,
"For I" (quod she) "am doughter to the king
Called Ligurge, which greatly me delite
Euery morrow this garden to visite,
It is to me so passingly disport,
Wherefore" (quod she) "beth of good comfort:

How womanly the lady acquit her to Tideus in his disease.

For no wight here touching your voyage,
Shall hinder you, ne doe you no damage,
And if ye list of all your auenture
The plaine trouth vnto me diseure,
I will in sooth doe my businesse,
To reforme your greeuous heauinesse,

With all my might, and whole my diligence,
That I hope of your great offence,
Ye shall haue helpe in your aduersite,
And as ferreforth as it lieth in me,
Trusteth right well, ye shall no faut find:
And whan he saw that she was so kind,
So womanly, so goodly and benigne,
In all her port by many a diuers signe,
He vnto her by order will not spare,
His auentures fully to declare
In Thebes first touching his message,
And at hill of the woody rage,
Of his wounds and of his hurts sore,
It were but vaine to rehearse it more,
By and by he told it euerydele,
The which in sooth she liked neuer adele,
But had routh and compassion
Of his mischeefe, wrought by false treason,
Riding in hast, that he should her sue,
And womanly, as her thought due,
To a chamber she led him vp aloft,
Full well beseine, there in a bed right soft,
Richly abouten apparrailed,
With cloth of gold all the floure irailed
Of the same, both in length and brede,
And first this lady, of her womanhede,
Her women did bid, as goodly as they can,
To be attendant vnto this wounded man,
And whan he was vnarmed to his shert,
She made first wash his wounds smert,

How Tideus was refreshed in the castle of the lady.

And serch hem well with diuers instruments,
And made fette sundry ointments,
And leeches eke, the best she coud find,
Full craftely to staunch him and to bind:
And euery thing that may done him ease,
To suage his peine, or his wo tapease,
Was in the court and in the castle sought,
And by her bidding to her chamber wrought,
And for his sake, she hath after sent
For such deinties as were conuenient,
Most nutritife by phisickes lore,
Hem that were seke or wounded to restore,
Making her woman eke to taken keepe,
And await on him on nights whan he sleepe,
And bee well ware that nothing astart,
That was or might be lusty to his herte.
And with all this, she prayed him abide,
Till he were strong and mighty for to ride,
In the castle to play him and disport,
And at leiser home ayeine resort,
Whan he might by welde him at his large,
But all for naught he will home to Arge,
Tooke his leaue on the next day,
Without abode to hast him on his way,
Lowly thanking vnto her goodnesse,
Of her freedome and bounteous largesse,
So womanly, that her list take heed
Him to refresh in his great need,
Behoting her with all his full might,
He would be her seruant and her true knight
While he liueth, of what she will him charge,
And forth he rode till he come to Arge,

How Tideus repaired is home to Arge.

In full great hast, and would no where dwell,
But what should I rehearse, either tell
Of his repaire, the coasts or the pleines,
The great rockes or the high mounteines,
Or all the manere of his home comming,
Of the meeting, nor the welcomming,
Nor the joy that Adrastus made,
Nor how his suster or his wife were glade,
Nor how that they, whereto should I write,
Embraced him in hir armes white,
Nor the gadering about him, or the prees,
Nor the sorrow that Polimites
Made in himselfe, to see him sore wounded,
His greenous hurts, his sores eke vnsounded,
His deadly looke, and his face pale,
Of all this to ginne a new tale,
It were in sooth a manner idlenesse.
Nor how himselfe in order did expresse,
First how that he in Thebes hath him borne,
Ne how the king falsely was forsworne,
Nor of thawait nor treason that he sette,
Whan fifty knights on the way him mette,
As ye haue heard all the manere how,
Without which my tale is long ynow:
But Adrstus made men to seach
In euery coast for many a diuers leach,
To come in hast, and make no tarrying
Upon a peine, by bidding of the king
To done hir craft, that he were recured,
And of his force in euery part assured.
And they echone so hir cunning shew,
That in space of a dayes few
He was all whole made of his sicknesse,
There was tho joy, and than was ther gladnesse,
Throughout the court and through al the toun,
For euery man hath such opinioun
In Tideus, for his gentillesse,
For his manhood, and his lowlinesse,
That he was hold the most famous knight,
And best beloued in euery mannes sight,
Throughout Greece in euery region.
But now must I make a digression,
To tell shortly, as in sentement,
Of thilke knight that Tideus hath sent,
Into Thebes, onely to declare
Of the great mischeefe and the euill fare,
Unto the king, how it is befall,
The open trouth of his knights all,
How Tideus hath slaine hem euerychone,
That saue himselfe, there escaped none,
Which was reserued from sheding of his blood,
The king to tell plainely how it stood:
And whan he had rehearsed euery poynt,
Ethiocles stood in such disjoynt,

How Ethiocles sore was astonied, whan he heard the death of his knights.

Of hatefull ire he wext nigh wood,
And in his teene and in his fell mood,
Of cruell mallice to the knight he spake,
And felly said, that it was for lacke
Onely of manhode, and through hir cowardise,
That they were slaine in so mortall wise,
" And hanged be he high by the necke,
That of your death or of your slaughter reck,
Or you compleine, eyther one or all,
Of the mischeefe that is you befall,
I doe no force that none of you astert,
But sigh vpon your false coward herte,
That o knight hath through his renoun
Brought you all to confusioun,

Full gracelesse and full vnhappy to:"
"Nay" (quod this knight) "it is nothing so.
It is thine vnhap plainly, and not ours,
That so many worthy warriours,
Which all hir life neuer had shame,
Except this querele, taken in thy name,
That grounded was, and rooted on falsenesse,
This was cause in very soothnesse,
Of our vnhap, I wot wele, and none other,
With thine vntrouth done vnto thy brother,
And that thou were so openly forsworne,
And percell cause, why that we were lorne,
Was fals breaking of thine assured oth."
And tho the king, mad almost for wroth,
In purpose was for to slea this knight,
Onely for he said vnto him right,
The which alas, both at eue and morrow,
Suppressed was with a deadly sorrow,
Renning aye in his remembraunce,
With the pitous and vnhappy chaunce
Of the great mischeefe and misauenture,
Touching the death and discomfiture
Of his freres, and of himselfe also,
That the shamefast importable wo
So was on him, with such a mortall strife,
That he was weary of his owne life,
Hent he hath a sword, and aside stert,
And roue himself euen to the herte,
The king himselfe being tho present:
And the rumour and the noise is went
Through Thebes of the wood rage,
By such as weren joyned by linage
To the knightes, slaine at hill,
That all at ones of one herte and will,
They would haue arisen throughout the citie,
Upon the king auenged for to be,
Which of hir death was cheefe occasioun:
But the barons and lords, of the toun
Ful busie were this rumour and disease,
Of high prudence, to stint and appease,
In quiete euery thing to sette:
And after that the bodies home they fette
Of the knights, like as ye haue herd
Afore yslaine, with the bloody swerd
Of Tideus, full sharpe whet and ground,
And in the field, so as they hem found,
Onely of loue, and of affectioun,
Solemnely they brought hem to the toun,
And like the manere of the rites old,
They were first brent into ashes cold,
And each one yburied, like to his degre,
Lo here the kalends of aduersite,
Sorrow vpon sorrow, and destruction,
First of the king, and all the region,
For lacke onely, like as I you told,
That behests truly were not hold:
The first ground and root of this ruine,
As the story clerely shall determine,
And my tale hereafter shall you lere,
If that you list the remnaunt for to here.

FINITUR PARS SECUNDA, SEQUITUR PARS TERTIA.

O CRUELL Mars, full of melancoly,
And of thy kind, hote, combust, and dry,
As the sparkles shewen from so ferre,
By the streames of the red sterre,
In thy sphere as it about goth,
What was cause that thou were so wroth
With hem of Thebes, throgh whos feruent ire
The city brent, and was set on fire,
As bookes old well rehearse conne,
Of cruell hate, rooted and begonne,
And engendred, the story maketh mind,
Onely of blood corrupt and vnkind,
By infection, called originall,
Causing a strife dredefull and mortall,
Of which the mischeef through al Grece ran,
And king Adrastus alderfirst began,
Which hath him cast a conquest for to make
Upon Thebes, for Polimites sake,
In knightly wise there to preue his might,
Of full entent to recure his right.
And first of all he sette a parlement,
And hath his letters and messengers sent
Through Greece, to many sundry kings,
Hem to enhast, and make no lettings,
And round about, as made is mention,
He sent also to many a region
For princes, dukes, earles, and barons,
To taken vp in cities and in tounes,
And to chesen out the most likeliest,
And such as weren preued for the best,
As of manhood, and send hem vp ech one,
And in hir hond receiue hir pay anone,
With Adrastus to Thebes for to ride,
And tho lords that with him abide

The great purveyaunce of king Adrastus toward the city of Thebes.

In houshold still, haue hir leaue take
To riden home, hir retourne to make
In hir countries, as they were of degre,
To sustene hem, to take vp meine,
And to make hem strong with knights and squeres,
With speres, bows, and arbalasteres,
In all the hast possible that they may,
And to returne in hir best array,
At tearme set, full manly to be seine
Toforne Arge moustren in a pleine:

The kings and princes that come to Adrastus.

And as I rede full worthy of degre,
Thider come first Prothonolope,
The which was by record of writing,
Of Archade, sonne vnto the king,
And full prudent found in warre and pees:
There came also the king Gilmichenes,
As I find, full famous of renoun,
Thider came eke the king Ipomedoun:
And passing all of knighthood and of name,
And excelling by worthinesse of fame
The noble king, called Campaneus,
Came eke to Arge, the story telleth thus,
Proued full wele, and had riden fer:
And thider come the king Meleager,
King Genor eke, that held his royall see,
Mine author saith, in the lond of Greece:
King Locris, and king Pirrus,
And eke the king called Tortolonus,
And renouned in many a region,
There come the king called Palenon,
Oft assayed, and found a manly knight,
That with him broght in stele armed bright,
Full many worthy out of his countre,
And Tideus most knightly for to see,
That noble man, that worthy werriour,
As he that was of worthinesse the flour,

Master and mirrour by prowes of his hond,
Hath sent also into the mighty lond
Of Calcedoine, of which he was heire,
That is his kingdome, both rich and feire,
Charging his counsaile and officers also,
In all the hast that it may be do,
To seeken out the best werriours
Of famous knights and proued souldeours
Throgh al the lond, and leid on hem this charge
Without abode for to come to Arge:
And they obey full lowly his bidding,
Enhasting hem, and made no letting,
But sped hem fast vpon hir journiy.
And from Thebes the mighty strong city,
Came doun knights, with many another man,
Maugre the king, to helpe what they can,
Considred first his falshood and treason,
Ymeued onely of trouth and of reason,
Polimites, as they were sworne of yore,
To his crowne justly him restore:
And whan they were at large out of the toun,
Unto Arge they be descended doun,
And like hir oth, and hir assurance,
As they were bound only of ligeance,
To him they come in full lowly wise,
Lowly to done what him list deuise.
And whan he had hir trouth full conceiued,
He hath to grace goodly hem receiued,
Assigning hem hir place amid the hoast,
Assembled there, from many a diuerse coast:
That finally, in this company
Ygadred was the floure of cheualry,
Ychosen out of all Greekes lond,
The most knightly and manfull of her hond,
That as I trow, sith the world began,
There was not seene so many a manly man,
So wele horsed with spere and with shield,
Togider sembled soothly in a field?
There men might see many strange guises
Of arming new, and vncouth deuises,
Euery man after his fantasie,
That if I should in order specifie,
Euery peece longing to armure,
And thereupon doe my busie cure,
It were in sooth almost a dayes werke,
And the tearmes also been so derke,
To rehearse hem clearely, and to rime,
I passe ouer for lacke of time,
And tell I will forth of hir lodging,
How Adrastus the noble worthy king,
Hath euery lord like to his degree,
Receiued wele within the citee,
And there they had like to hir pleasaunce,
Of what needeth fulsome habundance,
For men and horse plenty of vitaile,
Commaunding that nothing ne faile,
That all these noble worthy werriours,
Both high and low and poore souldiours,
Yserued were of what they haue need,
For Adrastus presently tooke heed,

That it availeth a king to pay his people truely hir fond.

Full lich a king, touching hir tearme day,
That they toforne were serued to hir pay,
He was so free he list nothing restraine,
And no man had cause to complaine
For hunger, thrust, ne for indigence,
But all thing ready was vnto hir presence:
And in a prince it is ful great repriefe,
To suffer his people liue at mischiefe,
It is ful heauy and greuous in hir thought,
If he habound and they haue right nought,
He may not both possede body and herte,
He to be rich and seene his people smart,
He may the body, of power wel constraine,
But hir herte hath a full long raine,
Maugre his might, to louen at hir large,
There may no king, on hertes set a charge,
Ne hem coarten from hir libertee,
Men saine ful often how that thought is free,
For which ech prince, lord and gouernour,
And specially ech conquerour,
Let him beware for all his high noblesse,
That bounty, freedome, plenty, and largesse,
By one accord that they his bridle lede,
Least of his people, whan he hath most nede,
He be defrauded, whan he is but alone,
Than is too late for to make his mone,
But in his court let him first deuise
To exile scarcehead and couetise,
Than is likely with freedome if he ginne
Loue of his people euermore to winne,
To reigne long in honour and contune,
Aye to encrease by fauour of fortune,
And his enemies manly to oppresse,
For loue is more than great richesse.

How loue availeth more to a king, than gold or riches.

Gold faileth oft, but loue will abide,
For life or death by a lords side,
And the treasour shortly of a king
Stondeth in loue aboue all thing,
Farewell lordship both morrow and eue,
Specially whan loue taketh his leue,
And who so list it mirrour for to make
Of knightly freedome, let him ensample take
Of Adrastus, the manly king famous,
So liberall and so bounteous
Unto his people at all times found,
Which made him strong, his fomen to confound,
And loue only, his enemies to werrey,
All Greece made his bidding to obey,
Of one accord to knightly by his side,
All at ones to Thebes for to ride,
For tauenge, sith they were so strong,
The great injury and importable wrong
Unto his sonne, and to his next allie,
As ye to forne haue heard me specifie.
But whiles Greekes rest a time in pees,
I will resort vnto Ethiocles,
Which in Thebes warely hath espied,
By his friends as he was certified
Of the Greekes wholly the ordinaunce,
Hir purpose eke, and hir purueyaunce,
And thereof had in herte a manner drede,
And first he tooke his counsaile and his rede

How Ethiocles made him strong ayenst the coming of the Greeks.

Of the lords and barons of the toun,
And of the wisest of his regioun,
How he might maken resistence,
Manly to stonden at defence,
To be so strong that there were no dout:
And in the countries adjacent about,
And eke also in foreine regions
He hath withhold all the champions,
And thereupon he sent out his espies,
And his friends, and his next allies,

And all the worthy dwelling enuiroun
Young, fresh, and lusty, he gadred to the toun,
Maskewed his wals and his toures,
And stuffed hem with manly souldeours,
Round about he set many gonnes,
Great and small, and some large as tonnes,
In his hasty passing feruent heat,
He spent his treasour, and yaue yefts great
Unto knights, and worthy men of name,
And euermore to encrease his fame,
He yaue to lords jewels manyfold,
Clothes of neluet, damaske, and of gold,
To get him hertes, soothly as I rede,
To helpe him now in his great nede,
And prudently purueyed him toforne
Of flesh, of fish, of wine, and of corne,
Set his captaines early and late
With full great stuff stonding at euery gate,
And made also by werkemen that were trew,
Barbicans, and bulwerkes strong and new,
Barreres, cheines and ditches wonder deepe,
Making his auow the city for to keepe,
While he liueth, despite of all his fone,
And by his gods of mettall and of stone,
Full oft he swore both of herte and thought,
That it shall first full deare ben ybought,
And many a man, with polax, swerd, and knife,
Before this towne shall first lese his life,
And there shall eke many sides blede,
Ere that his brother possibly possede
The toun in pees, like as Greekes wene:
But at end the trouth it shall be sene,
Let him beware, and wele toforne prouide
For Adrastus on that other side
For his party was not negligent,
But on a day held his parlement,
All his lords sitting enuiron,
To driue shorteley a pleine conclusion,
And vp tapoint the fine of hir entent,
But some thought it full expedient,
Ere they procede, to werke by thauise
Of one that was full prudent and wise,
And circumspect in his werkes all,
A worthy bishop into age fall,
And called was soothly by his name
Amphiorax, of whom the great fame,

How the bishop Amphiorax was sent for to come unto the Greeks.

Through all the lands, both east and south,
Among the Greekes passingly was couth,
A man in soth of old antiquity,
And most accept of authority,
First by reason of his high estate,
And eke he was so fortunate,
And in his werkes was also secre
With the gods, knowing hir priuitie,
By graunt of whom, as bookes specifie,
He had a spirit of trew prophecie,
And coud aforne full openly diuine
Things begon, how they should fine,
And eke by craft of calculation
Yeue a doome of euery question,
And had in magike great experience,
And find coud by heauenly influence,
And by meuing of the high sterres,
A finall doome of conteke and of werres.

The prophecy of Amphiorax the bishop.

And wist well, as his gods told,
That if Greekes forth hir journey hold,
It tourne shall platly, this is no fage,
To great mischeefe and great damage
Of hem echone, and in especiall,
The most blood, right of the blood royall
Through all Greece, it may not be withdraw
In this voyage shortly shall be slaw,
And of him, why the Greekes wente,
Who that euer wept him or bemente,
This is the fine, and may not be succoured,
Of the earth he should be deuoured
Quicke as he was, he knew it in certaine,
And for he saw there nas none other gaine,
To saue his life, nor no bette defence,
Than vtterly to withdraw his presence,
Praying his wife for him to prouide,
If he were sought, that she should him hide,
And womanly for to keepe him close,
And of trouth conceiling his purpose,
For all his trust, touching his greuaunce,
Was full set in her purueyaunce,
I hope to God, that he there not drede
Of no deceit, in her womanhede,
She was so true, as women been echone,
And also close and muet as a stone,
That she ne would, as the mill stood,
Discuren him for no worlds good.
But finally, the Greekes of entent,
In all his drede haue for this bishop sent.

How the wife of Amphiorax, of conscience to save her oath, discured her husband.

And soughten so long, ere they might him find,
For cause his wife was to him so kind,
That so surely hath locked vp his corps,
But for she had a manner remors
In her selfe, greuing her conscience,
Dreding to fall in great offence,
Least her soule were in perill lorne,
Whan she by oth compelled was and sworne,
They requiring, if she coud tell,
Where her lord the bishop should dwell,
Which to discure, her herte was full loth,
Till time she gan remember on her oth,
And coud a trouth of custome not denie,
And had also great conscience to lie,
Wonder heauy, with a sorrifull face,
Maugre her lust, taught hem to the place
Where as he was shitte vp in a toure,
All alone, hauing no succour,
They fell on him, ere that he was ware,
And set him vp in a full rich chare:
A foole he was to jeoparde his life,
For to discure his counsaile to his wife,
And yet she was full sorry for his sake,
And specially whan she saw him take:
But I hope that her hauinesse
Gan tassuage full soone by processe
In short time, whan that he was gone,
There is no tempest may lest euer in one:
But this bishop by very force and might
Unto Greekes conueyed was full right,
This hore grey in his chaire sitting,
And they full glad weren of his comming,
Hauing a trist and full opinion,
Through the cause and occasion

Of his wisdome and his sapience,
And by vertue of his high prescience,
They should eschue all aduersity
Possible to fall as in hir journy,
And as the story fully hath deuised,
Full circumspect, and right wele auised,
He hath pronounced in the parlement,
Tofore the lords, and the president,
His cleare conceit in very sikernesse,
Not entriked with no doublenesse,
Hir dismall dayes, and hir fatall houres,
Hir auentures, and hir sharpe shoures,
The froward sort, and vnhappy stounds,
The complaint of hir deadly wounds,
The wofull wrath and the contrariosty,
Of fell Mars, and his cruelty,
And how by meane of his grey mood
There shall be shed all the worthy blood
Of the Greekes, it may not ben eschued,
If hir purpose be execute and sued,
There is no more, this shall be the fine,
The high noblesse shall draw to decline
Of Grekes blood, in mischeefe, sorrow, and wo,
And with all this, I my selfe also,
As my fate hath before disposed,
Deepe in the ground I shall be enclosed
And locked vp in the derke vale
Of cruell death: lo this was the tale
That the bishop to Adrastus told,
Him counsailing his purpose to withhold,
In escheuing of more mischeefe and sorrow,
For all his gods he tooke to borrow,
If the Thebans and the Greekes meet,
The fine thereof shall be so vnsweet,
That all Greece after shall it rew,
Warning hem, if they the mischeefe knew
That shall follow, which no man may lette,
They would abstaine a siege for to sette
Unto Thebes, and hir purpose leue.
With whose words the lords gan hem greue,
And therein had but full small delite,
And euerich of heartely high despite,
They abreide, and seid he was vntrew,
And a contreuer of prophecies new,
And eke also, for all his long berd,
An old dotard, a coward, and aferd,
And of rancour gonne to defie
Both his calcling and his astronomie,
And shortely said, they took therof none hede,
Ne will no thing gouerne hem by his rede.
This was the clamour and noise in euery coast
Of high and low, throughout all the hoast,
And specially of the poore souldiours,
And of lordes reigning in hir flours,
And of estates effectuelly I mene,
Which of age were but tender and grene,
That haue not had of Marces influence
Of the werre great experience.
Here if ye list ye may consider and see,
Of coueiting, great aduersitee,
How that youth no perill cast aforne,
Till he in mischeefe suddainly be lorne,
There as age prouideth euery thing,
Ere he begin to casten the ending.

How age and youth been of diverse opinions.

Youth is gouerned by a large reine,
To stert forth, and can him not refreine,
But of head set on all at ones,
As he that hurteleth ayenst hard stones,
Broseth himselfe, and vnwarely perbraketh:
But age expert, nothing vndertaketh,
But he toforne by good discretion
Make a due examination
How it will tourne either to bad or good:
But youth, as fast as stirred is the blood,
Taketh emprises of hasty wilfulnesse,
Ioy at ginning, the end is wretchednesse.
The old prudent in all his gouernaunce,
Full long aforne maketh purueyaunce:
But youth alas by counseil will not werke,
For which full oft he stumbleth in the derke.
Thus selde is seene, the trouth to termine,
That age and youth draw by o line,
And where that folly hath domination,
Wisdome is put in subjection:

How that wisdom without supportation availeth little or nought.

Like as this bishop with al his high prudence,
For cause he might haue none audience,
All his wisedome and his prophecy
Of the Greekes was holden but folly,
For though Plato, and wise Socrates,
Moralt Seneke, and Diogenes,
Albumaser, and prudent Theolonee,
And Tullius, that had soueraintee
Whylome in Rome, as of eloquence,
Though all these, shortly in sentence,
Were aliue, most cunning and expert,
And no man list hir counsaile to aduert,
Nor of hir sawes for to taken heed,
What might auaile, and it come to need:
For where as prudence can find no succour,
And prouidence hath no fauour,
Farewell wisedome, and farewell discretion,
For lacke onely of supportation.
For vnsupported with his lockes hore,
Amphiorax sighen gan full sore,
With hed enclined, and many an heny thought,
Whan that he saw his counsail stood for nought:
For vtterly, the Greekes, as I told,
Haue fully cast hir journey for to yhold,
Made hem ready, and gonne for to hostey
Toward Thebes, the city for to werrey,
And in Greece will no lenger tarry;
And forth with hem Amphiorax they carry,
Set in his chaire with a dolefull herte,
Whan he wist he might not astert
Of his fate the disposition,
And hosteying into the region
Of Ligurge, Greekes can approche
A sundry lond, with many a craggy roche,
But all the way soothly that they gone,
For horse ne man water was there none,
So dry were the valleyes and the pleines,
For all that yeare they had had no reines,
But full great drougth, as made is mention,
And all the lond searching enuiron,

The great mischief that the Greeks had for default of water.

They nother found well ne riuere,
Hem to refresh, nor water that was clere,
That they alas no refute ne conne,
So importable was the shene Sonne,
So hote on hem, in foulds where they ley,
That for mischeefe men and horse they dey,

Gaping full dry vpward into the south,
And some putten hir swerdes in hir mouth,
And speare heads, in story as it is told,
Tassuage hir thurst with the yron cold,
And of his life full many one despeired,
In this mischeefe is home ageine repeired:
Till on a day worthy Tideus,
And with him eke the king Campaneus
Of purpose rode throughout the countree,
If they might any water see,
From coast to coast, both ferre and nere,
Till of fortune they entred an herbere,
With trees shadowed fro the Sunne shene,
Full of floures, and of hearbes grene,
Wonder holesome of sight and aire,
Therein a lady, that passingly was faire,
Sitting as tho vnder a laurer tree,
And in her armes a little child had she,
Full gracious of looke and of visage,
And was also wonder tender of age,
Sonne of the king, borne to succede,
Called Ligurgus, in story as we rede,
Whose hertes joy, and worldly eke disport,
All his mirth eke, pleasance, and comfort,
Was in this child of excellent fairenesse:
And this lady mirrour of semelinesse,
All sodainly, as she cast vp her sight,
Upon his stede saw an armed knight,
Greatly abashed, gan her anon remue,
But Tideus gan after fast to sue:

How Tideus complained to the lady in the herber for water.

And said "Suster, beth nothing dismaied
In your selfe, displeased, nor affraied,
For we are come onely to this place,
You to beseech of mercy and of grace,
Us to succour in our great need,
Declaring you how it stand indeed:
Here fast by, almost at hond,
The worthiest of all Greeks lond,
Kings, princes, be lodged in the field,
And many other with polax and with shield,
Which in mischeef, perill, and great drede,
For want of water, are likely to be dede,
For there was none of high ne low degree,
In all our hoast, now passed dayes three,
That dranke alas, I except none estate,
Our fate is so infortunate,
Praying you of womanly pitee,
Benignely and graciously to see,
How of Greece all the cheualry
Of hir liues stonds in ieopardy,
That ye would of womanhood tell,
If ye know any riuer, spring, or well,
Specially now in our care,
Of gentillesse vnto vs declare,
Lo here is all, if ye lust to heare,
That I will seine, mine own suster deare."
And whan this lady, inly vertuous,
The complaint heard of worthy Tideus,
Of very pity chaungeth chere and hew,
And in her herte vpon his wo gan rew,
And full goodly, seeing his distresse,
Said vnto him in all his heauinesse.

How the lady courteously broaught Tideus to the well.

"Certes" (quod she) "if I were at large,
Touching this child, which I haue in charge,
I should in hast of all that doth you greue,
To my power helpe you and releue,
Onely of routh, and of compassion,
And leue all other occupation,
Conuey you, and be your true guide,
To a riuer, but little here beside,
But I dare not so much me assure,
This little child to put in aduenture,
I am so fearefull from it to depart,
But for your sake yet I shall doe part
My life, my death, of true affection,
To prouide for your saluation:"
Tooke the child, and leid it in her lap,
And richely in clothes gan it wrap,
And couched it among the herbes sote,
And leid about many an holesome rote,
And floures eke, both blew and rede,
And supprised with a manere of drede,
With Tideus forth anon she went,
As she in trouth, that no treason ment,
And on her wey would neuer dwell,
Till she him brought to a right faire well,
And to a riuer of water full habound,
But who was glad, and who was tho jocound
But Tideus, seeing the riuer,
Which in all hast sent his messanger
To Adrastus, and bad him not abide,
But downe descend to the riuer side,
With all his hoast, licour for to haue
At this riuer, hir liues for to saue.
And they enhasted hem, making none abode,
All at ones to the riuer rode,
For to drinke, they had so great lust
Of appetite, for to staunch hir thurst,
And some dranke, and found it did hem good,
And some were so feruent and so wood
Upon the water, that in sikernesse,
Through vndiscreet and hasty greedinesse,
Out of measure the water so they drinke,
That they fell dead euen vpon the brinke,
And some naked into the riuer runne,
Only for heat of the summer Sunne,
To bathen hem, the water was so cold,
And some also, as I haue you told,
I meane tho that prudent were and wise,
The water dranke in measurable wise,
That of the thurst they haue before endured,
They were refreshed fully and recured:
And Greekes than, of high and low degree,
For hir profite, and hir commoditee,
Compasse the riuer, christalin of sight,
Of one accord they hir tents pight,
To rest hem there in reles of hir peine,
Onely the space of a day or tweine.
And whiles Grekes vpon the riuer lay,
This Tideus vpon the same day,
Full knightly hath done his diligence,
This yong lady with great reuerence,
To Adrastus goodly to present,
At whose comming the king himselfe went,
Again her, she falling doun on knees,
All thestates tho present and degrees,
Of Grekes lond absent was not one,
And in his armes tooke her vp anon,
Thanking her of her besinesse,
Of her labour, and her kindnesse,
Behoting her like as he was hold,
If any thing pleinly that she wold,
That he may don she should it redy find,
And also Greekes all, the story maketh mind,

Of thestates being tho present,
Thanked her with all hir holle entent,
For the freshing done to many a Greke,
And for hir part they behight her eke,
With hir bodies and goods both two,
What her list commaund hem for to do,
To be redy partly and not faile.
And here my auctour maketh rehersaile,
That this lady so faire vpon to se,
Of whom the name was Isiphile,
To Adrastus told as ye may rede,
Lineally, the stocke of her kinrede,
Sometime how she a kings doughter was,
Rehersing to him all the holle caas,
First how that she out of her countree went,
Shortly for she wol nat assent,
To execute a conspiracion,
Made by the women of that region,
A thing contrary agein all right,
That eeh of hem vpon a certein night,
By one accord shall warely take kepe,
Fader, brother, and husbands in hir slepe,
With knives sharpe and rasours kene,
Kitte hir thortes in that mortall tene:
Unto this fine as Bochas tell can,
In all that land be not found a man,
But slaine echone, to this conclusion,
That women might haue dominacion,
In that kingdome, and reigne at liberte,
And on no partes interrupted be.
But for this lady passing debonaire,
To this matere was froward and contraire,
Kept her fader that he was not slawe,
But from the death preserued and withdraw,
For which alas she fled countree,
And of a pirat taken in the see,
To king Ligurgus brought in all her dred,
And for her trouth and her womanhed,
To her he tooke his yong child to keepe,
Which in the herber she left alone to slepe,
Whan Tideus she brought to the well.
And by Iason, some bookes tell,
That this lady had sonnes two,
Whan that he, and Hercules also,
Toward Colchos, by her countree came,
For taccomplish the conquest of the ram,
But who that list by and by to see,
The story holle of Isophilee,
Her fadres name of which also I write,
Though some sein, he named was Thorite,
And some bookes Uermos eke him call,
But to know the auentures all,
Of this lady Isophile the faire,
So faithfull aye and inly debonaire,
Loke on the boke that Iohn Bochas made,
Whilom of women with rhetoriques glade,
And direct by full souereigne stile,
To faire Iane, the queene of Cesile,
Rede there the Rubrike of Isophile,
Of her trouth and of her bounte,
Full craftily compiled for her sake.
And whan that she her leue hath take
Of Adrastus, homeward in her wey,
Tideus gan her to conuey,
To the gardein till she is repeyred.
But now alas my matere is despeired,
Of all joy, and of all wilfulnesse,
And destitute of all mirth and gladuesse,
For now of wo begin the sharpe houres,
For this lady hath found among the floures,

How the child was slain of a foul serpent in the herber.

Her litel childe turned vp the face,
Slain of a serpent in the selfe place,
Her taile burled with scales siluer shene,
The venim was so persing and so kene
So mortall eke the perilous violence,
Caused alas through her long absence,
She was to slow homeward for to hie:
But now can she, but wepe, waile, and crie,
Now can she naught but sigh and compleine,
And wofully wring her honds tweine,
Dedly of looke, pale of face and chere,
And gan to rende her gilt tresses clere,
And oft sithe gan to say "Alas,
I wofull wretch vnhappy in this caas,
What shall I do or whider shall I tourne,
For this the fine if I here sojourne,
I wote right well, I may it not escape,
The piteous fate that is for me shape,
Socour is there none, ne none other rede,
Liche to my desert but that I mote be dede,
For through my slouth and my negligence,
I haue alas done to great offence,
That my guilte, I may it not excuse,
Shal to the king of treason me accuse,
Through my offence and slouth both two,
His sonne is ded and his heire also,
Which he loued more than al his good,
For treasour none so nigh his herte stood,
Nor was so depe graue in his courage,
That he is likely to fallen in a rage,
Whan it is so mine odious offence,
Reported be vnto his audience,
So importable shall be his heauinesse,
And well wot I in verray sothfastnesse,
That whan the queen hath this thing aspied,
To mine excuse it may not be denied,
I doubt it nat there geineth no pite,
Without respite she will auenged be,
On me alas as I haue deserued,
That from the death I may not be preserued,
Nother by bill nor by supplication,
For the rage of my transgression,
Requireth death, and none other mede."
And thus alas she quaking in her drede,
None other helpe ne remedy can,
But dreint in sorow to the Grekes she ran,
Of hertely woo, face, and chere distreined,
And her cheekes with weping albereined,
In hie affray distraught and furious,
Tofore all thoste she came to Tideus,
Fell on knees and gan her compleint make,
And told pleinly that for the Grekes sake,
She must be ded, and shortly in substaunce,
Rehersing him, the ground of her greuaunce,
First how by traines of a false serpent,
The child was slaine whan she was absent:
And whan that he her mischief vnderstood,
In what disjoint and perill that she stood,
Unto her full knightly he behight,
To helpe and further all that euer he might,
Her pitious woo to stinten and appease.
And for to find vnto her disease,
Hasty comfort, he went a full great paas
To Adrastus and told him all the caas,
Of this vnhappy wofull auenture,
Beseeching him to doon his besy cure,

As he was bound of equite and right,
And eke aduertise and to haue a sight
How she quitte her to Grekes here toforne,
That they were likely to haue ben lorne,
The succour voide of her womanhede,
For which he must of knighthood take hede,
To remedien this vnhappy thing.
And Adrastus like a worthy king,
Taquite himselfe, the story maketh mind,
To this lady will not be found vnkind,
Neither for coste ne for no trauaile,
But besy was in all that might auaile,
To her succour considred all things,
And by thauise of al the worthy kings,
Of Grekes lond they ben accorded thus,
Princes, dukes, and with hem Tideus,
To hold hir way, and all at ones ride,
To Ligurgus dwelling there beside,
Of one entent if they may purchace,
In any wise for to get grace,
For this lady called Isophilee,
They would assay if it might be.
And to his palaice full roially built of stone,
The worthy Grekes came riding euerichone,
Euery lord full freshly on his stede,
And Ligurgus example of manlyhede,
Anon as he knew of hir comming,
Taequite himselfe like a gentill king,
Agein hem went to mete hem on the way,
Ful wel besein and in good aray,
Receiuing hem with a full knightly chere,
And to Adrastus, said as ye shall here:
"Cosin" (quod he, and gan him to embrace)
"Ye be welcome to your owne place,
Thanking hertely to your high noblesse,
That so goodly of your gentillesse,
Towards me ye list you to acquite,
Your selfe this day your cosin to visite,
In this castell to take your lodging,
That neuer yet I was so glad of thing,
In all my life, and thereto here my trouth,
And euer more there shall be no slouth,
That the chambres and the large toures,
Shall be deliuered to your herberioures,
That euery lord as he is of degree,
Unto his lodging assigned shall bee,
Your officers let hem selfe deuise,
Yf the housing largely may suffise,
To you and yours, stretchen and atteine,
That none estate haue cause to compleine,
And all your host lodged here beside,
Which ententifely vpon you abide,
Let hem fet by my auctority,
Uitaile inough here in my city,
And al that may hem succour or saue,
And at a word al that euer I haue
Is full and holle at your commaundement."

How Adrastus and all the states of Grekes preiden Ligurgus for the life of Isophile.

(Quod Adrastus) "That is not our entent,
Nor no part cause of our comming,
For we be come all for another thing,
A certein gift of you to requere,
Benignely if ye list to here,
Which may Grekes passingly auaile,
Of our request if we do not faile,
Which we dare not openly expresse,
Withouten that ye will of your gentillesse,
Your graunt affirme, conferme, and ratifie,
Than were we bold it to specifie."
(Quod Ligurgus) "What thing euer it be,
Not excepted but onely things three,
The first is this it touche not my life,
My yong sonne pleinly, nor my wife,
Take all my good and what ye list prouide,
Of my treasour, and set these thing aside,
All the surplus I compt nat a mite."
Than Adrastus astonied was a lite,
Whan Ligurgus in conclusion,
Of his sonne made exception.
And whiles they treat thus in fere,
There came forth one with a wofull chere,
Of face and looke, pale, and nothing red,
And loud crieth, "The kings sonne is ded,
Alas the while that whilom was so feire,
After Ligurgus borne to ben his heire,
The which alas hath yolden vp the breath
Of a serpent stong vnto the death,
And with his wound new fresh and greene,
In the herber lieth that pity is to seene,
And hath so lien almost all this day."
But whan Ligurgus heard this affray,
And wist his child was dead and had no mo,
Little wonder thought that he was wo,
For sodainly the importable smart
Ran anon and hent him by the herte,

The sorow that king Ligurgus made for the death of his child, and the lamentation of the queen.

That for constraint of his deadly peine,
Throughout he felt coruen euery veine,
The rage gan mine on him so depe,
That he coud not but sobbe, sigh, and wepe,
And with the noise and lamentacioun,
The quene distraught is descended doun,
And whan she knew the ground of all this sorrow,
It needed her no teares for to borow,
But twenty time vpon a row,
A swound she fell to the earth low,
And stoundmell for this mischaunce,
Still as a stone she lieth in a traunce,
But whan the child into court was brought
Tofore Ligurgus, alas I wite him nought,
Upon the corps with a mortall face
He fell atones, and gan it to embrace,
Sore to gripse, and agein vp stert:
Than whan Adrastus this thing can aduert,
Of kingly routh and compassioun,
From his eyen the teares fell adoun,
Eke kings, dukes, that about stood,
Onely of pity that is in gentill blood,
No power had the teares to restreine,
That on hir cheekes doune began to reine,
But all a day would not suffise,
All hir sorowes in order to deuise,
First of the king, and the queene also,
To tellen al I should neuer haue do,
Not in the space almost of an houre,
But whan the stormes and the teary shoure,
Of hir weping was somewhat ouergone,
The litel corps was grauen vnder stone,
And Adrastus in the same tide,
Ligurgus toke a litel out a side,
And full wisely with his prudent speech,
The queene present gan him for to tech,
That so to sorow, auaile may right nought,
To murdre himself with his owne thought,

Ayeinst death may be no recure,
Though in wo perpetually endure,
Al helpeth not whan the soule is go,
" And our life here, thus taketh heed thereto,
Is but an exile and a pilgrimage,
Ful of turment and of bitter rage,
Liche see renning to and fro;
Suing an ebbe whan the flood is do,
Litel space abiding at full,
Of whose sojourne the pope yeueth no bull,
For king is none, duke, ne emperour,
That may him shroud ayenst his fatal shour,
Of cruel Death whan him list manace,
To marke a man with his mortall mace,
Than geineth not to his saluation,
Neither franchise, ne protection,
And littel or nought may helpen in this caas,
Saufcondit eyther supersedeas,
For in this world who so loketh aright,
Is none so great of power nor of might,
None so rich, shortly nor so bold,
That he must die either yong or old,
And who in youth passeth his passage,
He escaped is all the wood rage,
All sorrow, ail trouble of this present life,
Replenished with conteke warre and strife,
Which seld or neuer standeth in surete:
Wherefore best is, as it seemeth me,
No man grutch, but of high prudence,
The sonde of God he taketh in patience,
And ye that been so wise and manly to,
Your selfe to drowne in torment and in wo,
For losse of thing and ye list to see,
That in no wise may recured bee,
Is great folly and vndiscretioun."
And thus Adrastus hath conueyed doun
The substance whole of that he would say,
Till that he found a time for to pray
Conuenient for Isophilee,
Beseching him, for to haue pite,
Of that she hath offended his highnesse,
Not wilfully but of reckelesnesse,
First that he would his domes so diuide,
Mercy preferre and set right aside,
At request and prayer of hem all,
Of this vnhap and mischeefe that is fall,
By hasty rigour not to doe vengeaunce,
But thinke aforne in his purueyaunce,
Who to wretches doth mercy in hir drede,
Shall mercy find whan he hath most nede:
And sith he hath power might and space,
Let him take this lady into his grace,
For lacke of routh that she nat thus die.
But tho the quene gan again replie,

How the queen will algate haue the serpent dead.

And platly said as in this matere:
" Auaileth neither request, nor prayere,
Pite, mercy, nor remission,
But if it be by this condicion,
That the serpent cause of all sorow,
Through his labour lay his hed to borow:
This is finall and ytter recompence,
To find grace for her great offence,
Or elles shortly, shede blood for blood."
And whan Greekes her answere vnderstood,
Of one accord in hir best wise,
Toke on hem this auenturous emprise,
For loue onely of Isophile,
And gon to ride enuiron the contre,
By hilles, valeis, roches, and caues,
In diches darke, and in old graues,
By euery cost serching vp and doun,
Till at last full famous of renoun,
The worthy knight Parthonolope,
Was the first that happed for to se
This hidous serpent by a riuer side,
Great and horrible, sterne and full of pride
Under a roch by a banke lowe,
And in all hast he bent a sturdy bowe,
And therein set an arowe filed kene,
And through the body spotted blew and grene,

How Parthonolope slew the serpent.

Full mighty he made it for to glide,
And hent out a swerde hanging by his side,
Smote of his hed and anon it hent,
And therwithal gan the queene present,
Wherethrough parcel she gan tasswage:
And thus of prowesse and of high corage,
This manly man, this Parthonolope,
Hath reconciled faire Isophile,
Unto grace fully of the queene,
Her ire voided and her old tene,
And by Adrastus mediacion,
King Ligurgus graunted a pardon
To this lady, from all daunger fre,
She was restored to her liberte,
In his palice all her life to dwell,
Though Iohn Bochas the contrary tell:
For this auctour affirmeth out of drede,
That whan the child was by the serpent dede,
She durst not for her great offence,
Neuer after come in presence
Of Ligurgus, but of entention,
Fled anon out of that region,
At herte she tooke the childes death so sore:
What felle of her, find I can no more,
Than ye haue herde aforne me specifie.
And the kingdome, but if bookes lie,

Nota, de Ligurgo rege Traceæ.

Of Licurgus, called was Trace,
And as I rede, in an other place,
He was the same mighty champion,
To Athenes that came with Palamon
Ayenst his brother that called was Arcite,
Yled in his chaire with iiii. bolles white,
Upon his hed a wreth of gold full fine.
And I find eke how Bachus god of wine,

Baccus, deus vini.

With this king was whilom at debate,
Onely for he, pompous and elate,
Destruction did to his vines,
And for he first set alay on wines,
Meint with water, whan they were too strong:
And this Bacchus for the great wrong,
Brake his lims, and dreint him in the see:
Of Ligurgus, ye get no more of me,
But the trouth if ye list verifie,
Rede of goddes the genealogie.

Nota, de duodecim arboribus in libro Bochacii de Genealogia Deorum.

Lineally hir kinred by degrees,
Ybranched out vpon xii. trees,

Made by Bocchas, Decertaldo called,
Among poetes in Itaile stalled,
Next Fraunceis Petrarke suing in certein.
Now vnto Grekes I will retourne agein,
To tell forth shortly if I con,
Of hir journey, that they haue begon.
Here Adrastus hath his leaue take
Of Ligurgus with his browes blake,
And departing with seint Iohn to borow,
Made his wardes on the next morow
So wel besein, so mighty and so strong,
Wondre early whan the larke song,
With a trompet warned euery man,
To be ready in all the hast they can,
For to remue and no letting make:
And so they haue the right way take
Toward Thebes the Grekes euerichone,
That such a nombre gadred into one,
Of worthy knights, neuer aforn was sein,
Whan they in feere were moustred in a plein,
And they ne stint by none occasioun,
Till they be comen euen afore the toun,
And pight hir tents prowdely as I rede,
Under the walles in a grene mede,
And whan the Thebans were besette about,
The manly knights would haue pricked out,
And haue scarmished in hir hasty pride,
With hir fomen on that other side,
But by bidding of Ethiocles,
All thilke night they kept hemselfe in pees,
Because onely that it was so late,
With great wait set at euery gate,
Men of armes all the night walking
On the walles, by bidding of the king,
Lest there were traine, or treason,
And on the toures, and in the chief dongeon,
He set men to make mortall sownes,
With brasen hornes, and loud clariounes,
Of full entent the watches for to kepe,
In his warde that no man ne slepe.
And Grekes proudly all the long night,
Kindled fires and made full great light,
Set vp lodging vpon euery side,
Like as they should euer there abide,
Compas the toun, there was no voide space,
But all be set hir fomen to manace,
And whiles they tofore the cite ley,
On euery coast they sent out to forrey,

The forrey that the Greeks made in the countrey about Thebes.

Bren townes, thropes, and vilages,
With great rauing, making hir pilages,
Spoile and robbe, and brought home vitaile,
And all manere sortes of bestaile,
Shepe and nete, in hir cruell rage,
With houndes slaide all that was sauage,
Harte and hind, both bucke and do,
The blacke bere, and the wild ro,
The fat swine, and the tusky bore,
Carrying all home for the Grekes store,
Wheate and wine, for hir auauntage,
Hay, and oates, foddre and forage.
With the kalendes, as hem thought due,
The Grekes gan the Thebans salue,
Ministring hem occasions fell,
The seige set, shortly for to tell,
Of full entent in hir hatefull pride,
For life or death thereupon tabide,
Who so euer thereat be agreued,
Till they fully hir purpose haue acheued,
There may thereof be made no reles.
And of al this ful ware Ethiocles,
Gan in party greatly to merueile,
Whan he saw the great apparaile
Of the Grekes the cite round about,
And in himselfe had a manner dout,
Now at point, what was best to do,
For thilke time it stode with him so,
That to some abiding in the toun,
He had in herte a great suspecion,
Lest toward him that they were vnstable,
And to his brother in party fauourable,

The variaunce in Thebes among hemselfe.

For in the cite there was variaunce,
That vnto him was a great mischance:
For in his nede shortly he ne wist
Upon whom that he might trist,
For they were nat all of one entent,
Wherfore he hath for his counseil sent,
All his lords, and the old queene,
Soch as he dempte that were pure and clene,
Holle of one herte and not variable,
Of old expert and alwey found stable,
Requiring hem because they were wise,
All openly to tellen hir auise,
Where it were better pleinly in his sight,
With his brother to treaten, or to fight?
And some gaue a full blunt sentence,
Which had of werre none experience,
Said it was best and not ben aferde,
To try his right manly with the swerde:
And some also that were more prudent,
Spake vnto him by good auisement,
And list not spare but hir conceite told,
How it was best his couenant to hold,
And to perfourme his hest made toforn
To his brother lich as he was sworn,
So that his word, the wors make him to spede,
Be not found variant from the dede,
For none hatred rancour ne pride:
And tho the queene toke him out aside,

The words of the worthy queen Jocasta unto Ethiocles.

Told him pleinly, it was full vnfitting,
Soch doublenesse to finden in a king:
And said him eke, although he were strong,
Unto his brother he did wrong,
As all the towne will record in dede,
And bere witnesse if it come to nede:
"Wherefore let vs shape an other mene,
In this mattere while that it is grene,
Ere this querele, thus gon of volunte,
Turne in the fine to more aduersite,
For if it be darreyned by battaile,
Who trusteth most may full lightly faile,
And it is folie by short auisement,
To put a strife in Martes judgement:
For hard it is whan a judge is wood,
To treat aforne him without losse of blood:
And if we put our mater holle in Marte,
Which with his sword his laws doth coarte,
Than may it hap, where ye be glad or wroth,
Thou and thy brother shall repent both,
And many another that is here present,
Of your trespas that ben very innocent,
And many a thousand percas shall complein,
For the debate onely of you tweine,

And for your strife shall find full vnswote,
And for thou art ginner, ground and rote
Of this injury and this great vnright,
To the goddes, that hereof han a sight,
Thou shalt accompts and a rekening make,
For all tho that perishen for thy sake.
" And now the cause driuen is so ferre,
Sodeinly pees either hasty werre;
Mot folow anon for the fatall chaunce,
Of life and death dependeth in balaunce,
And thou ne maiest by no craft restreine,
That vpon one, plainly of you tweine,
The sort mote fall like as it doth tourn,
Who so euer thereat either laugh or mourn,
And thou art driuen so narow to the stake,
That thou maiest not mo delaies make,
But fight or treat this is the vtter fine,
By none engin thou canst it not decline,
An hasty caas, as folke sain that ben wise,
Redresse requireth by full short auise,
For to trete long now auaileth nought,
For to the point sothly thou art brought,
Either to keepe thy possessioun,
Or in all hast deuoid out of this toun,
Wher thou therwith be wroth or wel appaid,
Now note well all that I haue said,
And by my counsell wisely condescend,
Wrong wrought of old newly to amend;
The time is come it may be none other,
Wherefore in hast treate with thy brother,
And again him make no resistence,
But to thy lordes fully yeue credence,
By whose counsell sith they be so sage,
Let Polimite enjoy his heritage;
And that shall tourne most to thine auaill,
Loo here is holle the fine of our counsail."

The treaty that Ethiocles sent unto his brother.

And shortly tho for ire wroth,
Though he hereto froward was and loth,
According is, hearing all the prees,
If he algate shall treate for a pees,
It must be by this condicion,
That he will haue the dominacion,
First in chiefe to himselfe reserued,
As him thought he had it well deserued,
And saue to him holle the soueraintee,
And vnder him in Thebes the citee,
He to grant with a right good chere,
Polimite the reigne for a yeere;
Than tauoide and not resort agein,
For more to claime was all but in vein,
This would be done onely for his sake,
And otherwise he will none end make
With Greekes, what fortune euer befall,
And finally emong his lords all,
There nas not one of high or low estate,
That would gone on this ambassiat,
Out of the towne ne for bet ne wors,
Till Iocasta made sadle her hors,
And cast her self to gon on this treate,
To make an end if it would be:
And this was done the morow right by time,
Upon the howre whan it drew to prime,
And with her went, her yonge doughters tweine,
Antigone, and the faire Imeine,
Of her meine full many one about,
At gate she was conueied out,
And of purpose she made first her went,
On horseback to king Adrastus tent;
He and his lords being all in fere,
And they receiue her with a right glad chere,
Shewing her, like to her degree,
On euery halfe full great humanite,
Polimitie rising from his place,
And humbly his moder gan embrace,
Kissed her, and than Antigone,
And eke Imeine, excellent of beaute,
And for that they passingly were faire,
Great was the pres, concours, and repaire
Of the ladies for to haue a sight:
And Iocasta proceedeth anon right,
To Adrastus the matere to propose,
And gan to him openly to disclose
The entent and will of Ethiocles,
And by what meane he desireth pees,
To him reserue, as she gan specifie,
The honour whole, and the regalie,
With sceptre and crown, from him not diuided,
But whole to him; as he hath prouided,
And Polimite by this condition,
Under him to reigne in the toun,
As a soget by suffrance of his brother.
But the Grekes thoughten all another,

The knightly answer of worthy Tideus.

And specially worthy Tideus,
Pleinly affirming it should nat be thus,
For he will haue no conditions,
But set aside all exceptions,
Nothing reserue as in speciall,
But hole the lordship regally and all,
Be Polimites it fully to possede,
In Thebes crouned verely in dede,
And rightfull king put in possession,
Like the couenaunts and convencion,
Ymade of old assured and enseled,
That shall not now, of new be repealed,
But stable and holle in his strength stond,
And let him plaitly so vnderstond,
" And first that he deuoid him out of toune,
And deliuere the sceptre and the croune
To his brother, and make therof no more,
And shortly elles it shall be bought full sore,
Or this matere brought be to an end,
For Grekes be there none, that shul hens wend,
Er that our right that is vs denied,
With life and death, darreined be and tried,
We will not erst from this toun remewe,
And if him list all these thing eschue,
And all mischiefe stinten and appese,
To either part he may do great ese,
Thus I meane for his auauntage,
Deliuer vp hool the trew heritage,
To his brother for heire to endure,
And Grekes shall fully him assure,
By what bond that him list deuise,
The yere complete in our best wise,
To him deliuer ayen possession,
Without strife or contradicion,
And to this fine justly hold vs to,
And if it fall that he will not so,
Let him not wait but onely after werre,
The houre is come we will it not deferre;
Lo here is all, and thus ye may report
To him ayein whan that ye resort,
From which appointment we cast vs nat to vary,"
And yet to him Amphiorax the contrary
Full pleinly said in conclusion,
This fine shall cause a destruction,

Of hem echone if it forth procede,
To be performed and execute in dede:
But thilke time for all his eloquence,
He had in soth but litell audience;
For whether so he ment good or ill,
King Adrastus bad hem to be still.
And tho Iocasta, as wisedome did her tech,
Humble of her port with full soft spech,
Gan sech meanes in her fantasie,
If she might the ire modifie
Of the Greekes, to make hem to encline,
In any wise hir rancour for to fine,
She did her deuoir, and her besie cure;
But than befell a wonder auenture;
Cause and ground of great confusioun,
Greekes perturbing and eke the toun,
And it to tell I may not astert,
For which a while my stile I mote aduert,

Of a tame tygre dwelling in Thebes.

And shortly tell by descriptioun
Of a tygre, dwelling in the toun,
Which from a kingdome, besiden adjacent,
Out of Egipt was to Thebes sent,
Which beast, by record of scripture,
Is most swift as of his nature,
And of kind also most sauage,
And most cruell whan he is in his rage,
And as clerkes maken mention,
He of body resembleth the lion,
And like a greyhound the mosell and the hed,
And of eyen as any fire red,
Eke of his skin, written as I finde,
Like a panther, conuersant in Inde,
With all manner hues and colours,
And is ful ofte deceiued with mirrours,
By fraude of huntes and false apparance,
Shewed in glas withouten existence,
Whan his kindeles are by sleights take,
And he distreined, may no rescus make:
And like a lambe was this tigre tame,
Ayenst kind, mine auctour writ the same,
And this beast merueilous to see,
Was sent to Imeine and Antigone,
That vnto hem did great comfort,
And coud ple and make good disport,
Like a whelpe that is but yong of age,
And to no wight did no damage,
No more in soth than doth a litell hound,
And it was worth many an hundred pound,
Unto the king for ay in his greuaunce,
Ther was nothing that did him more plesaunce,
That for no tresour it might not be bought,
For whan that he was pensife or in thought,
It put him out of his heauinesse:
And thilke time the story doth expresse,
That Iocaste treated for a pees,
This tame tigre in party rekeles,
Out at gates in sight of many a man,
In to the field wildly out ran,
And casuelly renning to and fro,
In and out as doth the tame roi
Greekes weening that were yong of age,
That this tigre had be sauage,
And cruelly besetting all the place,
Round about gan him to enchace,
Till he was ded and slaine in the field:
The slaughter of whom whan that they beheld,
The proud Thebans which on the wals stood,
They ran doun furious and wood,
Wening he be slain of despite,
Taking hir hors without more respite,
Fully purposed with Greekes for to fight,
The tigres death tauenge if they might,
And forth they rode without gouernaile,
And full proudly Greekes gon assaile,
And of hatred and full high desdain,
Fellen on hem that han the tigre slein,
And cruelly quitten hem hir mede,
That many a Greeke in the greue mede,
By the force and the great might,
Of hir fomen, lay slain in this fight,
The tigres death so sore they abought,
So mortally Thebans on hem wrought,
That all the host in the field ligging,
Was astonied of this sodein thing.
And in this wise of rancour rekeles,
Out of Thebes rode Ethioeles,
And with him oke the worthy king Tremour,
Of his hond a noble werriour,
That made Grekes to forsake hir place,
And to hir tents gan hem to enchace,
And midde the field as they togider mette,
On horsebacke, with speres sharply whette,
Of very hate and enuious pride,
Full many one was dead on either side:
The which thing whan Tideus espieth,
Wood as a lion to horseback he hieth,
As he that was neuer a deal aferd,
But ran an hem and mette hem in the berd,
And maugre hem in his cruelty,
He made hem flee home to hir city,
Hem pursuing of full deadly hate,
That many one lay slain at gate,
Gaping vpright with hir wounds wide,
That vtterly they durst not abide,
Tofore the swerd of Tideus,
He was on hem so passing furious,
So many Thebans he rofe to the herte,
That whan Iocasta the slaughter can aduert,
Polimite she prey gan full faire,
To make Greekes home again repaire,
And that they woulden stint to assaile,
For thilke time, and ceassen hir battaile,
At whos request plainly and preire,
And at reuerence of his moder dere,
Polimite her herte to comfort;
Greekes made home ayein resort,
And Tideus to stinten of his chace,
And they of Thebes hasting a great pace,
Ful trist and heauy ben entred in to the toun:
And for the tigre in conclusioun,
As ye haue herd, first began the strife,
But many a Theban that day lost his life,
And recureles hath yeuen vp the breath,
Of thauenging of the tigers death.
And al this while duely as she ought,
The queen Iocasta humbly besought,
King Adrastus holly of his grace,
Some meane wey wisely to purchase,
To make a pees betwene the bretliren twein,
And the tretee so prudently ordein,
On either part that no blood be shad:
And thus Adrastus auised and right sad,
For Grekes party answere yaue anon,
That other end shortly gate she non,
Lich as the lordes fully ben auised,
Than Tideus to forn hath deuised:
And whan she saw it may none other be,
She leue toke and home to the cite

She is repaired, hauing to her guide,
Polimite riding by her side,
And Tideus led Antigone,
And of Archade, Protonolope
The worthy king, did his besie peine
To be attendant vpon faire Ismeine,
Whose herte she hath to her seruice lured,
And he ayein hath portreied and figured
Mid of his brest, which lightly may not passe,
Holly the fetures of her freshly face,
Him thought she was so faire a creature,
And though that he durst him not discure,
Yet in his herte as ferforth as he can,
He hath auowed to be her true man,
Unwist to her pleinly and vnknow
How he was marked with Cupides bow,
With his arrow sodainly werreied,
And to the yates the ladies conueied,
Been entred in, for it drew to eue,
Grekes of hem taking tho hir leue,
Though some of hem were loth to depart,
Yet of wisedome they durst not jeopart
Under a conduct to enter into the toun,
Lest it tourned to hir confusioun,
Though some bookes the contrarie sain,
But mine aucthour is plaine there again,
And affermeth in this opinion,
That Tideus of high discrecion,
Of wilfulnesse nor of no foly,
Ne would as tho put in jeopardy,
Neither himself ne none of his feres,
And the ladies with hir heauenly cheres;
Angelike of looke and countenaunce,
Liche as it is put in remembraunce,
At her entring from Grekes into the toun,
Polimite of great affectioun,
The queene besought, that thilke night not fine
For tassay if she might encline
Ethiocles of conscience and right,
To kepe couenaunt, as he hath behight
Full yore agone, with surplusage,
Lest the contrarie come to damage,
First of himself and many another mo,
And thus from Thebes the Greeks ben ago
To hir tents and rest hem all that night,
And Lucina the Moone shone full bright
Within Thebes on the depe dongeon,
Whan Iocasta made relacion
Unto the king and told him all the gise,
How that Greekes vtterly despise
His profer made by false conclusion,
Onely except the conuencion,
Of old engrossed by great purueiance,
Which is enrolled and put in remembrance,
Upon which they finally will rest,
Him counsailing her thought for the best,
To conforme him to that he was bound,
Lest in the fine falsnesse him confound,
But all her counsaile he set it at no price,
He dempt himself, so prudent and so wise,
For he was wilfull, and he was indurate,
And in his herte of malice obstinate,
And vtterly auised in his thought,
Within Thebes his brother get right noght,
And in his errour thus I let him dwell,
And of the Grekes forth I will you tell,
Which all that night kept hem self close,
And on the morow whan Titan vp arose,
They armed hem and gan hem redy make,
And of assaut haue the felde itake,

With the Thebans that day without doubt
For to fighten if they issue out,
And Adrastus in full thrifty wise,
In the field his wardes can deuise,
As he that was of all deceipts ware,
And richly armed in his chaire,
Amphiorax, came with his meinee,
Full renoumed of antiquitee,
And well expert bicause he was old.
And while that Greekes, as I haue you told,
Were besie hir wardes to ordeine,
Mid of the feld befell a case sodeine,
Full vnhappy, lothsome and odible,
For lich a thing that were inuisible,
This old bishop with horse and chare certein,
Disapered and no more was sein,
Onely of fate which no man can repell,
The yearth opened and he fell doune to Hell,

How the bishop Amphiorax fell down into Hell.

With all his folke that vpon him abode,
And sodainly the ground that he on rode,
Closed ayein and gidre shette,
That neuer after the Grekes with him met,
And thus the deuill for his old outrages,
Liche his desert payed him his wages,
For he full low is descended doun
Into the derke and blacke regionn,
Where that Pluto is crouned and istalled,
With his queene Proserpine icalled,
With whom this bishop hath made his mansion
Perpetuelly as for his guerdon,
Lo here the meede of idolatry,
Of rites old and false maumetry,
Lo what availen incantacions,
Of exorcismes and conjurisons,
What stoode in stede his nigromancy,
Calculation or astronomy,
What vailed him the heauenly mansions,
Diuerse aspects or constellacions,
The end is not but sorrow and mischance
Of hem that setten hir vtter affiance
In soch werkes superstitious,
Or trist on hem he is vngracious,
Record I take shortly for to tell,
Of this bishop sonken doune to Hell:
Whose wofull end, doun in euery cost,
Such a rumour hath made in the host,
That the noise of this vncouth thing,
Is ironne and come vnto the king,
How this vengeance is vnwarely fall,
And he anon made a trompet call,
All his people out of the field again,
And euery chone assembled vpon a plain,
For the king and also round him about,
Euerich man of his life in doubt,
Full pitously gan sorrow and loure,
Least that the ground hem al would deuoure,
And swelwen hem in his derke caue,
And they ne conne no recure hem to saue,
For neither force nor manhood doth auaile
In such mischeefe the value of a maile,
For he that wisest and could most,
To search and seeke throughout the host,
Amphiorax, whan he least wend,
To Hell is sonken, and coud him not defend,
To him the time vnknowne and vnwist,
In whom why lome was all the Greeks trist,
Hir whole comfort, and whole affiaunce,
But all at ones for this suddaine chaunce,

And this miscbeefe, they gan hem to dispeire,
Home to Greece that they will repeire.
This was the purpose of hem euerichone,
And on the walles of Thebes lay hir fone,
Rejoysing hem, of this vnhappy vre,
Sowning thereby greatly to recure:
And on hir toures as they loken out,
They on Greeks enuiously gan to shout,
And of despite and great enmitee,
Bad hem fooles gone home to hir countree,
Sith they han lost hir comfort and succour,
Hir false prophete and hir diuinour,
Wherthrough hir party greatly is empeired
And in this wise the Grekes despeired,
Dempte plainly by tokens euident,
This case was fall by some enchantment,
By witchcraft, and by sorcery,
Again which may be no remedy,
Trusty defence helpe ne succour.
And whan Adrastus herd this clamour,
He besie was againe this perturbanee,
To prouide some maner cheuisance,
And to him calleth soch counsail as he wist,
For life or death that he might trist,
Requiring hem but in words fewe,
In this mischief hir motion to shewe,
And declare by good auisement,
What to Grekes were most expedient,
To remedien and make no delay,
The vncouth noise, and the great affray,
That Grekes made with clamor importune,
And now, and now, euer in one contune,
And they that were most manly and wise,
Shortly saied it were a cowardise,
The high emprise that they haue vndertake,
For dred of death so sodainly to forsake,
It were to hem perpetually a shame,
And after hindring to the Grekes name,
And better it were to euery warreour,
Manly to die with worship and honour,
Than like a coward with the life endure:
For ones shamed, hard is to recure
His name ayein, of what estate he bee,
And sith that Grekes of old antiquitee,
As of knighthood who so list take heed,
Been so famous and so worthy of deed,
If now of new the shining of hir fame,
Eclipsed were with any spot or blame,
It were a thing vncouth for to here,
Of whose renoun the beames yet been clere,
Through all the world where that they haue pased,
And be not yet derked ne defaced,
By no report, neither on sea nor lond,
Thing to forsake that they tooke on hond,
" And by ensample of our progenitours,
That sometime were so manly conquerours,
Tofore that we into Grece wende,
Of thing begonne let us make an end,
And part not nor seuere from this toun,
Till it be brought to destruction,
Walles, toures, and crestes enbattailed,
And for warre strongly apparailed,
Be first doune beate, that nothing be sein,
But all togider with the yearth plein,
Below laied er that we resort,
That afterward men may of us report,
That we began, we knightly haue acheued,
Upon our fone, with worship vnrepreued."
This was the counsail shortly and thauise,
Of the Grekes that manly were and wise,
That neuer afore marked were with blame,
And specially such as dred shame,
And fully cast, what fortune euer tide,
On hir purpose to the end abide,
That on no part hir honour not appall:
And to this counsail, Grekes one and all,
Be condescended and after best redde,
In stede of him that was so late dedde,
Amphiorax, buried deepe in Hell,
That coud whilom to the Grekes tell,
Of things hid, how it should fine aforne,
In steed of whom now they haue hem lorne,
They casten hem wisely to purchace
Some prudent man to occupy his place,
That in soch thing might hem most auaile,
Through mistery of his diuinaile,
By craft of sorte, or of prophecie,
If any such they couden out espie:
Emong hem all hir purpose to attaine,
As I find they haue chosen twaine,

How the Grekes chosen a new divinour in steed of Amphiorax.

Most renowned of hem euerichone,
And Menalippus called was that one,
And Tredimus eke that other hight,
And for he had most fauour in hir sight,
This Tredimus was chosen and preferred,
And in hir choice Greekes haue not erred,
For whilome he learned his emprise
Of his maister, Amphiorax the wise,
And was disciple vnder his doctrine,
And of entent that he shall terming
Unto Greekes things that shall fall,
As a bishop mitred in his stall,
They done for him many an vncouth wise
In the temple, to Gods sacrifice:
And thus confirmed and stabled in his see,
A few daies stood in his degree,
After hir maister, with full great honour,
Of Greekes chose to be successour.
And all this time in story as it is told,
Full great mischief, of hunger, thurst, and cold,
And of Thebans as they issue out,
Lay many one slaine in the rout,
On either part of fortune as they mette,
Hir mortall swerds, were so sharpe whette,
And Tideus emong hem of the toun,
From day to day plaieth the lion,
So cruelly, where so that he rode,
That Theban non aforne his face abode,
He made of hem through his high renoun,
So great slaughter and occisioun,
That as the death from his swerd they fled,
For who came next laid his life to wedde,
He quit himself so like a manly knight,
That where he went he put hem to the flight,
And maugre hem, in his crueltee,
He droue hem home into hir citee,
Hem pursuing proudly to the gate,
That vnto him they beare so dedly hate,
That they hem cast by sleight or some engine,
To bring him vnwarely vnto his fine,
And lay awaite for him day and night:
But alas this noble manly knight,

How pitiously this worthy Tideus was slain with a quarrel.

Upon a day as he gan hem chace,
And mortally made hem lese hir place,

And sued hem almost to the toun,
That cause was of his destructioun:
For one alas that on the walles stood,
Which all that day vpon him abode,
With a quarel sharpe heded for his sake,
Marked him with a bow of brake,
So cruelly making none a rest,
Till it was passed both back and brest,
Wherthrough alas there was none other rede
Ne lechcraft that he mote be dede,
There may thereof be maked no delaies,
And yet he was holden in his dayes,
The best knight and most manly man,
As mine aucthour well rehearse can,
But for all that was there no defence,
Ayenst the stroke of deaths violence.
But Bocchas write ere he were fully dedde,
He was by Greekes presented with the hedde
Of him that yaue his last fatall wound,
And he was called like as it is found,
Menalippus, I can none other tell,
But thilke day Thebans waxe so fell,
Upon Greekes, that vnder hir citee,
The manly king Parthonope,
Yslaine was euene afore the gates,
And there also armed bright in plates,
The famous king called Ipomedon,
The same day as made is mencion,
On horsebacke manly as he faught,
At bridge, euen vpon the draught,
Beset with preace, casuelly was drouned:
And thus fortune hath on Greekes frowned,
On euery side thilke vnhappy day,
But all the manere tellen I ne may,
Of hir fighting nor hir slaughter in soth,
More to declare than mine aucthour doth.
But thilke day, I find as ye may sene,
Whan Phebus was passed meridene,
And from the south, westward can him draw,
His guilt tresses to bathen in the wawe,
The Theban king fell Ethiocles,
Roote and vnrest and causer of vnpees,
The slaughter of Grekes, whan that he beheld,
Armed in stele he came out into the feld,
Full desirous in that sodain heate,
Polimite in the field to mete,
Singulerly with him to haue a do,
For in this world he hated no man so,
He sat so nigh printed in his herte,
Whose coming out his brother gan aduerte,
Upon his steed in the opposite,
And had againward also great delite
To meten him if fortune will assent,
Thenuious fire so hir hertes brent,
Which hate was cancred of vnkind blood,
And like two tigres in hir rage wood,
With speres sharp ground for the nones,
So as they ran and met both at ones,
Polimite through plate, maile, and shield,
Rofe him throghout and smote him into the field;
But whan he saw the stremes of his blood,
Raile about in manere of a flood,
All sodainly of compassioun,
From his coursour he light adoune.

How each of the Theban brethren slough other, euen tofore the citee.

And brotherly with a pitous face,
To saue his life gan him vnbrace,
And from his wound of new affection,
Full besie was to pull out the trunchon,
Of loue onely handling him right soft:
But out alas, while he lay aloft,
Full iriously Ethiocles the fell,
Of all this sorow very cours and well,
With a dagger in all his peines smart,
His brother rofe vnwarely to the herte,
Which all hir life had be so wroth,
And thus the Thebans were islaw both,
At entree euen afore the toun
But Grekes tho been availed doun,
In the field the worthy knights all,
In Thebes land as such thing shall,
The cry arose whan hir king was dedde,
And to the gates, armed foot and hedde,
Out of the toun came many a proude Theban,
And some of hem upon the walles ran,
And gan to shoute that pitee was to here,
And they without of hir life in werre,
Without comfort or consolatioun,
Dispeired ronne home to the toun,
And Grekes followen after at backe,
That many one, that day goeth to wracke,
And as hir fomen proudly hem assaile,
Ful many Grekes, both throgh plate and maile,
Was shette throughout, preasing at wals,
And beaten off with great round bals,
That here lay one, and another yonder,
And the noise more hideous than thonder,
Of gunneshot, and of arblates eke,
So loud out rong, that many a worthy Greke
There lost his life, they were on hem so fell,
And at gates shortly for to tell,
As Grekes preasen to enter the city,
They of Thebes in hir cruelty
With hem mette, full furious and wood,
And mortally as they againe hem stood,
Men might see speres shiver asonder,
That to behold it was a very wonder,
How they foine with daggers and with swerds,
Through the viser ayming at berds,
Persing also through the round mailes,
Rent out peeces of hir auentailes,
That nought auaileth, the mighty Gesseran,
Through neck and breast, that the speres ran,
Hir weapons were so sharpe ground and whet
In their armour, that they were not let,
For there lay one troden under foot,
And yonder one perced to the herte root,
Here lieth one dead and there another lame,
This was the play and the mortall game,
Atweene Thebans and the Grekes proud,
That the swoughs and the cries loud
Of hem that lay and yolden vp the ghost,
Was heard full ferre about in many a cost.

How all the royal blood both of Grekes side, and on the city side, islain were upon a day.

And at gates and saillyng of the wall
Islaine was all the blood royall,
Both of the toune, and of the Grekes land,
And all the worthy knights of hir hand,
And of lords, if I shall not feine,
On Grekes side aliue were but tweine,
King Adrastus, and Campaneus,
That day to hem was so vngracious,
And for Titan westred was so low,
That no man might vnneths other know,

Of the towne they shitte hir gates fast,
With barrers round ymade for to last,
In which no wight kerue may ne hew,
And Adrastus with a Grekes few
Repeired is home to his tent,
And all that night he wasted hath and spent
For his vnhap in sorrow complayning,
And they in Thebes the next day suing,
Hir deuoire did, and hir busie cure,
To ordeine and make a sepulture
For hir king, yslaine in the field,
And offer vp his banner and his shield,
His helme, his swerde, and also his penon,
Therein of gold ybeaten a dragon,
High in the temple that men might seene,
And Iocasta the infortunate queene
Her sonnes death sore gan complaine:
And also eke her young doughters tweine,
Both Imeine and Antigoine
Crien and weepe, that pity was to see,
But to hir sorrowes there was no refute,
And thus the city bare and destitute,
Hauing no wight to gouerne hem ne guy,
For dead and slaine was all hir cheualry,
And no wight left almost in the toun,
To reigne on hem by successioun:
But for they saw, and tooken hede,
Without this, that they had an head,
In the city they may not dure long:
For though it so be, that commons be strong
With multitude, and haue no gouernaile
Of an head, ful lite it may auaile,
Therefore they haue vnto hir succour
Ichosen hem a new gouernour,

How Creon the old tyrant ychosen was to be king of Thebes.

An old tyrant that called was Creon,
Full acceptable to hem euerychone,
And crowned him, without more letting,
To reigne in Thebes, and to been hir king,
Although he had no title by descent,
But by free choice made in parlement,
And thereto him like, as it is found,
By hir ligeaunce of new they were bound
For to be true while the city stood
To him only, with body and with good,
Thus they were sworn, and sured euerichone,
And he againward to save hem fro hir fone,
And hem defend with all his full might,
And mainteine hem in all manner right:
This was the accord, as in sentement.
And in this while hath Adrastus sent
From the seige of Thebes the city
A wounded knight home to his country,
Through all Grece plainly to declare
All the slaughter and the euil fare
Of which Grekes, right as it is fall,
And how that he hath lost his lords all,
At more mischeefe than any man can mouth:
And whan this thing was in Grece couth,
First to Argiue, and to Delphile,
And to the ladies eke in the countre,
And of prouinces abouten adjacent,
They came downe all by one assent,
Worthy quenes, and with hem duchesses,
And other eke, that called were countesses.

How all the ladies of Græce arrayed hem toward Thebes.

And all the ladies and women of degree
Been assembled in Arge the citee,
Like as I rede, and all in clothes blake,
That to behold the sorrow that they make
It were a death to any man aliue:
And if I should by and by discriue
Hir tender weeping, and hir woful souns,
Hir complaints and lamentatiouns,
Hir oft swouning, with faces dead and pale,
Thereof I might make a new tale,
Almost a day you to occupie,
And as mine author doth clerely certifie,
Throughout all Grece, from all regiouns,
Out of cities and royal touns
Came all the ladies and women of estate,
Full heauy cheared, and disconsolate
To this assembly, toforne as I you told,
In purpose fully hir journey for to hold
Toward Thebes, they sorrowfull creatures,
Ther to bewaile hir wofull auentures,
Tacquite hemselfe of trouth and womanhead
To hir lords, which in field lay dead,
And as the story liketh to declare,
All this journey they went on foot bare,
Like as they had gon on pilgrimage,
In token of mourning, barbed the visage,
Wimpled echone in burnet weeds,
Not in chaires, drawne forth with steeds,
Nor on palfreies, blacke neither white,
Like as mine author liketh to endite,
To holden hir way, but barefoot foorth they went,
So faithfully euerychone they ment,
Through heauinesse, defaced of hir hue,
And as I find they weren all true,
Now was not that a wonder for to see
So many true out of o countree,
At ones gadered in a compaunie,
And faithfull all, bookes cannot lie,
Both in hir port, and inward in mening,
Unto my dome it was an vncouth thing,
Emoug a thousand woman, or tweine,
Not to find one that cond in herte feine,
It was a maruaile, not oft seene toforne,
For selde in fields groweth any corne,
But if some weed spring vp there emong,
Men allay wines whan they be too strong,
But hir trouth was meint with none allaies,
They were so true found at all assaies,
And they ne stint upon hir journey,
Till that they come there they would be,
Where Adrastus, written as I finde,
Lay in his tent, all of colour Inde,
And greatly merualled, whan that he beheld
The number of hem, spred throgh al the field,
Clad all in blacke, and barefoot euerychone,
Out of his tent he dressed him anone,
Upon his hand the king Campaneus,
Full trist in herte, and face right pitous,
Againe the women forth they went in fere,
And to behold the wofull heavy chere,
The dolefull cries also whan they met,
The sorrowful sighes in hir breasts shet,
The teares new distilling on hir faces,
And so swouning in many sundry places,
Whan they hir lords aliue not ne found,
But in the field throgh girt with many a wound

Lay straught vpright, plainely to endite,
With deadly eyen tourned vp the white,
Who made sorrow, or felt her herte riue
For her lord but the faire Argiue,
Who can now weepe, but Deiphilee,
Tideus for she ne might see,
Whose constreints were so fell and kene,
That Adrastus might not susteine,
To behold the ladies so compleine,
Wishing his herte coruen were in tweine.

How the old cursed Creon will not suffer the bodies neither to be brent nor buried.

And yet alas both euen and morrow,
O thing there was that doubled all hir sorow
That old Creon fader of fellony,
Ne would suffer through his tiranny,
The dead bodies be buried neither brent,
But with beasts and hounds to be rent,
He made hem all upon an heape be laid,
Whereof the women thrist and euil apaid,
For very dole as it was no wonder,
Hir hertes felt almost riue asunder,
And as my master Chaucer list to endite,
All clad in blacke with hir wimples white,
With great honour, and due reuerence,
In the temple of the goddesse Clemence,
They bode the space of a fourthnight,
Till Theseus the noble worthy knight,
Duke of Athenes, with his cheualry,
Repaired home out of Feminy,
And with him led, full faire vpon to scene,
Through his manhood Ipolita the queene,
And her sister called Emely:
And whan these woman first gan espy
The worthy duke as he came riding,
King Adrastus hem all conueying,
The women brought vnto his presence,
Which him besought to yeue hem audience,
And all at ones swouning in the place,
Full humbly besoughten him of grace,
To rew on hem, hir harmes to redresse:
But if ye list to see the gentillesse
Of Theseus, and how he hath him borne,
If ye remember, as ye haue heard toforne
Well rehearsed, at Depford in the vale,
In the beginning of the knights tale.

How the final destruction of Thebes is compendiously rehearsed in the Knights tale.

First how that he whan he herd hem speke,
For very routh he felt his herte breke,
And hir sorrowes whan he gan aduart,
From his courser downe anone he start,
Hem comforting in full good entent,
And in his armes he hem all vp hent,
The Knights tale rehearsen euerydele,
From point to point, if ye looke it wele;
And how this duke without more abode,
The same day toward Thebes rode,
Full like in sooth a worthy conquerour,
And in his coast of cheualry the flour:
And finally to speaken of this thing,
With old Creon, that was of Thebes king,
How that he faught, and slough him like a knight,
And all his hoast put vnto the flight,
Yet as some authors make mentioun,
Or Theseus entred into the toun,
The women first with pekois and with malles,
With great labour beat downe the walles,
And in hir writing, also as they saine,
Campaneus was in the wals slaine,
With cast of stones he was so ouerlade,
For whom Adrastus such a sorrow made,
That no man may release him of his paine,
And Iocasta, with her doughters twaine,
Full wilfully oppressed of hir cheres,
To Athenes were sent as prisoners;
What fell of hem, more can I not saine,
But Theseus, mine author write certaine,
Out of the field, ere he from Thebes went,
He beat it downe, and the houses brent,
The people slough, for all hir crying loud,
He made her wals and her toures proud,
Round about, euen vpon a row,
With the soile to be laied full low,
That nought was left but the soile bare,
And to the women, in release of hir care,

How that duke Theseus delivered to the ladies the bodies of their lords.

The bodies of hir lords that were slaine,
This worthy duke restored hath againe,
But what should I any lenger dwell,
The old rites by and by to tell,
Nor the obsequies in order to deuise,
Nor declare the manner and the guise,
How the bodies were to ashes brent,
Nor of the gommes in the flaume spent,
To make the aire sweeter of reles,
Of frankencence, mirre, and aloes,
Nor how the women round about stood,
Some with milke, and some also with blood,
And some of hem with vrnes made of gold,
Whan the ashes fully were made cold,
To enclose hem of great affection,
And beare hem home vnto hir region,
And how that other, full deadly of hir looke,
For loue onely, of the bones tooke,
Hem to keepe for a remembraunce,
That to rehearse euery obseruaunce
That was doen in the fires bright,
The wake plaies during all the night,
Nor of the wrastling, telling point by point,
Of hem that were naked and annoint,
How euericke other lugge can and shake,
Ne how the women haue hir leaue take
Of Theseus, with full great humblesse
Thanking him of his high worthinesse,
That him list vpon hir wo to rew,
And how that he his freedome to renew
With the women of his high largesse
Iparted hath eke, of his richesse,
And how this duke Theseus hem forsooke,
And to Athenes the right way tooke,
With lauer crowned in signe of victory,
And the palme of conquest and of glory,
Did his honour duly vnto Marte,
And how the women wept whan they parte

How king Adrastus, with the ladies, repaired home ayen to Arge.

With king Adrastus, home ayein to Arge,
To tellen all it were too great a charge:
And eke also as ye shall vnderstand,
At ginning I tooke no more on hand,

By my promise, in conclusion,
But to rehearse the destruction
Of mighty Thebes, and no more,
And thus Adrastus with his lockes hore,
Still abode in Arge his citee
Unto his end, ye get no more of me,
Sauf as mine authour liketh to compile,
After that he liued but a while,
For he was old ere the seige began,
And thought and sorrow so vpon him ran,
The which in sooth shorted hath his daies,
And time set, death maketh no delaies,
And all his joy passed was and gone,
For of his lords aliue was not one,
But slaine at Thebes, ye known all the caas,
And whan this king in Arge buried was
Full royally with great solemnitee,
It was accounted in bookes ye may see,

Four hundred year tofore the foundation of Rome was the city of Thebes destroyed.

CCCC. yeare, as made is mention,
Tofore the building and foundation
Of great Rome, so royal and so large,
Whan the ladies departed from Arge
To hir countries, full trist and desolate,
Lo here the fine of conteke and debate,
Lo here the might of Mars the froward sterre,
Lo what it is to beginne a werre,
How it concludeth, ensample ye may see,
First of the Grekes, and sith of the Thebans cite,
For eyther part hath matter to complaine,
And in hir strife ye may see things twaine.

How all the worthy blood of Greece destroyed was at seige, and the city brought to nought, to final loss of both parties.

The worthy blood of all Greece spilt,
And Thebes eke of Amphion first built,
Without recure brought to ruine,
And with the soile made plaine as any line,
To wildernesse tourned, and deserte,
And Grekes eke fall into pouerte,
Both of her men, and also of her good,
For finally all the gentill blood
Was shed out there, her wounds wer so wide,
To losse finall vnto either side,
For in the warre is none exception
Of high estate, ne low condition,
But as fate and fortune both in fere,
List to dispose with hir double chere,

Bellona goddesse is of battaile.

And Bellona the goddesse in her chare
Aforn prouideth: wherefore euery man beware
Unaused warre to beginne,
For no man wote who shall lese or winne,
And hard it is whan either part leseth,
And doubtlesse neither of hem cheseth,
That they must in all such mortall rage,
Maugre hir lust, feelen great damage,
It may not be by mannes might restreined,
And warre in sooth was neuer ordained
But for sinfull folkes to chastise,
And as the Bible truly can deuise,

How that the war first began in Heaven, by the high pride and surquedy of Lucifer.

High in Heauen, of pride and surquedy,
Lucifer fader of enuy,
The old serpent the Leuiathan,
Was the first that euer warre began,
Whan Michael, the heauenly champion,
With his feres venquished the dragon,
And to Hell cast him downe full low,
The which serpent hath the cocele sow,
Through all earth, of enuy and debate,
That vneths is there none estate,
Without strife can liue in charitee,
For euery man of high and low degree,
Enuieth now that other should thriue:
And ground and cause, why that men so striue,
Is couetise, and false ambition,
That eueriche would haue domination
Ouer other, and trede him vnderfoot,
Which of all sorrow ginning is and root,
And Christ recordeth, rede, looke, and ye may se,
For lacke of loue what mischeef there shall be:

Surget gens contra gentem. Luc. xxi.

For o people, as he doth deuise,
Ayenst another of hate shall arise:
And after telleth what diuisions
There shall be betweene regions,
Eueriche busie other to oppresse,
And all such strife, as he beareth witnesse,
Kalends been, I take his word to borrow,
And a ginning of mischeefe and of sorrow,
Men haue it found by experience:
But the venim and the violence
Of strife, of warre, of conteke and of debate,
That maketh londs bare and desolate,
Shall be proscript, and voided out of place,
And Martes swerds shall no more manace
Nor his spere, grecuous to sustene,
Shall now no more whetted be so kene,
For he no more shall his hauberke shake,
But loue and peace shall in hertes awake,
And charity, both in length and bread,
Of new shall hir bright beames spread
Through grace onely in diuers nations,
For to reforme atweene regions
Peace and quiet, concord, and vnitee,
And that is both one, two, and three,
Eke three in one, and soueraine lord of pees,
Which in this exile, for our sake chees,
For loue onely our troubles to termine,
For to be borne of a pure virgine,
And let vs pray to him that is most good,
That for mankind shadde his herte blood,
Through beseeching of that heauenly quene,
Wife and moder, and maiden clene,
To send vs peace in this life here present,
And of our sinnes perfite amendement,
And joy eternall, whan we hence wend,
And of my tale thus I make an end.

Here now endeth, as ye may see,
The destruction of Thebes the citee.

[The following were first published in Urry's Edition, but, in Mr. Tyrwhit's opinion, without evidence of authenticity.]

THE

COKE'S TALE OF GAMELYN.

Now lithen and listinith, and
Herkinith you aright,
And ye shullin herè me tell
You of a doughti knight.

Sir Johan of Boundis clepid was
This ilkè knight'is name;
Wele coudin he of noriture,
And eke of mochil game.

Thre sonnis this knight had, and with
His bodi he them wan;
The eldest was a moche shrew,
And sonè he began.

His brotherin lov'd thir fadir,
And of him were agast;
Th' eldist deserv'd his fadir's curse,
And had it at the last.

The godè knight his fadir did
Livè so long and yore,
That Deth was comen him unto,
And handlid him full sore.

The godè knight ycarid moch,
Sore sike ther as he lay,
How that his childerin shuldè
Lyvin after his day.

He haddè ben widè where, but
Noon husbondee he was;
Allè the londe which that he had
It was veray purchas;

And fayn he woldè that it were
Dressid among them all,
That everich of them had his part
As it mightè befall.

Tho sent he into the contrè
Aftir wisè knightis,
To helpen dele his londis, and
Dressin them to rightis.

He sent them word hy letteris
That they shulde hyè blyve
If that they wol speken with him
While that he was on live.

Sone as those knightis herden how
Thus sekè that he lay,
Tho haddè they no mannir rest
Nothir by night nor day

Tyll that they comin unto him,
Ther as he layd him still,
Upon his deth' is bedde for to
Abidin Godd' is will.

Thus then saiden the godè knight,
Sekè ther as he lay,
" Lordis, I warnè you forsothe,
Withoutin any nay,

" I may not lengir liven here
In this sorrowful stound,
For thorough Godd'is will supreme
Dethe drawith me to ground."

Ther ne was no one of them alle,
That herdin him aright,
That thei ne haddè mochil routh
Upon that ilkè knight;

And seidè, " Sir, for Godd'is love
Ne dismayen you nought,
God may don botè of balè
Which that is now ywrought."

Then answerid them the godè knight,
Sikè there as he lay,
" Botè of balè God may send,
I wote it is no nay.

" But I besekè you knightis,
Al for the love of me,
Goith and dressith my londis
Among my sonis thre.

" And, frendis, for the love of God
Delith them nat amys,
And forgetith not Gamelyn,
My yongè son that is.

" Takith hedè unto that one
As wel as to that other;
Seldome ye seine any heir
That helpè woll his brother."

Tho lettin they the knighte liggin
Which that was not in hele,
And in thei wentin to counsaile
His londis for to dele;

For to delin them al too on
That was ther only thought,
And for that Gamelyn yongist was
He shuldè having nought.

Al the londè which that ther was
They delten it in two,
And letè Gamelyn the yonge
Withouten londè go.

And evèrich of them seiden
Til othir fulle loude,
His bretherin mowe give him londe
Whan that he godis koude.

Whan they had delid the londis
After their ownè will,
Tho camin they unto the knight
Ther as he lay full still,

And toldin unto him anon
How that they hadd ywrought,
And the knight there as he seke lay
Ylikid it right nought.

Then seidè the knight angrily,
" I sware by Seint Martyn
For all that which ye have ydone
Yet is the londè myn.

" For Godd'is love, my neighbouris,
Standeith ye allè still,
And I woll delin my londè
After myn ownè will.

" Johan myn eldist sonè shall
Yhavè plowis five,
That was my fadir's heritage
While that he was on live;

" And my middillist sonè shall
Five plowis have of lond
That I holpè for to gettin
With myn own rightè hond;

" And all myn othir purchasis
Of landis and of ledes,
That I bequethè Gamelyn,
And alle my godè stedes.

" And I beseke you, godè men,
That lawis con of lond,
For Gamelyn'is lovè that
Thus my bequest may stond."

Thus delid hath the godè knightè
His londe be his dai,
Right upon his deth'is beddè,
Sore sike ther as he lay:

And sonè aftirwerdis he
Lay as a stonè still,
And dyid whan the tymè came,
As it was Crist'is will.

Anon aftir that he was dede,
And undir grass ygrave,
Tho fonè the eldir brothir
Begylid the yongè knave.

He tokin into his hondis
His londis and his ledè,
And also Gamelyn himself
To clothin and to fedè.

He clothid him and feddè him
Evil and ekè wroth,
And letin his londis for fare,
And als his housis both;

His parkis eke, and his wodis,
And diddè nothyng wel,
And sithen he it aboughtè
On his own feire fell.

So longè tyme was Gamelyn
In his brother'is Hall,
For the strengist of godè will
They doutidin him all.

They ne was none wight in that place
Nothir yongè ne olde,
That woldè wrathin Gamelyn
Were he nevir so bold.

Gamelyn stode upon a day
In his brother'is yerde,
And he began with his hondè
To handilin his berde.

He thoughtin upon his londis,
That layin longe unfawe,
And also of his feire okis,
That dounè were ydrawe.

His parkis werin al brokin,
And al his deir reved;
Of allè his godè stedis noon
Was there with him beleved;

His housis werein unhelid
And full evilly dight;
Tho thought this yongè Gamelyn
It wentè not aright.

After camè his brothir in
Ywalkyng statelich thare,
And seidè unto Gamelyn,
" What? is our metè yare?"

Tho Gamelyn ywrothid him,
And swore by Godd'is boke,
" Thou shalt y go bake, luke, thy self;
I wol not be thy coke."

" How, brothir Gamelyn," quod he,
" Thus answerist me thou?
Thou spakist nevir soche a word
Yet as thou doist now."

" By my faith," sejdè Gamelyn,
" Now me it thinkith nede;
Of all the harmis that I have
I nevir yit toke hede.

" My parkis hen y brokin, and
My deir ben yreved;
Of myn harnis and my stedis
Noght is there me beleved.

" Al that my fadir me bequethe
Al goith now to shame,
And therefore have thou Godd'is curse,
Brothir John by thy name."

Than thus bespakin his brothir,
" That rapè was of vees,
Stondith stille, thou gadiling,
And holdith right thy pees:

" Thou shaltè ben ful faign to have
Thy metè and thy wede.
What spekist thou, thou gadiling,
Of lond othir of lede?"

Then seidè to him Gamelyn,
The childè that was yinge,
" Christ'is cursè mote he havin
That clepeth me Gadlyng.

" I am no wors gadlying than the,
Parde ne no wors wight,
But born I was of a lady,
And gottin of a knyght."

Ne durst he not to Gamèlyn
Not oo fote ferthir go,
But cleped to him his meinè,
And seidè to them tho;

" Goith and betith wele this boy,
And ravith him his wit,
And let him lere another time
To answering me bett."

Then seid the chyld, yong Gamelyn,
.....
" Christ'is curse motè thou having
What? brother art thou myn.

" And if that I shal algatis
Y betin be anon,
Crist'is cursè mote thou havin
But that thou be that one."

And right anon his brothir did,
In that his gretè hete,
Makin his meinè fett stavis,
This Gamelyn to bete.

Whan everich of them had a staff
Into his hond nomin,
Gamèlyn was awarè tho,
He forsaugh them comin.

Tho Gamèlyn saugh them comin
He lokid ovir all,
And was warè of a pestil
Stodè undir the wall.

And Gamèlyn was fully light,
And thidir gan he lepe,
And droffè all his brother's men
Right sonè on an hepe.

He lokid like a wild lion,
And laidin on gode wone;
Tho whan his brothir seyè that
He beganne to gonne.

He fleigh up untill a loftè,
And shet the dorè fast;
Thus Gamèlyn with his pestil
Madè them all agast.

Somè for Gamèlyn'is love,
And some for his envie,
Allè withdrowen them to halves
Tho he began to pleie:

" What now?" seide Gamèlyn; " brothir,
Evil motè ye the;
Wollè ye beginnin contek
And than so sonè fle?"

Gamèlyn sought his brothir tho
Whithir he was yflowe,
And saugh where that he lokid out
At a solere windowe.

" Brothir," tho seidè Gamèlyn,
" Comith a litil nere,
And I wol techin the a plaie
Attè the bokillere."

His brothir to hym answerid,
And swore by Seint Richere,
" While the pestil is in thyn hondè
I woll comin no nere.

" Brothir, I woll makin the pece,
I swere by Crist's ore;
Castith away the pestil tho,
And wrathè the na more."

" I mot nedis," seide Gamèlyn,
" Wrathè me at onys,
For that thou woldist make thy men
To breikin my bonis.

" Ne had I haddin meyn and might,
In myn ownè twey armes,
To have y pushin them fro me
They would have done me harmes."

To Gamèlyn tho seidin his
Brothir; " Be thou not wrothe,
For to sein the havin harme
Me werin rightè lothe.

" I ne did it not, my brothir,
But right for a fonding,
For to lokin if thou were strong,
And art so very ying."

" Come adoun then to me," quod hè,
" And grauntè me my bone,
Of oo thing I wol askin the,
And we shull saughtè sone."

Adoun then camin his brothir,
That fikill was and fell,
And was swithè right sore aghast
Of that ilkè pestil.

He seidè, " Brothir Gamèlyn;
Askè me now thy bone,
And loke that you me blamè, but
I grauntè it full sone."

Tho seiden yongè Gamèlyn;
" Brothir mynè, I wiss
And if we shullè ben at one
Thou must me grauntè this:

" Al that my fadir me bequethe,
While that he was on live,
Thou mustè do me it to have,
If that we shul not strive."

" That thou shalt havè, Gamèlyn,
I swere by Crist'is ore,
All that thy fadir the bequethe,
Though thou woldist have more.

" Thy londè, that now lyith lie,
Full well it shall be sowe,
And thyne housis yraisid up
That now ben layd full lowe."

Thus seide the knight to Gamèlyn,
But only with his mouth,
And thoughtè but of falsèness,
As he right welè couth.

The knightè thoughtin on traison,
But Gamèlyn on noon,
And went and kissid his brothir,
And then they were at oon.

Alas for yongè Gamèlyn!
Nothing at all he wist
With swichè falsè traison
His brothir hath him kist.

Lithinith and lestinith, and
Holdith you stille your tonge,
And ye shull herin straunge talking
Of Gamèlyn the yonge.

There happid to be there beside
Tryid a wrastiling,
And therefore there was ysettin
A ram and als a ring.

And Gamèlyn was in a will
To wendè thereunto,
For to previn his mighte, and se
What that he couthè do.

" Now brothir myne," quod Gamèlyn,
" By holie Seint Richere
Thou mustè nedis lene to night
Me a litil coursere,

" That is freshè to the sporis,
Upon him for to ride;
I mustin on an errand go
A litil here beside."

" Be God," seidè his brothir tho,
" Of stedis in my stall
Goith and chosith the the best
And sparith none of alle,

" Of stedis or of courseris,
That stondith 'hem beside,
And tellith me, my gode brothir,
Whithur thou wiltè ride."

" Herè besidis, brothir, is
Y cryid a wrastling,
And thereforè shallè ben y sett
A ram and als a ring.

" Mochè worship it were sothly,
Brothir, unto us all
Might I the ram and als the ring
Bringin home to the Hall."

A stedè there was sadilid,
Smarth was it and eke flete;
Gamèlyn diddin a peire of
Sporis fast on his fete.

He sat his fote in the stirrop,
The stedè he bestrode,
And towardis the wrastilling
The yongè childè rode.

Tho Gamèlyn the yongè was
Riddin out at the gate,
The falsè knight his own brothir
Lokkid it aftir thate.

And he besoughtin Jesu Crist,
That is of Hevin king,
That he mightè brekin his nek
In that ilk wrastiling.

Assone as Gamèlyn cam there
The wrastling placè was
He lightid down of the stedè
And stodin on the gras.

And ther he herd a frankelyn
Weloway for to sing,
And beganin all bittirly
His handis for to wring.

" Godè man," seidè Gamèlyn,
" Why makist thou this fare?
Is ther no man that may you help
Out of this nicè care?"

" Alas!" seidè this frankèlyn,
" That evir I was bore!
For tweiè stalworthè sonis
I wene I have forlore.

" A champion is in the place
That has wroughtin me sorow,
For he hath slayn my too sonis
But if that God them borow.

" I woldè givin ten poundis,
Be Jesu Crist, and more,
With the nonis I fond a man
To handilin him sore."

" Godè man," seidè Gamèlyn,
" Wilt thou this welè done?
Holdè my hors while that my man
Ydrawith of my shone.

" And helpe my man also to kepe
My clothis and my stede,
And I woll into the place gon
And loke how I may spede."

"By God," seidè the frankelyn,
It shall right so be don;
I woll my silfin be thy man
To drawin of thy shone.

"And wendè you into the place,
Swete Jesu Crist the spede,
And dredè not of thy clothis
Nor of thy godè stede."

Barefote and ungert Gamèlyn
Into the ringè came,
Allè that werin in the place
Hedin of him the name,

Howe he durstin aventure him
On him to don his might
That was so doughti a champion
In wrastling and in fight.

Upstertè tho the champion
Ful rapely right anon,
Towardis yongè Gamèlyn
He tho began to gon,

And seidè, "Who is thy fadir,
And who is eke thy sire?
Forsothè thou art a gret fole
For that thou camist hire."

Anon Gamèlyn answerid
The stout champion tho,
"Thou knewist full welè my fadir
While that he couthè go:

"Whilis that he was on live,
I swere by Seint Martyn,
Sir John of Boundis was his name,
And I am Gamèlyn."

"Felawe," seidè the champion,
"So evir mote I thrive,
I knew right welè thy fadir
While that he was on live;

"And thy selfin, yonge Gamèlyn,
I will that thou it here,
Whiles thou wert a yongè boy
A mochè shrew thou were."

Then seidè yongè Gamèlyn,
And swore bi Crist' is ore,
"Now am I oldir wox thou shalt
Y findin me a more."

"Be God," seidè the champion,
"Welcome motè thou be;
Comè thou onys in my honde
Shaltin thou nevir the."

It was welè within the night,
And bright the mone shone,
Whan Gamèlyn and the champion
Togidir gan to gon.

The champion castè tornis
To Gamèlyn that was prest,
And Gamèlyn stodin stillè,
And bad him don his best.

Then seiden yongè Gamèlyn
Unto the champion,
"Now that I have fully provid
Many tonis of thine,"
"Thou mostin," seidè Gamèlyn,
"Prove oon or two of myn."

Gamèlyn to the champion
Yede smartily anon,
Of al the tornis that he coude
He shewid him but one;

And kest him on the liftè side
That thre ribbis to brak,
And thereunto his left armè,
That gaf a grettè crak.

Than seidè yongè Gamèlyn
Smertly to him anon,
"Shall it be holdin for a cast,
Or ellis go for none?"

"Bi God," seidè the champion,
"Whedir so that it be,
He that ones comith in thyn hand
Shallin he nevir the."

Than seidè the frankèlyn, that
Thre sonis there had lore,
"Blessid be thou, yonge Gamèlyn,
That ever thou were bore!

"For now unto the champion
This have I for to seie,
"This is the yonge Gamèlyn
That taughtè the to pleie."

Ayen answerde the champion,
That likid nothyng well,
"He is allè their maistir, and
His pleiè is right fell.

"Sithin that I wristilid first
It is agon full yore,
But I was nevir in my life
Handilid so before."

Yonge Gamèlyn stode in the place
Allone withouten ferk,
And seide, "If there be any mo
Let them comè to werk."

The champion which that painid
Him to workin so sore,
It semith by his countinaunce
That he willè no more.

Gamèlyn in the placè stode
Stillè as any stone
For to abidin wrastiling,
But there ycomith none.

There ne was none with Gamèlyn
That woldè wrestle more,
For he handilid the champion
So wonderously sore.

Two gentilmeinè that owned the place
Come to Gamelyn, God geve them gra

And seidè to him, " Have done on
Thy hosin and thy shone;
Forsothè at this timè all
This faire it is ydone."

Tho seidè to them Gamèlyn,
" So mote I well yfare,
I havè not yet halvindele
Ysoldè all my ware."

Than seide the champion so broke,
" I may it welè swere
He is a fole that therof bieth,
Thou sellest it so dere."

Tho seide to him the frankèlyn,
That was in mochill care,
" Fellaw," he saidè, " whi lakkist
Thou so moche of his ware?

" Be Seint Jame, that in Galis is,
That many man has sought,
Yet it is moche too godè chepe
That thou hasten ybought."

Tho that the wardinis werin
Of that ilk wrastiling
Comin forth, and brought Gamèlyn
The ram and als the ring.

And thus wann yongè Gamèlyn
The ram and eke the ring,
And wentè forth with mochil joy
Homeward in the morning.

His brothir se where that he come
With all the grettè rout,
And bad the porter shute the gate,
And holdin him without.

The porter of his lord'is word
Was so right sore agast,
And stert anon unto the gate
And lokkid it full fast.

Now lithinith and lestinith
Bothè yongè and old,
And ye shullin herè gamin
Of Gamelyn the bold.

Gamèlyn cometh therunto
For to have comen in;
But all in vaine; the dore then was
Y shitt fast with a pyn.

Than seidè yongè Gamèlyn,
" Porter, undo the yate,
For many a godè mann'is
Sonnè stondith thereat."

Then answerid him the porter,
And swore by Godd'is berde,
" Thou ne shalt, frendè Gamèlyn,
Comin into this yerde."

" Thou lyist," seidè Gamèlyn,
" So broukin I my chynne:"
He smote the wikit with his fote,
And brak away the pyn.

The porter streightwey saughè tho
It might no bettir be,
He sette fote on erthè, and
Fast he began to fle.

" Bi my faith," seidè Gamèlyn,
" That travaile is ylore,
For I am on fote as light as
Thow, though thow had yswore,"

Gamelyn ovirtoke the porter,
And his teenè ywrak,
And gert him full upon the nek,
That he the bon to brak;

And toke him by that oon armè,
And threw him in a well;
Seven hundrid fadom it was depe,
As I have herdè telle.

Whan Gamèlyn the yongè thus
Had yplaied his play,
Allè that in the yerdè were
Withdrewin them away,

That dredin him full sorè for
The wrekè that he wrought,
And for the fayir cumpany
That he had thither brought.

Yong Gamèlyn yede to the gate
And letè it up wide,
He letin in allè the rout
That gon woldin or ride;

And seidè, " Ye ben ywelcome
Withouten any greve,
For we wol ben maisteris here,
And askè no man leve.

" It n'as but yesterdai I laft,"
Saide yongè Gamèlyn,
" In my brother'is seleris
Five toun of right gode wyne.

" I willè not this cumpany
Partyn with me on twyn,
And if ye will don aftir me,
Whil any sope is inn:

" And if my brothir grutchith us,
Or makith it foulè chere,
Othir for spence of mete and drink,
That we shull spendin here,

" I am the ovirceterir,
And bere our althir purse,
He shallè have for his grutching
Sancta Maria's curse.

" My brothir is but a nigon,
I swere by Crist'is ore,
And we woll spendè largily
That he hath sparid yore.

" And whoso that makith grutching
That we do here ydwell,
He shall go unto the porter
Into the drawè well.

Sevin dayis and sevin nightes
Gamèlyn held his fest,
With mochè solace that there was,
And eke no mannir heste.

Alf in a litil torrit his
Brothir laydè ysteke,
And saugh him wastin his godis,
But durstè not to speke.

Right erli in a morrowning,
Upon the eightè day,
The gestis come to Gamèlyn,
And woldè gon thir way.

" Lordis," tho seidè Gamèlyn,
" And wollin ye so hie?
Allè the wyn is not yet dronk,
So broukin I mine eye."

Yonge Gamèlyn in his hertè
Was sorowfull and wo
Whan that his gestis toke their leve
And fro him woldè go.

He woldè that they had dwellid
Lengir, and they seide " Nay,"
But bitaught Gamèlyn to God,
And bad him have gode dai.

Thus madè Gamèlyn his feste,
And brought it well to end,
And aftirward his gestis toke
Levè their way to wend.

Now lithinith and listinith,
And holdith you your tonge,
And ye shullin herè gamin
Of Gamèlyn the yonge.

Herkinith, lordilingis, and
Listinith you aright,
Whan all the gestis weren gon
How Gamèlyn was dight.

Allè the while that Gamèlyn
Had hold his mangerie
His brothir thought on him bewreke
With his false trecherie;

Tho whan that Gamèlyn'is gestes
Y ridin were and gon
Gamèlyn stode anon alone,
Frendè tho had he none.

Tho aftir this full sone it fell,
Within a littil stound,
That Gamèlyn was takin, and
Full hardly was he bound.

Than forth comith the false knight
Out of the solerè,
And to Gamèlyn his brothir
He goith fulle nerè,

And seiden unto Gamèlyn,
" Who medè the so bold
For to destroyin and wastè
The store of my houshold?"

" Brothir," answered Gamèlyn,
" Now wrathè the right noght,
For it is many day agon
Sithins it was ybought:

" For, brothir, thou hastin haddè,
I swere by Seint Richere,
Of fiftene plowis of loudè
This full sixtenè yere;

" And of allè the bestis which
Thou hastè forth ybredd,
That my fadir to me bequethe
Upon his deth'is bedd:

" Of allè this full sixtene yere
I gevè the the prow,
For the metè and the drinkè
That we have spendid now."

Than thus seidè the false knight,
(Full evil mote he the)
" Herkinith, brothir Gamelyn,
What I woll gevin the;

" For of my body, brothir, heir
Y gettin have I none;
I wollè makin the my heir,
I swerè by Seint John."

" Par mafay," seidè Gamèlyn,
" And if that it so be,
And thou thinkest as thou seyist,
May God yeldin it the!"

Nothing wistè yong Gamèlyn
Of his brother'is gile,
And therefore he him begilid
In verry littil while.

" Gamèlyn," seiden he, " o thing
I nedis must the tell,
Tho whan thou threwè my porter
Into the drawè well,

" I sworè in that wrathè, and
In that my gretè mote,
That thou shuldist ybondè be
Both hondè and eke fote:

" And therefore I besechè the,
My brother Gamèlyn,
Letith thou noght me be forsworn,
As brothir art thou mine;

" But letith me ybindin the
Both hondè and eke fote,
For me to holdin myne avough,
Right as I the behote."

" Brothir," tho seide Gamèlyn,
" As so I motin the,
Thou shaltè not ben forsworin
For the lovè of me."

Tho madin thei this Gamèlyn
To sitte, might he not stand,
Tyll that he him ybondin had
Both fote and also hand.

The falsè knight his brothir of
Gamèlyn was agast,
And sentè aftir fetteris
To fetterin him fast.

His brothir madè lesingis
On him ther as he stode,
And toldè them that comin in
That Gamèlyn was wode.

Gamèlyn stodè to a post
Y bondin in the Hall,
And tho that ther ycomin in
Lokid upon him all.

Evir stodè yong Gamèlyn
Evin boltè upright,
But mete nor drink ne had ne none
Nowthir by day ne night.

Tho seidè yongè Gamèlyn,
"Brothir myn, by my hals
Now I have wele espyid that
Thou art a parti fals.

"Had I but wistè that treson
That thou haddist yfond
I woldin have gevin strokis
Or I had ben ybound."

Gamèlyn stodè thus bondin
As still as any stone
For too dayis and too nightis,
And metè had he none.

Then seide at last this Gamèlyn
That stodè boundin strong,
"Adam Spencer, methinkith that
I fastè al to long;

"Therefore, Adam le Dispencer,
Now I beseche the
For the mochè lovè with which
My fadir lovid the,

"If thou may comin to the kaies,
Lesith me out of bond,
And for thi I woll departin
With the of my fre lond."

Than him answerid this Adam,
Which that was the Spencer,
"I have yscryid thy brothir
This full sixtenè yere,

"And if I shuldè letin you
To gon out of his boure
He woldin aftirwardis seye
That I were a traytour."

"Adam," answeryd Gamèlyn,
"So broukin I myn hals,
Thou shaltè findin my brothir
At the last rightè fals;

"And therefore, brothir Adam, me
Losè out of my bonds,
And I wollè departin with
The of myn own fre londs."

"Upon so gode a forewardè"
Saiden Adam, "I wis
I wollè doin thereunto
Alle that in me is."

"Adam," tho seidè Gamelyn,
"As so mowin I the,
I woll holdè the covènaunt,
An thou too wollè me."

Anon as Adam his lordè
To beddè was ygone,
Adam tokè the kaies, and lat
Gamèlyn out anon.

He unlokid yonge Gamèlyn
Both hendis and eke fete,
On hope of the avaunccment
Which that he him bèhete.

Then seidè yongè Gamèlyn,
"Thankid be Godd'is sonde,
For now that I am ylosid
Both fote and also hond!

"Had I but etin a litil,
And thereto dronk aright,
There is non in this housè that
Shuld bindè me this night."

Tho Adam tokè Gamèlyn,
As still as any stone,
And haddin him into the spence
Right rapily anon;

And settin him to his soupere
Right in a privie stede,
And badin hym do gladily,
And Gamelyn so dede.

Anon assone as Gamèlyn
Had etin wel and fine,
And thereunto had ydrankin
Well of the redè wyne,

"Adam," seide yongè Gamèlyn,
"Tell what is now thy rede;
For me to go to my brothir,
And gerdin of his hede?"

"No, Gamèlyn," seidin Adam,
"It shallè not be so,
But I can tellè the a rede
That is yworth the too.

"I wote wele forsothè that
(And this it is no nay)
We shullin have a mangerie
Rightè upon Sonday;

"Of abbotis and priouris
Full many here shal be,
And othir men of holie chereh,
As I can tellè the:

"Thou shaltè stond up by the post,
As thou were hondè fast,
And I shall them leve unlok, that
Away thou may them cast:

" And whan that they have y etin,
And washin have their hondes,
Tho thou shalt bespekin them all,
To bring the out of bondes:

" And if that they will borrow the
That werin a gode game,
Than werin thou out of prison
And I als out of blame;

" But if that evèrich of them
Sayè unto us nay,
I shullè don anothir thing,
I swerè by this day.

" Thou shullè have a godè staffe,
And I woll have another,
And Crist'is cursè have that oon
That failè shall that othir."

" Ye, for God," seidè Gamèlyn,
" I say it right for me
If that I failin on my side
Than evil mote I the.

" If that we shullin algatis
Assoile them of thire synne;
Warnith me, my brothir Adam,
Whan that we shall begynn."

" Now Gamèlyn," seiden Adam,
" Ey seintè Charitè
I wollè warnè the befom
Whan that the time shall be.

" Whan that I twinkin upon the
Lokè for to be gon,
And cast away the fetteris,
And come to me anon."

" Adam," seidè yong Gamèlyn,
" Y blissed be thy bones!
That is a rightè gode counsaile
Y gevin for the nones.

" If that they shullin wernè me
To bring the out of bendes
I wollè settin gode strokis
Full right upon their lendes."

Tho the Sondy was ycomin,
And these folk to the feste;
Faire they werein ywelcomid
Bothè the leste and meste.

And evir as they at the hall
Dorè were comin in
They evèrich castin an eie
On yongè Gamèlyn.

The falsè knight his own brothir,
So full of trecherie,
Allè the gestes that there were
At that ilk mangerie

Of Gamèlyn his own brothir
He toldin them with mouth
Allè the harmis and the shame
That e'ere he tellè couth.

Tho they werein yservid streit
Of messis too or thre;
Than seidè yongè Gamèlyn,
" How do ye servè me?

" It ne is not wele yservid,
Be God that allè made,
That I shold sittin here fasting
And othir men make glade."

The falsè knightè his brothir,
Thereas that he ystode,
Toldin to allè his gestis
That Gamèlyn was wode.

And Gamèlyn there stodè still,
And answerid right noght,
But of Adam'is wordis he
Heldè still in his thought.

Tho Gamèlyn began to speke,
Right doulefully withall,
Unto the grettè lordis that
Y satyn in the hall:

" My lordings," tho seiden he,
For Crist'is passion
Helpin to bringè Gamèlyn
Out of thilkè prison."

Than seidè to him an abbot,
(Sorow upon his cheke!)
" He shallin havè Crist'is curse
And Seintè Maries eke,

" That shall the out of this prison
Beggin owthir borow,
But evir worthè hym full wele
That doth the mykil sorow."

And anon aftir that abbot
Than spakin anothir,
I woldè that thyn hede were of
Though thou were my brothir.

" Allè that the shall borrowin
Motè them foulè fall;"
And thus yseiden allè they
That werin in the hall.

Than seidè to him a priour,
" Evil mowin he thrive!
It is grettè sorow and care,
Boy, that thou art on live."

" On, on," seidè yonge Gamèlyn,
" So broukin I my bone,
Now that I havin espyid
That frendis have I none.

" A cursid mot he worthè be,
Bothè fleshè and blode,
That evir doth to priouris
Or abbotes any gode."

Anon Adam the Dispencer
Takin up hath the cloth,
And lokid unto Gamelyn,
And saugh that he was wroth.

Adam of the pantrie at thilk
Time litel he thought.
And too godè stavis unto
The hallè dore he brought.

Adam lokid on Gamèlyn
And he was war anon,
And cast away the fetteris,
And began for to gon.

Tho he camin unto Adam,
He toke to the one staff,
And beganning to werkè wele,
And gode strokis he gaff.

Gamèlyn came into the hall,
And Adam Spencer both,
And lokid them all aboutin
As they haddè ben wroth.

Gamèlyn sprenith holi watir
All with an okin spire,
That some of them that stode upright
Fillin into the fire.

There was no mannir lewdè man
That in the haliè stode
That woldè doin Gamèlyn
Any thingè but gode.

But thei stodè besidin, and
Letè them bothè werch,
For thei ne haddè no routhè
Of men of holi cherch.

Of abbot or of prior, or
Of monk or of canon,
That Gamèlyn hath overtoke,
Anon they yedin doun.

There ne was none of them allè
That with his stuff ymette
That he madè them overthrowe,
And quyttè them his dette.

Tho, "Gamèlyn," seidè Adam,
"For Seintè charite
Payith, I pray, godè liveray
And for the love of me;

"And I wollè kepin the dore;
So evir here I masse
Er that they ben assoilyid
Ther shallè noon ypasse."

"Doutè the noght," seide Gamèlyn,
"While that we ben in fere;
But kepè thou welè the dore
And I woll werkin here;

"Besturrith the, gode Adam, and
Ne lettith none yfle,
And we shall tellè largily
How many here there be."

To Gamèlyn seiden Adam,
"Doith them all but gode,
For thei ben men of holi cherch;
Drawith of them no blode;

"Savith right wele the coroune,
And doith them no harmes,
But brekith bothè their leggis,
And sithin here thir armes."

Thus Gamèlyn and Adam hath
Y wroughtin righte fast,
And pleidin with the monkis tho,
And madè them agast.

Forth hidir they comè riding
Full jolily with swaines,
But home again they werin ledde
In cartis and in waines.

Tho as they haddin all ydone
Than seidin a gray frere,
"Alas! alas! my lord abbot,
What diddè we now here?

"Tho that we hither did ycome
It was a coldè rede;
Us had far better ben at home
With watir and with brede."

While Gamèlyn made orderis
Of monkis and of frere
Evir stodè his brothir stille,
And madè foulè chere.

Tho Gamèlyn up with his staff,
That he ful welè knew,
And grettin him upon the nek,
That he him overthrewe,

A litil above the girdil
The riggin bone to brast,
And sett him in the fetteris
There as he sattin arst.

"Sittith thou there, my brothir John,"
Tho seidè Gamèlyn,
"For to colin thy hotte bodie,
As I did colè myn."

And swithe as they yhaddè wele
Wroken them on their fone,
They askid for the watir, and
They wishin them anon.

What some of them for their lovè,
And somè for their awe,
Allè the servauntis servid
Them of the bestè law.

The shereff was thennis away
But about a five myle,
And all was toldin unto him
Within a little whyle,

How Gamèlyn and Adam had
Ydon a sorry res,
Boundin and woundin many men
Agen the king'is pece.

Eftsonis tho begannin sone
Striffè for to awake,
And the shiregereve about did
Cast Gamèlyn to take.

Now lithinith and lestinith,
So God geve you gode fine,
And ye shull herin a gode game
Of yongè Gamèlyn.

Now four-and-twenty yongè men,
That holdin them full bolde,
Comin unto the shiregereve,
And seidè that they wold

Both Gamèlyn and eke Adam
Y fettè be the way;
The shiregereve gafè them leve
Tho soth as I you say,

Thes yongè meinè hiden them
Fast, woldè they not lynne
Tyll that they comin to the gate
There Gamèlyn was inne.

They knokidin upon the gate,
The porter tho was nye,
And lokid forth out at an hole
As man that was full slye

The porter had beholdin them
But for a litil while,
He lovid welè Gamèlyn,
And was adrad of gile,

And forthi letè the wiket
Y stondin fullè still,
And askid them that stant without
What ywas their will?

For allè the gret cumpany
Than spake bot one alone,
"Undo the gatis, porter, and
Latè us in ygone."

Than seidè to them the porter,
"So broukin I my chynne
Ye shullè sayin your errand
Or that ye comin inne."

"Say to Gamèlyn and Adam,
If that ther wille it be,
We wollè spekin here with them
Two wordis othir thre."

"Fellaw," seidè the porter tho,
"Stondith thou ther ystill,
And I woll wend to Gamèlyn
To wetin of his wille."

And in wentè the porter tho
To Gamèlyn anon,
And seidè, "Sire, I warne you
That here be come your fone;

"For lo! the shiregerev'is men
Now ben all at the gate
For to ytekin you bothè;
Shallè ye not escape."

"Porter," tho seidè Gamèlyn,
"So mote I welè the,
I woll allowè the thy wordes
Whan I my timè se.

"Go ageyn, porter, to the gate,
And dwell with them a while,
Awaitin, and thou shaltè se
Right sone, porter, a gile.

"Adam," tho seidè Gamèlyn,
Lokè the to be gon,
We havè foomen at the gate,
And frendis nevir one.

"It ben the shiregerev'is men
That hithir ben comin,
They ben yswore togideris,
That we shull be nomin."

To Gamèlyn seidè Adam,
"Hiè the righte belyve,
And if I failè the this day
Than evil mote I thryve."

"And we shullin so welcomè
The shiregerev'is men,
That some of them I trow shall make
Their beddis in the fen."

Than thorough the posternè gate
Yong Gamèlyn out went,
And a gode sturdie cartè staffe
In his hondè he hent.

And Adam Spencer hentè sone
Anothir grettè staff
For to helpè young Gamèlyn,
And gode strokis he gaffe.

Adam yfellid hath his tweyne,
And Gamèlyn felled thre,
The tothir settè on erth,
And fast began to fle.

"What?" seidin Adam Spencer tho,
"So evir hire I masse
I havè right god reddè wyne,
Pray drinkith er ye passe."

"Nai, nai! by God," seidè they tho,
"Thy drink in nothing gode,
It woldè makin mann'is brayne
To lyin in his hode."

Yong Gamèlyn tho stodè still,
And lokid him about.
And saide, "The shiregereve comith
With a full grettè rout.

"Adam Spencer," seid Gamèlyn,
"My rede it is now this,
Abidin we not lengir here
Lest we farin amys.

"I rede that we to wode ygonn
Er that we be yfound;
Betir is there lose for to gonn
Than in the toune, ybound."

Adam than tokè by the hond
This yongè Gamèlyn.
And echè of them to tlie othir
Drankin a draft of wyne.

And aftirwardis toke their course,
And wentè streight their way;
Tho fond the shiregereve the nest,
But in it was none ay.

The shiregereve lightid adoune,
And went into the hall,
And found the lord yfetterid
Full fastè therewithall.

The shireve tho unfetterid
Him rightè sone anon,
And sentin aftir a gode leche
To hele his riggè bon.

Letè we now this falsè knight
Lie in his mochill care,
And tellè we of Gamèlyn,
And lokè how he fare.

Gamèlyn into the wild wode
Ystalkid is full stille,
And Adam le Dispencer it
Ylikid but right ille.

Tho Adam swore to Gamèlyn,
And that be Seint Richere,
"Now I say that it is mery
To ben a dispencer;

"That muchè levire me werin
The kayis for to bere,
Than walkin in this wildè wode
My clothis all to tere."

"Adam," seidè yong Gamèlyn,
"Dismayè the right noght,
For many a gode mann'is child
In carè is ybrought."

As they thus in the wode stodin,
Ytalking both in fere,
Adam herdè talking of men,
And nigh them thought they were,

Tho Gamèlyn undir the wild
Wodè lokid aright,
Full sevin score of yongè men
He saugh right wel ydight;

Allè were sattè at their mete
In a compas about;
"Adam," tho seidè Gamèlyn,
"Now havin ye no doute,

"For aftir balè comith bote,
Thorough Godd'is grete might;
Methinkith of mete and of drink
That I havin a sight."

Adam le Dispencer lokid
Tho undir wodè bowe,
And whan that he the metè saugh
Tho he was glad inowe;

For now he hopid unto God
For to havin his dele,
And he was ful sore alongid
Aftir a godè mele.

Anon as he seidè that word
Streight the maistir outlawe
Saugh Gamèlyn and Adam both
Undir the wodè shaw.

"Lo! youngè men," seide the maistir
Outlaw, "by the gode rode
I am aware of some gestis,
Pray God sendin us gode!

"Loke! yondir be two yongè men
That ben right wel adight,
A! peradventure they ben mo,
Whoso lokid aright.

"Ariseth up quick yongè men,
And fettè them to me,
For it is gode that we wetin
What meinè that they be."

Up thei stertin quik at that word,
Sevin fro the dinnere,
And they metin with Gamèlyn
And Adam Dispencere.

Whan that they werin ney to them
Than seidè thus that one,
"Yeldith up to us, yongè men
Your bowis and your flone."

Than seidè to them Gamèlyn,
That yongè was of elde,
"Ful mochil sorow mote they have
That unto you shall yelde:

"I curse woll nonè othir wight
But right mine ownè selve
Tho ye may fettin unto you
Fyve, and than be ye twelve."

They herdin by his wordis that
Gret might was in his arme,
And forthi there was non of them
That woldè don him harme,

But sedin unto Gamèlyn
Right mildily and still,
"Comith aforin our maistir,
And say to him thy will."

"Yongè man," seidè Gamèlyn,
"Upon your leautè
Tellith what man your maister is
Which that ye with ybe."

Tho allè they answerid him
At ones without lesing,
"Our maister is ycorounid
Of outlawis the king."

"Adam," seide yongè Gamèlyn,
"Go we in Christ'is name,
He may nothir metè nor drink
Y wernè us for shame;

"And if that he hendè, and be
Comin of gentil blode,
He woll geve us both mete and drink,
And doin us some goode."

"By Seintè Jame," seide Adam tho,
"What harme so that I grete
I will adventure me to the
Dorè that I had mete."

Tho Gamèlyn and Adam both
Y wentè forth in fere,
And they both gretè the maistir
Which that they fondè there.

Than seidè to them the maistir,
That king was of outlawes,
"What do ye seke, ye yongè men,
Undir the wodè shawes?"

Yong Gamèlyn answerid tho
The king with his corowne,
"He mustè nedis walk in wodes
That may not walk in toune.

"Sire, we walkè not here in wodes
Non harmè for to do,
But if paradventure we mete
A dere tó sherte thereto,

"As meinè that ben right hungry,
And mow no metè fynd,
And very hardè ben bestad
Undir the wodè lynd."

Of Gamèlyn'is wordis tho
The maister haddè routhe,
And seidè to them, "Ye shall have
Inow, heve God my trouthe."

Anon he baddè them sittin
Doune for to takè rest,
And baddè them etin and drink,
And that too of the best.

As they were eting and drinking
Of the best wele and fine,
Than seide the ton to the tothir
"This is yonge Gamèlyn."

Tho was the maister of outlawes
Into consaile nomin,
And told how it was Gamèlyn
That thither was comin.

Anon as he had herdin all
How that it was befall,
He madè Gamèlyn maistir
Undir him o're them all.

Within the third weke aftir this
To him comith tiding,
To the maistir of outlawis,
Which that now was their king,

That he shuldè ycomin home,
For that his pees was made;
And of that joyfull tiding he
Was wonderously glade.

Tho seide he to his yongè men,
The sothè for to tell,
"To me be comin tidingis
I may no lengir dwell.

Tho was yong Gamèlyn anon,
Withoutin tarying,
Made maistir of outlawis, and
Y coroundid their king:

Tho was yong Gamèlyn crounid
The king of the outlawes,
And among them walkid a while
Undir the wodè shawes.

The falsè knight his brothir now
Was shiregereve and sire,
And lete his brothir be endite
For hatè and for irè.

Tho werin all his bondmeinè
Sory and nothing glad
Whan that Gamèlyn their lordè
Wolves Hede was cryed and made,

And sentin outè his meinè
Where they mightin him fynd,
For to sekin yonge Gamèlyn
Undir the wodè lynd,

To tellè to him tidingis
The windè was ywent,
And allè his gode revied was,
And all his men yshent.

Whan that they haddè hym fonndin
On kneys they them sette,
And adoun with thir hodè and,
Gamèlyn their lord grette.

They seiden, "Sire, now wrathè not
You for the godè rode,
For we have brought you tidingis,
But they be nothing gode.

Now is thy brothir shiregereve,
And he hath the baillie,
And thereto hath enditid the,
And Wolves Hede doth the crie."

"Allas!" tho seidè Gamèlyn,
"That e're I was so slak,
That I ne hadd brokin his nek
Whan I his riggè brak.

"Goith, and gretith you welè
My housbondis an wif,
I wollè ben at the next shire,
So havè God my lif."

Gamèlyn camè well redy
Unto the nextè shire,
And there the false knight his brothir
Was bothè lord and sire.

Gamèlyn camè boldilich
Into the Motè Hall,
And put adoun his hode among
The lordilingis all.

"God savè you lordilingis!
Which that now herè be;
But as for the, brokeback shereve,
Evil motè thou the!

" Why hastè thou doin to me
That shame and villonie
For to latin enditè me,
And Wolf'is Hede me crie ?

Tho thought the falsè knight on him
For to have ben awreke,
And letè takin Gamèlyn;
Must he no more yspeke.

Mightè there be no mannir grace,
But Gamèlyn at last
Was into prisoun ycastin,
And fetterid full fast.

This Gamèlyn hath a brothir
That cleped was sir Ote:
As gode and hend a knight he was
As mightin gon on fote.

Right anon yede a messager
Unto that godè knight,
And toldin him altogethir
How Gamèlyn was-dight.

Anon as sir Ote herdin had
How Gamèlyn was dight,
He was right passing sory tho,
Ne he was nothing light:

And letè saddle him a stede,
And streit the weie he name,
And unto his tweie bretherin
Right sonè there he came.

" Sir," seidè this sir Ote unto
The shiregerevè tho,
" We ben but only thre brethren,
Shall we be nevir mo,

" And thus hast thou yprisounid
The bestè of us all;
Soche anothir brothir as thou
Evil mote him befall !"

" Sir Ote," seidè the false knight,
" Now letè be thy curs;
By God for these thi wordis he
Shallè farin the wors.

" Now to the king'is prisoun he
Is lefully ynome,
And ther he shall abidin
Untill the justice come."

" But parde," seidè sir Ote tho,
" Bettir it shall ybe
I biddin him unto maynprise
And that thou grauntè me,

" Untill the nextè sitting shall
Come of deliveraunce,
And than lete Gamèlyn fairely
Ystondin to his chaunce."

" Brothir, in soche a forewardè
I takin him to the,
And by thy fadir'is soulè,
That the begat and me,

" If that he be not right redy
Whan that the justice sitte,
Thou shaltè berin the judgement,
For all thy grettè wit."

" I grauntin it welè," seide sir Ote,
" That it shall so ybe;
Letith deliver him anon,
And takin him to me."

Tho Gamèlyn was delivered
To sir Ote his brothir,
And that night ydwellid in fere
The ton with the tothir.

On the morow seide Gamèlyn
Unto sir Ote the hend,
" My brothir," he seidè, " forsothe
I motè from the wend,

" To lokin how my yongè men
In wode ledin their lif,
And whethir that they liven now
In joie or elles in strif."

" Be God," tho answerid sir Ote,
" That is a coldè rede,
Now I se that allè the cark
Shall fallin on my hedè;

" For whan that the justice sittith,
And thou be not yfound
I shall anon be takin, and
In thy stedè be ybound."

" Brothir," tho seidè Gamèlyn,
" Dismayè the right noght,
For be seintè Jame in Galis,
That many man hath sought,

" If so that God Almighty hold
Me my lif and my wit
I wollè ben there right redy
Whan that the justice sit."

Than seide sir Ote to Gamèlyn,
God sheldè the fro shame!
Comith whan that thou seist tyme,
And bring us out of blame."

Now lithinith and lestinith,
And holdith you right still,
And ye shullè herin how that
Gamèlyn had his will.

Anon Gamèlyn wentin his
Way undir the wode rise,
And he yfondè there playing
His yongè men of prise.

Tho was this yongè Gamèlyn
In herte right glad inow
Whan that he fond his yongè men
Undir the wodè bow.

Gamèlyn and his yongè men
Ytalkidin in fere,
And they all haddè right gode game
Their maistir for to here.

His men told him of aventures
Which that they had yfound,
And Gamèlyn told them agen
How he was fast ybound.

All the while that Gamèlyn was
Outlaw had he no curs;
There ne was no man that for him
Yferid ought the wors,

But abbotis and priouris,
And monkis, and chanon;
In them forsothe ne laft he noght
Whan ere he might them nom.

While Gamèlyn and his yong men
Ymadè mirthis ryve,
The falsè knight his own brothir,
Evil motè he thryve!

For all this while he waft about,
Both one day and othir,
On purpose for to hire the quest
To hangin his brothir.

Gamèlyn stodin on a day,
And round him he beheld
The wild wodis and the shawis
Within the wildè feld;

He thoughtin upon his brothir,
How that he him behete
That he ywoldin be redy
Whan that the justice sete;

He thoughtin welè that he wolde,
Withoutin more delay,
Ycomin afore the justice
For to kepin his day;

And seidè to his yongè men,
"Now dightith you full yare,
For whan that the justice sittith
We mote nedis be there;

"For I am undir a borow
Until that I comin,
And my brothir instede of me
To prison shal be nomin."

"Be seint Jame," seide his yongè men,
"And that thou rede thereto,
Ordeineth how it shallè be,
And it shall so be do."

While Gamèlyn was ycoming
There that the justice satt
The falsè knight his own brothir
Forgattin he not that,

To hire the meinè on his quest
To hangin his brothir,
And though thei haddè not that oon
He wolde han that othir.

Tho comith yongè Gamèlyn
From undir the wode rise.
And he broughtin along with him
His yongè men of prise.

"I se wele," seidè Gamèlyn,
"The justice is ysette;
Go thou aforn us, Adam, and
Lokè how that it spette."

Adam wentè into the hall,
And lokid all about,
And he saugh there ystondè tho
Lordingis grette and stout,

And sir Ote, Gamèlyn'is brothir,
Yferterid wele fast;
Tho wentin Adam out of Hall
As he werin agast.

Adam seidè to Gamèlyn,
And to his felawes all,
"Sir Ote ystondith fetterid
Within the Motè Hall."

Seide Gamèlyn, "If God geve us
Gracè wel for to do
He shallin it abegge anon
That him broughtin thereto."

Then seidin Adam Dispencer,
That lokkis haddin hore,
"Christ'is curse motè he havin
That boundin him so sore.

"And if thou wiltè Gamèlyn,
Doin aftir my rede,
There is none in the hallè that
Shall bere aweie his hede."

"Adam," tho seidè Gamèlyn,
"We wollè not do so;
We woll sle only the giltif,
And lat the othir go.

"I will my selve into the hall,
And hire the justice speke,
And on all them that ben giltif
I wollè ben awreke.

"Lat non escapin at the dore;
Take, yongè meinè, yeme,
For I wollè ben the justice
This day domis to deme.

"Pray God spedè me this ilk dai
At this my newè werke!
And Adam, comith thou with me,
For thou shalt be my clerke."

His meinè all answerid him,
And bad hym don his best,
"And if thou to us havè nede
Thou shalt fyndin us prest:

"For we wollè stondin with the
Whilis that we may dure,
And but that we werkin manly
Payith us then no hure."

"Yongè men," seidè Gamèlyn,
"So mote I welè y the,
As ye a right trusty maistir
Shullè findin of me."

And rightè thereat the justice
Ysattin in the halle,
In wentè tho yong Gamèlyn
Boldly amonges them all.

Gamèlyn letè unfettir
His brothir out of bend;
Than seidè to him sir Otis,
His brothir that was hende,

"Thou haddist almost, Gamèlyn,
Dwellid away to long,
For the questè is ygon out
On me that I shulde honge."

"Brothir," tho seidè Gamèlyn,
"God gevè me gode rest,
This gode day they shull ben hongid
That ben upon the quest;

"And thereto the justice bothè,
That is the juggè man,
And eke the sheriff our brothir,
For through him it began."

Than seidè yongè Gamèlyn
Unto the false justice,
"Now is thi powir at an end,
You must nedis arise.

"Thou hast ygevin domis that
Ben evil allè dight;
I wollè settin in thi sete,
And dressin them aright."

But the justice sattin stillè,
And roosè not anon,
And Gamèlyn with his swerdè
Clevid his chekè bone.

Yonge Gamèlyn toke him in his
Armis, and no more spak,
But threw him ovir the barrè,
And his armè to brak.

Durst no one unto Gamèlyn
Sayè nothing but gode,
For fere of the gret company
That withoutin ystode.

Gamèlyn sattè him adoun
In the justicès stede,
(Herkenith now of the bourdè
That Gamelyn tho dede)

And sir Otè by him he satte,
And Adam at his fete.
And whan Gamèlyn the yong was
Satte in the justice sete,

He letè fettè the justice
And his falsè brothir,
And letè them come to the barre
The ton with that othir.

Whan Gamèlyn had thus ydone
Haddin he tho no rest
Till that he had enquerid who
Werin upon the quest.

For to demin his brothir dere,
Sir Ote, for to be honge,
Er that he wistè which they were
It thoughtè him full longe.

But al so sone as Gamèlyn
Wistè where that thei were
He diddè them euerichone
Fetterin fast in fere,

And bringè them unto the barre,
And settè them in vewe:
"By my faith," seidè the justice,
"The sheriff is a shrewe,"

Than seidè yongè Gamèlyn
Unto the false justice,
"Thou hastè gevè thy domis
Al of the worst assise;

"And the twelvè sisouris that
Werin of the inquest
They shulle ben hongid this day,
So God geve me gode rest."

Than seide the sheriff pitously
To yongè Gamèlyn,
"My lord, I criè the mercie,
Brothir artè thou myn."

"Therefore," seidè yonge Gamèlyn,
"Havè you Crist's curse,
For if thou werin maistir yet
Shuldin I farè worse."

But for to makè short my tale,
And not to tary longe,
He ordeynid him there a quest
Of his own men so strong.

The false justice and the sheriff
Bothè were hongid hie,
To weyvin there with the ropis,
And with the windè drie.

And als the twelvè sisouris,
Sorow havè that rekk,
Allè they werin yhongid
Full fastè by the nekk.

Thus endid hath the falsè knight
With all his trecherie,
That evir haddè lad his life
In falseness and folie.

He was hongid up by the nek,
And nought by the purse;
That was the mede that he had hadde
From his fadir'is curse.

Sir Ote was the eldist tho,
And Gamèlyn was yonge,
They wentin with their frendis, and
Passidin to the king

They madin pece with the kingè
Of the bestè assise;
The king lovid Sir Ote welè,
And made him a justice.

Aftir the king made Gamèlyn,
Bothè in est and west,
The chefe justice and rídere of
Allè his fre forest.

Alle his wight yongè men the king
Forgafin them their gilt,
And sithen in gode office the king
Hath allè them ypilt.

Thus has wan yongè Gamèlyn
His londè and his lede,
And wrake of him his enemies,
And quytè them their mede.

And sir Otè, his brothir dere,
Ymade him hath his heir,
And sithen weddid Gamèlyn
A wife both gode and faire.

They lividin togidir wele
Whilis that Christè wolde,
And sithen that was Gamèlyn
Ygravin undir molde;

And so shallè we allè here;
May there no man yfle
God bringin us unto the joie
That evir shull ybe!

THUS ENDITH THE LEGEND OF GAMELYN, CALLED THE COKE'S TALE.

HERE BEGINNETH

THE PLOWMAN'S PROLOGUE.

The Plowman plucked up his plowe
Whan midsomer mone was comen in,
And saied his bestes should ete inowe,
And lige in grasse up to the chin:
Thei ben feble both oxe and cowe,
Of 'hem n'is left but bone and skinne;
He shoke of shere, and coulter' off drowe,
And honged his harnis on a pinne.

He toke his tabarde and staffe eke,
And on his hedde he set his hat,
And saied he would Sainct Thomas seke,
On pilgrimage he goth forth plat;
In scrippe he bare bothe bred lekes;
He was folswonke and all forswat:
Men might have sene through both his chekes,
And every wang tothe where it sat.

Our Hoste beheldè well all about,
And sawe this man was sunne ibrent;
He knewe well by his singid snout,
And by his clothes, that were to rent,
He was a man wont walke about,
He n'as not aye in cloister pent,
Ne couthe religiousliche lout,
And therefore was he full ill shent.

Our Hoste him axed, "What man art thou?"
"Sire Hoste," (quod he) "I am an hine,
For I am wont to go to plow,
And erne my mete yet that I dine:
To swette and swinke I make avowe,
My wife and babes therewith to finde,
And servin God and I wist how,
But we lende men yben full blinde:

"For clerkes saie we shullin be fain
For ther livelod to swette and swinke,
And thei right nought us give again
Neither to ete ne yet to drinke;
Thei mow by lawe, as that thei sain,
Us curse and dampne to Hell'is brinke;
And thus thei puttin us to pain
With candlis quient and bell'is clinke.

"Thei make us thrallis at their lust,
And sain we mowe not els be saved;
Thei have the corne and we the dust;
Who gainsayes then they saye he raved."
"What, man!" (quod our Hosté) "canst thou
Come nere and tell some holy thing." [preche?
"Sir," quod he, "I herd onis teche
A preest in pulpit gode preching."

"Saie on" quod he, "I the beseeche."
"Sir, I am redy at your bidding.
I pray that no man me reproche
While that I am my tale telling."

THUS ENDETH THE PROLOGUE.

HERE FOLLOWETH

THE FIRST PART OF THE TALE[1].

A full sterne strief is stirrid newe,
In many stedis in a stounde,
Of sondry sedis that ben sewe;
It semith that some ben unsounde,
For some be grete growin on grounde,
Some ben souble, simple and small:
Whether of 'hem is falsir founde
The falsir foule mote him bifall.

That one side is that I of tell
Popis, cardinals, and prelates,
Parsons, monkis, and freris fell,
Priours, abbotes, of grete estates;
Of Heven and Hell thei kepe the yates,
And Peter's successours ben all,
And this is demid by old dates;
But falshed foule mote it befall.

The othir side ben pore and pale,
And peple yput out of prese,
And semin caitiffes sore a cale,
And er in one without encrese
Iclepid Lollers and Loudlese;
Who totheth on 'hem thei ben untall;
Thei ben arayid all for pece,
But falshed foule mote it befall

Many a countrey haue I sought
To knowe the falsir of these two,
But aye my travaile was for nought
All so ferre as I have ygo,
But as I wandrid in a wro,
Within a wode beside a wall,
Two foulis sawe I sitting tho,
The falsir foule mote him befall.

[1] A complaint against the pride and covetousness of the clergy, made no doubt by Chaucer, says the editor of Chaucer's works printed for *Ad. Islip.* at *London*, *A. D.* 1602. *Urry.*

That one did plete on the pope's side,
A griffon of a grimme stature;
A pellicane withoutin pride
To these Lollers ylaied his lure;
He mused his mattir in mesure
To counsaile, Christ ay gan he call;
The Griffon shewed as sharpe as fire,
But falshed foule mote it befall.

The Pellicane began to preche
Bothe of mercie and of mekenesse,
And said that Christ so gan us teche,
And meke and merciable gan blesse;
The' Evangely berith witnesse
A lambe he likeneth Christ ovre' all,
In tokening that he mekist was
Sith pride was out of Hevin fall.

And so should every cristened be,
Priestis and Peter's successours,
Beth lowliche and of low degre,
And usin none yerthly honours,
Ne croune ne curious covertours,
Ne pilloure ne other proude pall,
Ne to cofrin up grete tresours,
For falshed foule mote it befall.

Priestis should for no cattill plede,
But chasten 'hem in charite,
Ne to no battaile should men lede
For inhaunsing ther own degre,
Nat willin sittinges in hie se,
No soverainte in hous ne hall,
Worldly worship defie and fle;
Who willeth highnes foule shall fall.

Alas! who maie soche sainctis call
That wilnith welde yerthly honour?
Lowe as Lucifere soche shall fall,
In balefull blacknesse build their boure
That eggith peple to erroure,
And makith them unto 'hem thrall;
To Crist I holde soche one traitour;
Lowe as Lucifer soche shall fall,

That willith to be kingis peres,
And higher than the emperour,
And some that werin but pore freres
Now wollin waxe a warriour;
God ne is not ther governour
That holdith none his permagall,
While cove'tise is ther consailour;
All soche falshede mote nedis fall,

That hie on horse willith to ride
In glitterande golde of grete arraie,
Painted and portrid all in pride,
No common knight maie go so gaie,
Chaunge of clothing every daie,
With goldin girdils grete and small,
As boistous as is bere at baie;
All soche falshede mote nedis fall.

With pride punishith thei the pore,
And some one thei sustain with sale,
Of holie churche makith an hore,
And fill ther wombe with wine and ale;
With money fille thei many a male,
And chaffrin churchis when thei fall,
And tèlle the peple a leude tale;
Soche false faitours foule 'hem befall.

Thei fede of many manir metes,
With song and solas sitting iong,
And filleth ther wombe, and faste fretes,
And from the mete unto the gong,
And aftir mete with harpe and song,
And eche man mote 'hem lordis call,
And hote spicis evir emong;
Soche false faitours foule 'hem befall.

Miters thei werin mo than two
Iperlid as the quen'is bedde,
A staffe of golde, and pirrie lo!
As hevie as' it were made of ledde;
With clothe of gold bothe new and redde,
With glitterande gold as grene as gall,
By dome thei darfipne men to be dedde;
All soche faitours foule 'hem befall.

And Crist'is peple proudly curse
With brode boke and braying bell,
And to put pennies in ther purse
Thei woll sell bothe Hevin and Hell:
In ther sentence and thou wilt dwell
Thei willin gesse in ther gaie hall,
And though the soth thou of 'hem tell
In the grete cursing shalt thou fall.

That is yblessid that thei blesse,
And cursid that thei cursin woll,
And thus the peple thei oppresse,
And have ther lordshippis at full:
And many be merchauntes of woll,
And to purs pennies woll come thrall,
The pore peple thei al to pull!
Such false faitours foule 'hem befall,

Lordis also mote to 'hem loute,
Obeysaunt to ther brode blessing,
Thei ridin with ther royal route
On a coursir as' it were a king,
With sadle of golde glittering,
With curious harneis quaintly crallit,
Stiroppis gaie of golde mastling;
All suche falshed foule may befal it.

Christes ministers clepid thei bene,
And rulin al in robberie,
But Antichriste thei servin clene,
Attirid al in tirannie,
Witnesse of John his prophecie!
Antichriste is ther admirall,
Tiffelers attired in trecherie;
Al suche faitours foule 'hem befall.

Who saith that some of 'hem may sinne
He shal be domid to be ded;
Some of 'hem wollin gladly winne
Al ayenst that which God forbed.
Al holiest they clepe ther hed,
That of ther rule is full regall;
Alas that evir thei ete bred!
For al such falshed wol foule fall.

Ther hed covitith al honour,
To be worshipped in worde and dede,
Kingis mote to him knele and coure,
To the' apostles that Christ forbede:
To popis hoste such take more hede
Than to kepe Christes commaundement,
Of gold and silver ben ther wede,
Thei holde him holy omnipotent.

He ordaineth by his ordinaunce
To parishe priestis a powere,
To' anothir a gretir avaunce,
A greatir point to his mistere;
But for he' is highist in erth here
To him reserveth he many' a point,
But unto Christ, that hath no pere,
Reservith he no pin no joynt.

So semith he abovin all,
And Christ abovin him nothinge,
Whan that he sittith in his stall
Dampnith and savith as him thinke;
Suche pride tofore hie God doth stinke:
An angel bad John to' him not knele,
Only to God to do his bowinge;
Soche worship-willers mote ill fele.

Thei ne clepe Christ but *Sanctus Deus*,
And clepe their hed *Sanctissimus*;
All they that suche a secte sewis
I trowe thei taken 'hem amisse:
In erth here they havin ther blisse,
Ther hie mastir is Beliall;
Christ his pore peple from 'hem wisse,
For al suche false will foule befall.

They mowin both ybinde and lose,
And all is for ther holy life;
To save or dampne they mowen chose;
Betwene 'hem now is a grete strife;
Many' a man is killed with a knife
To wete with havin lordship shall;
For such Christ suffrid woundis five,
For all suche falshed will foule fall.

Christ said, *Qui gladio percutit*,
With swerde sorely he shall die;
He bad his priestis pece and grith,
And bad 'hem not drede for to dje,
And bad hem be both simple' and slie,
And carkè not for no cattell,
And truste on God that sittith on hie,
For all false shal full foule befall.

These wollin makè men to swere
Ayenst Christ'is commaundiment,
And Christ'is members al to tere,
On rode as he were new yrent:
Suche lawes thei maken by assent,
Eche on it trowith as a ball,
And thus the pore be fully shent,
But falshed foule it shulle befall.

Ne usin thei no simonie,
But selle churchis and priories,
Ne they usin to none envie,
But cursin al 'hem contraries,
And hirith men by daies and yeres
With strength to hold 'hem in ther stall,
And culle all ther advarsaries,
Therfore falshed foule thou them fall.

With purse they purchase personage,
With purse thei payin 'hem to plede,
And men of warre thei wollin wage
To bring ther enemies to ded,
And lordis livis they wol lede,
And muchil take, and give but small,
But he' it so get from it shul shede,
And make suche false right foule yfall.

They halowe nothing but for hire,
Ne churche, ne font, ne vestiment,
And make orders in every shire,
But pristis pay for the parchment;
Of riatours they taken rent,
Therwith they smere the shep'is skall,
For many churches ben suspent;
All suche falshed foule it befall.

Some livith not in lecherie,
But haunte wenchis, widows, and wives,
And punish the pore for putre,
Themselfe it useth al ther lives;
And but a man to them him shrives
To Hevin come he nevir shall,
He shall be cursed as be cattives;
To Hel thei saine that he shal fall.

Ther was more mercy' in Maximine,
And Nero, that never was gode,
Than there is now in some of them
Whan he hath on his furrid hode;
They folowe Christ that shed his blode
To Heven, as bucket to the wall;
Suche wrechis yben worse than wode,
And al suche faitours foule 'hem fall.

They give ther almis to the riche,
To mainteynours and men of lawe,
For to lordis they wol be liche,
And harlots sonne not worthe an hawe;
Sothfastnesse alle suche han slawe;
They kembe ther crockettes with cristall,
And drede of God they have doune drawe;
Al suche faitours foule 'hem befall.

They make parsons for the pennie,
And canons and their cardinals;
Unnethe amongst 'hem al is any
That ne hath glosed the gospel fals,
For Christ made ner no cathedrals,
Ne with him was no cardinall
With a redde hatte, as use minstrals;
But falshed foule mote it befall.

Ther tithing and ther offring bothe
They clemith by possession,
Ne thereof n'il they none forgo,
But robbin men as a raunsome:
The tithing of *turpe lucrum*
With these maisters is veniall;
Tithinge of bribry and larson
Will make falshed full foule to fall.

They takin to ferme ther sompnours
To harme the peple what they may,
To pardoners and false faitours
Thei sell ther soles I dare well say,
And all to holdin gret arraie,
To multiplie 'hem more mettall,
They drede ful litel dom'is day,
Whan all suche falshed shal foule fall.

Suche harlottes shul men disclaunder,
For that they shullin make them gre,
And ben as proud as Alexander,
And sain to the pore wo be ye!
By yere eche priest shal paie his fe
For to encrese his lemmans call;
Suche herdis shul wel ivil the,
And al suche false shul foule befall.

And if a man be falsely famed,
And wol ymake purgacioun,
Than wol the' officers be agramed,
And assign him fro toun to toun;
So nede he must payin raunsome,
Though he be clene as is christall,
And than have an absolution;
But al suche false shal foule befall.

Though he be giltie of the dede,
And that he maie the money paie,
Al the while his purse wol yblede
He may use it fro day to day.
The bishopes officers gone gay,
And this game they use ovir all,
The pore to pil is al their pray;
But al suche false shul foule befall.

Alas! God ordained no such lawe,
Ne no suche crafte of covetise,
But he forbad it by his lawe;
Suche rulers mowen of God agrise,
For al his rulis ben rightwise:
These newe pointis ben pure papall,
And Godd'is lawe they all dispisce,
And al suche faitours shul foule fall.

They saine that Peter had the key
Of Heven and Hel, to have and holde;
I trowe Peter toke no money
For no sinnis that he ysolde:
Suche successours yben to bolde,
In winning all ther witte they wral,
Ther conscience is waxin colde,
And al such faitours foul 'hem fall.

Peter was ner so grete a fole,
To leve his key with suche a lorell,
Or take suche cursid soc or tole,
He was advisid nothing well;
I trowe they have the key of Hell,
Their maistir is of that marshall,
For there thei dressin 'hem to dwell,
And with false Lucifer to fall.

Thei ben as proude as Lucifarre,
As angry and as envious;
From a gode faith thei ben ful farre;
In covetise thei ben curious;
To catche catil as covitous
As hounde that for hungre woll yall,
Ungodly and ungracious;
And nedely suche false shal foule fall.

The Pope, and he were Peter's heire,
Me thinke he errith in this case,
Whan choice of bishop's in dispaire
To chosin 'hem in divers place,
A lorde shal write to him for grace,
For his clerke anone pray he shall,
So shal he spedin his purchase;
And al suche false foule 'hem befall.

Although he can ne manir gode
A lord'is prayir shal be spedde,
Though he be wilde of wil or wode,
Nat understanding what men redde,
A leude boistir, that God forbedde,
As gode a bishoppe' is my horse Ball;
Suche a pope is full foule bestede,
And at the laste wol foule yfall.

He makith priestes for erthly thanke,
And not at all for Christ'is sake;
Suche that yben ful fat and ranke,
To soule is hele none hede they take;
Al is wel done what er they make,
For they shal answere ones for all;
For world'is thank such worch and wake,
And al suche false shal foule befall.

Suche that can nat ysay ther crede
With prayer shall be made prelates,
Nothir can thei the gospell rede,
Suche shul now weldin hie estates:
The hie godes frendship 'hem makes,
Thei totith on ther summe totall;
Suche bere the keyes of Hell'is yates,
And all suche false shal foule befall.

Thei forsakin for Christ'is love
Travaile, and hungre, thurste, and colde;
They ben ordrid or al above
Out of youthed til they ben olde;
By the dore they go nat to the folde,
To helpe ther shepe they nought traval,
For hirid men al suche I holde,
And al suche false foule 'hem befall.

For Christ our king thei wol forsake,
And know him nought for his poverte,
For Christ'is love they wol awake,
And drinke piement al aperte:
Of God they seme nothing aferde,
As lusty live as Lamiat,
And drive ther shepe into desert;
Al suche false faitours shul foule fal.

Christ yhad twelve apostles here,
Nowe say they ther may be but one
That may not erre in no manere,
Who leve not this ben lost echone:
Peter errid, so did not Joan;
Why is he cleped the principall?
Christe cleped him Peter, not the stone;
Al false faitours foule 'hem befal.

Why cursin they the croisery
Christ'is christian creturis?
For bytwene them is now envy
To be enhaunsid in honours;
Christin livers with ther labours,
For they levin on no mortal,
Ben do to deth with dishonours,
And al suche false foule 'hem befal.

What knoweth a tilloure at the plowe
The pop'is name, and what he hate?
His crede suffiseth to' him mowe,
And knowith a cardi'nal by his hatte.
Rough is the pore unrightly latte,
That knowith Christ his God royal;
Suche matters be not worth a gnatte,
But suche false faitours foule 'hem fal.

A king shal knele and kisse his showe,
Christ let a sinful kisse his fete,
Me thinke he holdeth him bie inowe;
So Lucifer did, that hie set:
Suche one me thinke himselfe foryet,
Or to the trouth he was nat cal:
Christe that suffirid woundis wete,
Shall make all suche falshed foule fall.

They layith out ther largè nettes
For to takin silvir and golde,
Thei fillin coffers, and sackes fettes
Ther as they soulis catchin sholde;
Ther servauntes be to them unbolde;
But they can doublin ther rentall;
To bigge 'hem castles bigge 'hem holde;
And al suche false foule 'hem befall.

HERE ENDETH THE FIRST PARTE OF THIS TALE, AND HEREAFTER FOLOWETH THE SECONDE PARTE.

To accorde what this wordè fall
No more English ne can I finde,
Shewing anothir now I shall,
For I have moche to saye behinde,
How priestis han the peple pinde,
As curteis Christe yhath me kinde,
And put this matter in my minde,
To make this manir men amende.

Shortely to shende 'hem, and shewe nowe
How wrongfully they werche and walke,
Of hie God nothing tell, ne howe,
But in Goddes worde tell many a balke,
In harnis holde 'hem and in halke,
And prechen' of tithis and offrende,
And untruely of the gospel talke;
For his mercy God it amende!

What els is Antichriste to saie
But even Christ'is adversarie?
Suche hath now ben many a daie
To Christ'is bidding ful contrarie,
That from the trouthè clene ywarry;
Out of the way they ben ywende,
And Christ'is peple untruely cary;
God for his pitie it amende!

They live contrary to Christes life,
In hie pride against mekènesse,
Against suffraunce they usin strife,
And angre ayenst sobrenesse,
Ayenist wisedom wilfulnesse;
To Christ'is talis litil tende,
Against mesure outrigiousnesse;
But whan God wol it may amende.

Lordely life ayenst lowlinesse,
And demin al without mercy,
And covetise ayenste largesse,
Ayenist trouthè trechery,
And ayeinst almesse envy;
Ayenist Christ they comprehende;
For chastite mainteine leche'ry;
God for his gracè this amende!

Against penaunce thei use delightes,
Ayenst suffraunce strong defence,
Ayenst God they usin ill rightes,
Ayenist pitie punishmentes,
Open evil ayenst continence;
Ther wickid winning worse dispende,
Sobirnesse sette in to dispence;
God for his godenesse it amende!

Why cleimin they holy' his powere,
And wranglin ayenst al his hestes?
His living folowe thei nought here,
But living worse than witlesse bestes;
Of fishe and fleshe they lovin festes;
As lordis they ben brode ikende;
Of Godd'is pore thei hatin gestes;
God for his mercy this amende!

With Dives such shall have ther dome,
That saine that they be Christ'is frendes,
And do nothing as they should done,
Al suche ben falsir than ben fendes:
On the peple they ley suche bendes
As God in erth they han offende;
Succour for such Christe now send us,
And for his mercy this amende!

A token' of Antichrist they be;
His careckes ben now wide iknowe,
Receved to preche shal no man be
Without tokin of him I trowe:
Eche Christin priest to prechin owe,
From God above thei ben ysende
Goddes word to al folke for to showe,
And sinful man for to amendè,

Christ sont the porè for to preche,
The royal riche he did not so,
Now dare no pore the peple teche,
For Antichrist is all ther foe;
Among the peple he mote go,
He hath biddin al suche suspende,
Some hath he hent, and thinketh yet mo;
But al this God may wel amende.

Al tho that han the worlde forsake
And livin lowly, as God badde,
Into ther prison shulle be take,
Betin and boundin, and forth ladde:
Hereof I rede no man be dradde,
Christ said that his should be yshende;
Eche man ought hereof to be gladde,
For God ful wel it wol amende.

They take on 'hem royall power,
And say they havin swerdis two,
One curse to Hel, one sle men here:
At his taking Christ had no mo,
Yet Peter had but one of tho,
And Christ to him smite gan defende,
And into the' sheth badde put it tho;
And al suche mischeves God amende!

Christ bad Peter to kepe his shepe,
And with his sworde forbade 'hem smite;
Swerde is no tole with shepe to kepe,
But to shepherdes that shepe wol bite;
Me thinke suche shepherdes ben to wite
Who' ayen ther shepe with swerde contende;
They drive ther shepe with grete despite;
But al this God may well amende.

Peter's successoures be thei nought
Whom Christ ymade his chefe pastoure;
A swerde no shepherde usin ought.
But he would sle as a bochour:
Who so were Peter's successoure
Should bere his shepe til his baeke bende,
And shadowe 'hem from every shoure;
And al this God may wel amende.

Successours to Peter ben these
In that, that Peter Christe forsoke,
That levir had God's love to lese
Than shepherde had to lese his hoke;
He culleth the shepe as doth the coke;
Of 'em takin they woll untrende,
And falsely glose the Gospell boke;
God for his mercy them amende!

Whan Christ had take Peter the kay
Christ saide he must ydie for man;
That Peter to Christ gan withsay,
Christ bad him "Go behinde, Sathan:"
Suche counsailours many' of these han,
For world'is wele God to offende;
Peter's successours they ben than,
But al suche God may wel amende.

For Sathan is to say no more
But he that countrary to Christ is,
In this they lernin Peter's lore,
They sewin him whan he did misse;
They folowe him forsoth in this
That Christ would Peter reprehende,
But nat that longith to' hevin blisse;
God for his mercie 'hem amende!

Thei none apostle sewen, in case
Of ought that I can understonde,
But him that betraieth Christ, Judas,
That bare the purse in every londe,
And al that he might sette on honde
He hidde and stale, and it mispende:
His rule these traitours han in honde;
Almighty God all suche amende!

And at the last his lorde gan tray
Cursidly through false covetise,
So would these traine him for money
And they ywistin in what wise;
They be sikre' of the fele ensise.
From all sothnesse they ben yfrende,
And covetise chaunge with quentise;
Almighty God al suche amende!

Were Christ upon erth, here efte sone,
These wouldin dampnè him to die;
All his hestis they han fordone,
And saine his sawes ben heresie;
Ayenst his commaundementes they crie,
And dampnin all his to be brende,
For thei ne like suche losengrie;
God Almighty all suche amende!

These han more might in Englande here
Than hath the king and all his lawe,
They han purchasid suche powere
To takin 'hem whom list not knawe,
And say that heresie' is ther sawe,
And so to prison wol 'hem sende;
It was not so by eldir dawe;
God for his mercy it amende!

The king'is lawe wol no man deme
Angerliche withoutin answere,
But if any man these misqueme
He shall be baightid as a bere,
And yet wel worse they wol him tere,
And in prison wollin him pende
In ginis, and in othir gere;
Whan that God woll it may amende.

The king ne taxith nat his men
But by assent of the commi'nalte,
But these eche yere wol raunsom 'hem
Maistirfully, more than dothe he:
Ther selis by yere bettir be
Than is the king'is in extende,
Ther officers han gretir fe;
But alle this mischefe God amende!

Who so wol prove a testament
That is nat al worth tonnè pounde,
He shal paye for the parchèment
The thirde of the money all rounde;
Thus the pore peple is ransounde,
They say suche parte t'em should apende,
There as they gripen' it goeth to grounde;
God for his mercy it amende!

A simple fornication
Twenty shillingis he shall pay,
And than have absolucion
And al the yere use it he may:
Thus thei lettin 'hem go astray;
Thei recke nat though the soule be brende;
These kepin evill Peter's kay;
And al suche shepherdes God amende!

Wondir is that the parliamente,
And all the lordis of this londe,
Here to takin so lite entente
To helpe the peple' out of their honde,
For thei ben hardir in ther honde,
Worse bete, and cruellir ybrende,
Than to the king is understand;
God him helpe this for to amende!

What bishoppes, what religions,
Han in this lande as muche lay fe,
Lordeshippis and possessions,
More than lordis it semith me;
That makith 'hem lese charite:
They mowin not to God attende,
In erth thei have so highe degre;
God for his mercy it amende!

The Empe'rour yafe the Pope somtime
So highè lordeship him about,
That at the last the sely kime
The proudè Pope yput him out,
So of this relme is in grete dout;
But, Lordes, beware, and them defende,
For nowe these folke be wondir stoute;
The king and lords now this amende.

THUS ENDETH THE SECONDE PARTE OF THIS TALE, AND HEREAFTER FOLLOWETH THE THIRDE.

Moysès lawe forbode it tho
That prestis should no lordshippes welde,
Christ'is gospell biddith also
That they should no lordshippis helde;
Christes apostels were ner so bolde,
No suche lordshippes to 'hem embrace,
But sklere ther shepe and kepe ther folde;
May God amendè 'hem for his grace!

For thei ne ben but counterfete,
Men may yknow 'hem by ther fruite,
Ther gretenesse maketh 'hem God foryete,
And take his mekenesse in despite;
And thei were pore and had but lite
Thei n'old nat demen' aftir the face,
Norishe ther shepe, and 'hem nat bite;
May God amende 'hem for his grace!

GRIFFON.

What canst thou preche ayenst chanons
That men yclepin Seculere?

PELLICAN.

Thei ben curates of many tounes,
On yerth they havin grete powere,
They have grete prebendis and dere,
Some two or thre, and some have mo,
A parsonage to ben playing fere,
And yet thei serve the king also,

And let to-ferme all that fare
To whom that wol moste give therfore,
Some wollin spende, and some woll spare,
And some wol laye it up in store;
A cure of soule they care not fore,
So that they mowin money take;
Whethir ther soules be wonne or lore
Ther profites they woll not forsake.

They have a gedering procuratour,
That can the pore peple enplede,
And roble 'hem as a ravinour,
And to his lorde the mony lede,
And catche of quicke and eke of dede,
And richin him and his lorde eke,
And to robbe the pore give gode rede
Of olde and yonge, of hole and sicke.

Therwith they purchase 'hem lay fe
In londe, there as 'hem likith best,
And buildin brode as a cite
Both in the est and in the west;
To purchase thus they ben ful prest,
But on the pore they woll nought spende,
Ne no gode give to Godd'is gest,
Ne' sende him some that all hath sende.

By ther service soche wollin live,
And trust that othir to tresure;
Though all ther parishe die unshrive
Thei woll nat givin a rose floure;
Ther life should be as a mirrour
Both to lerid and leude also,
And teche the folke ther lele labour;
Soche maister men ben all misgo.

Some of 'hem yben full harde nigges,
And some of 'hem ben proude and gaie,
Some spendin ther gode upon gigges,
And findin 'hem of grete araie.
Alas! what thinke these men to saie
That thus dispendin Godd'is gode?
At the grete dredefull dom'is daie
Soche wretchis shall be worse than wode.

Some ther churchis nevir ne sie,
Ne ner o penie thidir sende;
Though that the pore for hungir die,
O penie' on 'hem will thei not spende:
Have thei receiving of the rente
Thei recke ner of the remenaunt;
Alas! the devill hath clene 'hem blente;
Soche one is Sathanes sojournaunt.

And use horedome and harlottrie,
And covetise, and pompe, and pride,
And slothe, and wrathe, and eke envie,
And sewin sinne by every side;
Alas! where thinkin soche t' abide?
How woll thei ther accomptis yeld?
From hie God thei mowe 'hem not hide;
Soche willers witte' is not worth a nelde.

Thei ben so rotid in richesse
That Christ'is povert is foryet;
Yservid with so many messe
Hem thinke that manna is no mete:
All is gode that thei mowin gete;
Thei wene to livin evirmore;
But whan that God at dome is sete
Soche tresour is a feble store.

Unnethis mote thei matins saie
For counting and for courtholding,
And yet he jangilith as jaie,
And understont himself nothing;
He woll yserve bothe erle and king
For his finding and for his fe,
And hide his tithing and offring;
This is a feble charite.

Othir thei ben proude or cove'tous,
Or elles thei ben hard or hungrie,
Or thei ben libe'rall or lecherous,
Or els medlers with marchandrie,
Mainteiners of men with maistrie,
Or stewardes, countours, or pledours,
And serve God in ypocrisie;
Soche priestis ben Christes false traitours.

Thei ben false, thei ben vengeable,
And begile men in Christ'is name;
Thei ben unstedfast and unstable;
To traie ther Lorde 'hem thinke no shame;
To servin God thei ben full lame;
Godd'is thevis, and falsely stele,
And falsely Godd'is worde defame;
In winning is ther world'is wele.

Antichrist these priestis serve all,
I praie the who maie sayin Naie?
With Antichrist soche shullin fall,
Thei folowen him in dede and faie;
Thei servin him in riche araie,
To servin Christ soche falsely fain;
Why at the dredfull dom'is daie
Shull thei not folowe him to pain?

That knowen 'hem self that thei doen ill
Ayenst Christ'is commaundement,
And amende 'hem ner ne will,
But serve Sathan by one assent.
Who sayith sothe he shall be shent,
Or speketh ayenst ther false living,
Who so well livith shall be brent,
For soche ben gretir than the king.

Popis, bishops, and cardinals,
Chanons, and parsons, and vicare,
In Goddes service I trowe ben fals
That sacramentis sellin here,
And ben as proude as Lucifere:
Eche man loke whethir that I lie;
Who so spekith ayenst ther powere
It shall be holdin heresie.

Lokith how many orders take
Onely of Christ for his service,
That the world'is godis forsake;
Who so take ordirs othir wise
I trowe that thei shall sore agrise,
For all the glose that thei conne,
All ne sewin not this assise;
In evill time thei thus begonne.

Loke how many emong hem all
Ne holdin not this hie waie
With Antichrist thei shullin fall,
For that thei wollin God betraie:
God amende 'hem, that best ymaie!
For many men thei makin shende;
Thei wetin well the sothe I saie,
But the devill hath foule 'hem blende.

Som of 'hem on ther churchis dwell
Apparailled porely; proude of porte;
The seven sacramentes thei doen sell;
In cattell catching' is ther comfort:
Of eche mattir thei wollin mell;
To doen 'hem wrong is ther disport;
To afraie the peple thei ben fell,
And hold 'hem lower than doeth the lorde.

And for the tithing of a ducke,
Or of an apple or an aje,
Thei make men swere upon a boke;
Lo! thus thei foulin Christ's saie:
Soche berin evill hevin kaie;
Thei mowin assoile, thei mowe shrive,
With mennis wivis strongly plaie,
And with true tillers, sturte and strive,

At the wrestling and at the wake,
And the chief chauntours at the nale,
Market beters, and medling make,
Hoppen' and houtin with heve and hale;
At faire freshe, and at wine stale,
Thei dine and drinke, and make debate,
The seven sacramentes set a saile;
Kepe soche the kaies of hevin gate?

Mennis wivis thei wollin hold,
And though that thei ben right sory,
To speke thei shull not be so bold,
For sompning to' the consistory,
And make 'hem saie with mouthe I lie;
Though thei it sawin with ther eye
His lemman holdin opinly
No man so harde to aske why.

He woll have tithing and offring
Maugre whosoevir it grutche,
And twise on the daie he woll sing:
Godd'is priestis ne were none soche;
He mote go hunte with dogge and biche,
And blowen his horne and cryin Hey,
And sorcerie usen as a witche;
Soche kepin evill Peter's key.

Yet thei mote have some stocke or stone
Gaily paintid and proudly dight,
To makin men livin upon,
And saie that it is full of might,
About soche men set up grete light,
Other soche stockes shull stande therby
As darke as if it were midnight,
For it maie makin no mastrie.

That it the leude peple se mowe,
Thou Mary, thou worchest wondir thinges,
About that that men offrin to
Hongin brochis, ouchis, and ringes;
The priest purchasith the offringes,
But he n'ill offir to' none image:
Wo is the soule that he forsinges
That prechith for soche pilgrimage!

To men and women that ben pore,
Which that ben Christ'is owne likenesse,
Men shullen offir at ther dore,
That suffre hungir and distresse,
And to soche image offir lesse,
That mowe not fele ne thirstene cold;
The pore in spirite gan Christ blesse,
Therfore offrith to feble' and old.

Buckilers brode and swerdis long,
Baudrike, with baselardis kene,
Soche toles about ther necke thei hong:
With Antichrist soche priestis ben;
Upon ther dedes it is well sene
Whom thei servin, whom thei honouren:
Antichrist'is thei ben all clene,
And Godd'is godes falsly devouren.

Of scarlet and grene gaie gounes,
That mote be shapin for the newe,
To clippen and kissin in tounes
The damoseles that to the daunce sewe,
Cuttid clothes to sewe ther hewe,
With longe pikis on ther shone:
Our Godd'is gospell is not true;
Either ther serve the devill or none.

Now ben the priestis pokes so wide
Men must enlarge the vestiment,
The holy gospell they doen hide
For the contrarien in raiment;
Such pristes of Lucifer ben sent:
Like conquerours thei ben araied,
The proude pendauntes at ther arspent,
Falsely the trueth thei han betraied.

Shrift silvir soche wollin askeis,
And wollin men crepe to the crouche;
None of the sacramentes save askis
Withouten moede shall no man touche;
On ther bishop ther warant vouche,
That is a law of the decre:
With mede and money thus thei mouche,
And thus thei sain is charite.

Within the middis of ther masse
Thei n'ill have no man but for hire,
And full shortly let forth ypasse:
Soche shull men findin in eche shire
That parsonages for gaine desire
To live in liking and in lustes;
I dare not sain *sans ose jeo dire*
That soche ben Antichrist'is priestis.

Or thei yef the bishoppis why,
Or thei mote ben in his service,
And holdin forth ther harlottrie,
Soche prelates ben of feble' emprise;
Of Godd'is grame soche men agrise,
For soche mattirs that takin mede,
How thei' excuse hem, and in what wise,
Methinketh thei ought gretely drede.

Thei sain that it to no man longeth
To reprove them though that thei erre;
But falsly Godd'is godes thei fongeth,
And therwith maintein wo and werre;
Ther dedes should be as bright as sterre,
Ther living leudè mann'is light:
Thei saie the Pope ne maie not erre;
Nede must that passin mann'is might.

Though' a priest lie with his lemman al night,
And tellen his felowe and he him,
He goith to masse anon right,
And saieth he singeth out of sinne;
His birde abideth him at his inne,
And dighteth his diner the mene while,
He singeth his masse for he would winne,
And so he wenith God begile.

'Hem thinkith long till thei be mei,
And that thei use forth all the yere;
Enoug the folke whan he is set
He holdith no man half his pere:
Of the bishop he hath powere
To soile men, or els thei ben lore,
His absolucion maketh them skere;
Wo is the soule that he singeth for!

The Griffon began for to threte,
And saied, Of monkis canst thou ought?
The Pelli'can said, Thei ben full grete,
And in this world moche wo hath wrought;
Sainct Benet, that ther ordir brought,
Ne made 'hem ner in soche manere,
I trowe it came ner in his thought
That thei should use so grete powere.

That a man should a monke Lorde call,
Ne serve him on knees as a king;
He is as proude as prince in pall,
In mete and drinke, and in all thing:
Some weren a miter and ring,
With double worstid well idight,
With roiall mete and richè drinke,
And ride on courser as a knight.

With haukis and with houndis eke,
With broche or ouchis on his hode;
Some saie no masse in all a weke;
Of deintees is ther mostè sode
With lordshippis and with bondmen;
This is a roiall regioun;
Sainct Benet made ner non of 'hem
To have lordship of man ne toune.

Now thei ben queint and curious,
With fine clothe clad and servid clene,
Proude, and angrie, and envious,
Malice is mochil that thei mene;
In catching craftie and covetous,
Lordly livin in grete liking;
This living' is not religious
According to Benet's living.

Thei ben clerkes, and courts ovir se,
Ther pore tenaunce fully thei slite;
The hier a man amercid be
The gladlyir thei woll it write:
This is farre from Christes poverte,
For all with cove'tise thei endite;
On the pore thei have no pite,
Ne ner 'hem cherishe but or bite.

And comminly soche ben comen
Of pore peple, and of 'hem begete,
That this perfection han inomen:
Ther fathirs ride but on their fete,
And trayaile sore for that thei ete,
In povert livith yong and old;
Ther fathirs suffreth drought and wete,
Many hungrie meles, thurste, and cold.

And all this the monkes han forsake
For Christ's love and Sainct Benete,
To pride and ese have 'hem betake;
This religion is ill besete:
Had thei ben out of gret religion
Thei must have hangid at the plowe,
Threshid and diked fro toune to toune,
With sorie mete not halfe inowe.

Therfore thei han this all forsake,
And take to riches, pride, and ese;
Full fewe for God wol monkes 'hem make,
Lite is soche ordir for to praise;
Sainct Benet ordained it not so,
But bad hem to the cherèliche,
In churchliche manir live and go,
Boistous in yerth, and not lordliche.

Thei disclanderin Sainct Benet,
Therfore thei have his holy curse;
Sainct Benet with hem never met
But if thei thought to robbe his purse.
I can no more here of 'hem tell
But that thei ben like tho before,
And clene serve the devill of hell,
And ben his tresure and his store;

And all soche othir counterfaitours,
Chanons, canons, and soche disgised,
Ben Godd'is enemies and traitours,
His religion han foule dispised;
And of freris I have before
Told in a makin of a crede,
And yet I could tell worse and more,
But men would werien it to rede.

As Goddes godenes no man tell might,
Ne write ne speke, ne thinke in thought,
So ther falshed and ther unright
Maie no man tell that ere God wrought.
The Griffon saied, Thou canst no gode,
Thou came ner of no gentill kinde;
Othir I trowe thou waxist wode
Or ellis thou hast loste thy minde.

Should holy churche yhave no hedde
Who should ybe her governaile,
Who should her rule, who should her redde,
Who should her forthren, who availe?
Eche man shall live by his travaile;
Who best doith shall have most mede:
With strength if men the churche assaile
With strength men must defende her nede.

And if the Pope were purely pore
And nedy, and nothing ne had,
He shuld be dryve from dore to dore;
The wickid of him n'olde not drad:
Of soche an hedde men would be sade,
And sinfully liven' as 'hem lust;
With strength amendis soche be made,
With wepin wolves from shepe be wast.

If that the Pope and prelates would
So begge and bid, bowe and borowe,
Holy churche should ystande full cold;
Her servauntes sit and soupe sorowe;
And thei were noughtie, foule, and horowe,
To worship God men would wlate
Both on evin and on morowe:
Sochè harlotrie men would hate.

And therfore men of holy churche
Should in be honeste in all thing,
And worshipfull God's workis werche;
So semeth it to serve Christ ther king
In honest and in clene clothing,
With vessels of gold and clothes riche
To God honestly to' make offring,
For to his lordship none is liche.

The Pellican cast an houge crie,
And saied, Alas! why saiest thou so?
Christ is our hede that sitteth on hie,
Heddis ne ought we have no mo;
We ben his membres bothe also,
Fathir he taught us call him als,
Maisters to call forbad he tho;
All maisters ben wickid and fals

That takith maistrie in his name
Ghostly, and to win yerthly gode;
Kingis and lordes should lordship have,
And rule the peple with milde mode,
But Christ, for us that shed his blode,
Bad his priests no maistirship have,
Ne carke not for clothis ne fode;
From all mischief he woll 'hem save.

Ther riche clothes shall be rightwisnesse,
Ther tresure a true life shall be,
Charite shal be ther richesse,
Ther Lordship shall be unite,
And hope in God ther honeste,
Ther vessel a clene conscience;
Pore in sprite, and humilite,
Shall be holy church'is defence.

What! saied the Griffon, maie the greve
That othir folkis faren wele?
What hast thou to doin with ther live?
Thy falsed every man maie fele,
For thou ne canst no cattell gete,
But livest in londe as a lorell,
With glosing gettist thou thy mete;
So farith the devil in hell.

He would that eche man there should dwell,
For he livith in clene envie,
So with the tales that thou doest tell
Thou wouldest othir peple destrie
With your glose and your heresie,
For ye can live no bettir life
But clene in fals hypocrisie,
And bringist the in wo and strife.

And therwith have ye not doen,
For ye ne having here ne eure;
Ye serve the devill, not God ne man,
And he shall payin you your hire;
For ye wol farin wel at festes,
And be warm clothid for the cold,
Therfore ye glosin Godd'is hestes,
And begile peple yong and old.

And all the sevin sacramentes
Ye speke ayenst as ye were slie,
Tithings, offringes, with your ententes,
And on your Lord's body lie:
All this ye doen to live in ese,
As who sayith ther ben none soche,
And sain The Pope' is not worth a pese,
To make the peple' ayen him groche.

And this ycommith in by fendes
To bring the Christin in distaunce,
For thei would that no man were frendes.
Levith thy chattring with mischaunce!
If thou live well what wilt thou more?
Let othir men live as 'hem list,
Spenden ther gode or kepe in store;
Othir mennes conscience ner thou n'ist.

Ye han no cure to answere fore;
What meddle' ye that han not to doen?
Let men live as thei han doen yore,
For thou shalt answerde for no man.
The Pellican sayid, Sir, naie,
I ne dispisid not the Pope
Ne no sacrament, sothe to saie,
But speke in charite' and gode hope:

But I dispise ther hiè pride,
Ther welthe that should be pore in sprite;
Ther wickidnesse is knowe so wide,
Thei servin God in false habite,
And tournin mekenesse into pride,
And lowlinesse into' hie degre,
And Godd'is wordis tourne and hide,
And I am moved by charite

To lettin men to livin so
With all my conning and my might,
And to warnin men of ther wo,
And to tellin 'hem trouth and right.
The sacramentes be soul'is hele
If thei ben usid in gode use;
Ayenst that speke I ner a dele,
For than ne were I nothing wise;

But thei that use 'hem in misse manere,
Or set 'hem up to any sale,
I trowe thei shall abie 'hem dere;
This is my reson, this my tale:
Who so taketh hem unrightfulliche
Ayenst the ten commandèmentes,
Or elles by glose wretchidliche
Selleth any of the sacramantes,

I trowe thei doe the devill homage,
In that thei wetin thei doe wrong,
And therto I dare well to wage
Thei serve Sathan for all their song.
To tithen' and offre' is holsome life,
So it be doen in due manere,
A man to houselin and to shrive,
Wedding, and all othir in fere.

So it be nother solde ne bought,
Ne takè ne give for covetise,
And it be so taken' it is nought;
Who selleth him so maie sore agrise:
On our Lordes body' I doe not lie,
I saie the sothe thorough true rede,
His fleshe and blode, through his misterie,
Is there all in the forme of brede.

How it is there it nedeth not strive,
Whethre' it be subget or accident,
But as Christ was whan he' was on live
So is he there in verament.
If Pope or cardi'nall live gode live,
As Christ us bad in his gospell,
Ayenst that ne woll I not strive,
But me thinkith thei live not well;

For if the Pope lived as God bedde,
Pride and highnesse he should dispise,
Richesse, covetise, and croune on hedde;
Mekenesse and poverte' he should use.
The Griffon saied he should abaie,
Thou shalt be brent in balefull fire,
And all thy sect I shall distrie;
Ye shall be hangid by the swire.

Ye shulle be hangid and to drawe:
Who giveth you leve for to preche,
Or spekin ayenst Godd'is lawe,
And the peple thus falsely teche?
Thou shalt be cursed with boke and bell,
And dissevered from holie churche,
And clene idampnid into Hell,
Othirwise but ye wollin worche.

The Pelli'can saied, That I ne drede;
Your cursing is of lite value;
Of God I hope to have my mede,
For it is falshed that ye shewe,
For ye ben out of charite,
And wilne vengeaunce, as did Nero:
To suffrin I wol redy be;
I drede not all that thou canst do.

Christ bad ones suffre for his love,
And so he taught all his servauntes,
But thou' amende for his sake above;
I drede not all thy maintenaunce;
For if I drede the world's hate,
Me thinkith I were lite to praise:
I drede nothing your hie estate,
Ne I ne drede not your disese.

Wollin ye tourne and leve your pride,
And your hie porte and your richesse,
Your cursing should not go so wide;
God bring you into right wisenesse!
For I drede not your tirannie,
For nothing that ye can ydoen;
To suffre I am all redie,
Sikir I recke nevir how sone.

The Griffon grinned as he were wode,
And lokid lovely as an owle,
And swore by cock'is herte and blode
He wold him tere every doule;
Holy churche thou disclaundrist foule;
For thy speche I woll the to race,
And make thy flesh to rote and moule;
Losell, thou shalt have hardè grace.

The Griffon flewe forth on his waie,
The Pellican did sit and wepe,
And to himself he gan to saie,
God would that any of Christes shepe
Had herdin, and itaken kepe
Eche a word that here sayid was,
And would it write and well ikepe;
God would it were all for his grace!

PLOWMAN.

I answerid, and saied I would,
If for my travaile one would pey.

PELLICAN.

He saied yes; these ther God han sold,
For thei han grete store of money.

PLOWMAN.

I sayid, Tell me and thou maie,
Why tellist thou menn'is trespace?

PELLICAN.

He said, To' amende hem in gode fay,
If God woll give me any grace;
For Christ himself is liken to me,
That for his peple died on rode;
As fare I right so farith he,
He fedith his birdes with his blode:
But these doen evill ayenst Gode,
And ben his foen undir frendes face;
I told 'hem how ther living stode,
And God amende 'hem for his grace!

PLOWMAN.

What ailith the Griffon, tell why
That he holdith on the' othir side,
For thei two yben likily
And with kindis yrobin wide.

PELLICAN.

The foulè betokinith pride,
As Lucifer that high flewe was,
And sith he did him in ill hide,
For he agilted Godd'is grace.

As birde flyith up in the aire,
And livith by birdes that ben meke,
So these ben flowe up in dispaire,
And shendin sely soulis eke;
The soulis that ben in sinnes eke
He culleth 'hem; knele therfore, alas!
For bribrie Godd'is forbode breke;
But God amende it for his grace!

The hinder parte is a loun,
A robber and a raviner,
That robbeth the peple in yerth doune,
And in yerth holdith none his pere:
So fareth this foule both ferre and nere,
With tempo'rel strength the peple chase
As a lion proude in yerth here;
May God amende 'hem for his grace!

PELLICAN.

He flewe forth with his wingis twain
All drouping, and dasid, and dull,
But sone the Griffon came again,
Of his foulis the yerth was full;
The Pelli'can he had cast to pull,
So grete nombre ner sene ther was,
What manir of foules telle I woll,
If God wol give me of his grace.

With the Griffon come foulis fele,
Ravins, rokis, crowis, and pie,
And graie foulis, agadrid wele,
Algurde above they wouldin hie,

Gledis and bosardes weren 'hem by,
White molles and puttockes toke ther place,
And lapwinges, that wel conith lie;
This company' han forlete ther grace.

Long while the Pellican was oute,
But at last he commith againe,
And brought with him the phenix stoute;
The Griffon would have slow ful faine,
His foulis flewen as thicke as raine,
The phenix tho began 'hem chace;
To flie from him it was in vaine,
For he did vengeaunce and no grace.

He slewe 'hem doune without mercy;
There estarte neither fre ne thrall;
On him they cast a rufull crie
Whan that the Griffon doun was fall;
He bete him not, but slewe hem all:
Where he 'hem drove no man may trace:
Under the erth methought they yall;
Alas, they had a feble grace!

The Pellican then axid right
For my writing if I have blame
Who then wol for me fight of flight?
Who shullin sheldè me from shame?
He that yhad a maide to dame,
And the Lambè that slaine ywas,
Shal sheldin me from gostly blame,
For erthely harme is Godd'is grace.

Therforè I pray every man
Of my writing have me excused,
This writing writeth the Pellican,
That thus these peple hath dispised;
For I am freshe fully advised
I n'ill not maintene his menace,
For the devill is ofte disguised
To bring a man to evil grace.

Witith the Pelli'can and not me,
For herof I n'il not avowe
In hie ne lowe, ne no degre,
But as fable take it ye mowe.
To holy churche I will me bowe;
Eche man to' amende him Christe sende space!
And for my writing me alowe
He that' is almighty for his grace.

HERE ENDETH THE PLOWMAN'S TALE.

THE PROLOGUE;

OR, THE MERY ADVENTURE OF

THE PARDONERE AND TAPSTERE,

AT THE INN AT CANTERBURY.

When all this freshe feleship were come to Cantirbury,
As ye have herde to fore, with Talys glad and merry,
Som of sotill sentence of vertue and of lore,
And som of othir mirthis, for them that hold no store
Of wisdom, ne of holynes, ne of chivalry,
Nethir of vertuouse matere, but to foly
Leyd wit and lustis all to such japis
As hurlewaynes meyne in every hegg that rapes
Thorough unstabil mynde, ryght as the levis grene
Stondewn ageyn the wedir, ryght so by them I mene;
But no more hereof nowe at this ilche tyme,
In saving of my sentence, my Prolog, and my ryme.
They toke ther in, and loggit them at mydmorowe I trowe,
Alle cheker of the hope that many a man doth knowe;
Their Hoost of Southworke, that with them went,
as ye have herde to fore,
That was rewler of them al, of las, and eke of more,
Ordeyned their dyner wisely or they to chirch went;
Such vitaillis as he fonde in town, and for noon othir sent.
The Pardonere beheldè the besynes, how statis wer iservid,
Diskennyng hym al prively, and a syde swervid:
The hostelere was so halowid fro o plase to another,
He toke his staffe to the Tapstere: "Welcom myn own brother,"
Quod she, with a frendly loke, al redy for to kys;
And he, as a man i lerned of such kyndnes,
Bracyd hir by the myddyll, and made hir gladly chere,
As thoughe he had iknowen hir al the rathir yeer:
She halid hym into the tapstry there hir bed way was makid;
"Lo, here I ligg," (quod she) "myself al nyght al nakid,
Without manny's company syn my love was dede,
Jenkyn Harpour, yf ye hym knewe: from fete to the hede
Was not a lustier persone to daunce ne to lepe
Then he was, thoughe I it sey:" and therwith to wepe
She made, and with hir napron feir and white ywash
She wypid soft hir eyen for teris that she out lash
As grete as any mylstone: upward gon they stert
For love of her swetyng, that sat so nighe hir hert:
She wept and waylid, and wrong her hondis, and made much to done,
For they that loven so passyngly such trowes they have echon:
She snyffith, sighith, and shoke hire hede, and made rouful cher:
"*Benedicite!*" quod the Pardonere; and toke hir by the swere,
"Yee make sorwe inowgh," quod he, "your life though ye shuld lese."
"It is no wondir," quod she than; and therwith she gan to snese.
"Aha! al hole," quod the Pardonere; "your penaunce is somewhat passid."
"God forbede it els!" quod she, "but it were somwhat lassid;
I might nat lyve els, thowe wotist, and it shuld long endure:
Now blessid be God of mendemente of hele and eke of cure!"
Quod the Pardonere tho anoon, and toke hir by the chynne,
And sayd to hir these wordis tho; "Alas that love is syn!
So kynd a lover as ye be oon, and so trew of herte,
For be my trewe conscience yit for yewe I smerte,
And shall this month hereafter, for your soden disese;
Now wele wer hym ye lovid so he coud you plese;

I durst swere upon a book that trewe he shuld yewe fynd,
For he that is so yore dede is grene in yeur mynd.
Ye made me a sory man; I dred ye wold have stervid." [unaservid:
"Graunt mercy, gentil sir," quod she, "that ye
Yee be a nobile man, iblessid mut yee be:
Sit down; ye shul drynk."—"Nay I wis" (quod he)
"I am fastyng yit, myne own hert'is rote."
"Fastyng yit, alass!" quod she; "therof I can gode bote."
She stert into the town and fet a py al hote,
And set to fore the Pardonere; "Jenken, I ween I n'ote [sustir,
Is that your name I yow prey."—"I wis, myn own
So was I enformed of them that did me fostir.
"And what is yowrs?"—"Kitt, iwis; so cleped me my dame."
"And Godd'is blessing have thow, Kitt; now broke wel thy name;"
And privylich unlasid his both eyen liddes,
And lokid hir in the visage paramour and amyddis,
And sighed there with a litil time that she it here myghte,
And gan to rown and seyn this song, "*Now, love, then do me righte.*"
"Ete and be merry," quod she; "why breke ye nowt your fast?
To wait more feleship it were but work in waste.
Whi make ye so dull chere? for your love at home?" [aloon."
"Nay, forsooth, myne own herte, it is for you
"For me? alas! what sey ye? that wer a simple prey." [yewe sey."
"Trewlich yit," quod the Pardonere, "it is as I
"Ye, etith and beth mery; we wol speke therof sone;
Brennyd cat dredith feir: it is mery to be a loon;
For by our lady Mary, that bare Jesus on hir arm,
I coud nevir love yit but it did me harm,
For evir my manere hath be to love ovirmuch."
"Now Crist's blessing," quod the Pardonere, "go with al such. [his mach,
Lo! how the clowdis worchyn ech man to mete
For trewly, gentil Cristian, I use the same tach,
And have ydo many a yer: I may it nat forbere,
For *Kynd woll have his cours* though men the contrary swere;"
And therwith he sterte up smertly and cast down a grote.
"What shal this do, gentil sir? Nay, sir, for my
I n'old ye payd a peny her and so sone pas." [cote
The Pardoner swore his grette othe he wold pay no las.
"I wis, sir, it is ovir do, but sith it is yowr will
I woll putt it in my purse lest yee it take in ill
To refuse your curtesy:" and therwith she gan to bowe.
"Now trewly," quod the Pandoner, "yeur maners been to lowe,
For had ye countid streytly, and nothing left behind,
I might have wele ydemed that ye be unkind,
And eke untrewe of herte, and sooner me forgete,
But ye list be my tresorer, for we shall offter mete."
"Now certen," quod the Tapster, "ye have a rede ful even,
As wold to God ye couth as wele undo my sweven
That I my self did mete this nyght that is ypassid,
How I was in a chirch when it was all ymassid,
And was in my devocioune tyl service was al doon,
Tyl the preest and the clerk boystly bad me goon,
And put me out of the chirch with an egir mode."
"Now Seynt Daniel," quod the Pardonere, "your swevyn turn to gode,
And I woll halsow it to be best, have it in yeur mynd,
For comyngly of these swevyngs the contrary men shul fynd.
Ye have be a lover glad, and litil joy yhad;
Plick up a lusty herte, and be mery and glad,
For ye shul have an husbond that shall yewe wed to wyve,
That shal love yewe as hertely as his own lyve.
The preest that put yew out of chirch shall lede you in ageyne, [main
And helpe to yeur mariage with al his might and
This is the sweven al and som Kit; how likith the?"
"Be my trowith wondir wele, blessid mut thou we be?"
Then toke he leve at that tyme, tyll he come efft-
And went to his feleship (as it was to doon) [sone,
Thoughe it be no grete holynes to prech this ilk matere;
And that som list to her it, yit sirs, ner the latter
Endurith for a while and suffrith them that woll,
And ye shull her how the Tapster made the Pardoner pull
Garlik all the long nyghte til it was ner end day;
For the more chere she made of love the falsir was her lay; [while,
But litil charge gaff she therof, tho she acquit his
For ethir is thought and tent was othir to begile,
As ye shul here hereaftir, when tyme comith and spase
To meve such matere.—But now a litil spase
I wol return me ageyn to the company, [to ly
The Knyghte and al the feleship, and nothing for
Whan they wer al yloggit, as skil wold and reson,
Everich aftir his degre, to chirch then was seson
To pas and to wend to make their offringis,
Righte as their devocioune was, of silver broch and rynges;
Then at chirch dorr the curtesy gan to ryse
Tyl the Knyght, of gentilnes that knewe right wele the guyse,
Put forth the prelatis, the Parson, and his fere,
A Monk that took the spryngill with a manly chere,
And did as the manere is, moilid al their patis
Everich aftir othir, righte as they were of statis:
The Frer feynyd fetously the spryngill for to hold
To spryng oppon the remnaunt, that for his cope he n'old
Have laft that occupacioune in that holy plase,
So longid his holy conscience to se the Nonn'is safe.
The Knyght went with his compers toward the holy shryne
To do that they wer com for, and aftir for to dyne:
The Pardoner and the Miller, and othir lewde sotes,
Sought 'hem self in the chirch right as lewd gotes,
Pyrid fast and pourid high upon the glase,
Counterfetyng gentilmen the armies for to blase,
Diskynering fast the peyntur, and for the story mournid,
And a red al so right as rammys hornyd.
"He berith a balstaff," quod the toon, and els a rakid end;
"Thow failest," quod the Miller, "thow hast nat wel thy mynd;
It is a spere, yf thow canst se, with a prik tofore,
To push a down his enmy, and through the shoulder bore."

" Pese," quod the Hoost of Southwork; " let stond the wyndow glasid; [amasid:
Goith up and doith your offerynge; ye semith half Sith ye be in company of honest men and good
Worchith somwhat aftir them, and let the kynd of brode
Pas for a tyme; I hold it for the best, [rest."
For who doith aftir company may live the bet in
Then passid they forth boystly gogling with their hedis, [bedis
Knelid adown to fore the shrine, and hertlich their
They preyd to Seint Thomas in such wyse as they couth;
And sith the holy relikes ech man with his mowith
Kissid, as a goodly monk the names told and taught,
And sith to othir places of holynes they raught,
And wer in their devocioune tyl service wer al doon,
And sith they drowgh to dynerward as it drew to noon, [bought,
Then as manere and custom is, signes there they
For men of contre shuld know whome they had sought.
Eche man set his silver in such thing as they likid,
And in the meen while the Miller had ypikid
His bosom ful of signys of Caunterbury brochis,
Though the Pardoner and he pryvely in hir pouchis,
They put them afterwards that noon of them it wist,
Save the Sompner seid somwhat, and seid to he list,
" Halff part," quod he, prively rowning on their ere;
" Husht! pees," quod the Miller, " seist thou nat the Frere,
How he lowrith undir his hood with a doggish eye?
Hit shuld be a privy thing that he cond nat aspy;
Of every craft he can somwhat our lady gave hym sorowe!" [on morowe:
" Amen," tho quod the Sompner, " on eve and eke
So cursid a tale he told of me the devill of Hell hem spede, [mede,
And me, but yf I pay him wele and quyte wele his
Yf it hap homward that ech man tell his tale,
As we did hiderward, though we shuld set at sale
All the shrewdnes that I can, I woll hym nothing spare,
That I n'ol touch his takerd somwhat of his care."
They set their signys upon their hedes, and som oppon their capp,
And sith to the dynerward they gan for to stapp.
Every man in his degre wish and toke his sete,
As they were wont to doon at soper and at mete,
And were in silence for a tyme tyl good ale gan
And then, as nature axith, as these old wise [arise,
Knowen wele, when veynys been somwhat replete,
The sperits wol stere, and also metis swete
Causen oft myrthis for to be ymevid,
And eke it was no tyme tho for to be ygrevid,
Every man in his wyse made hertly chere,
Telling his felowe of sportys and of cheré,
And of othir mirthis that fellyn by the wey,
As custome is of pylgryms, and hath been many a dey. [knowe,
The Hoost leid to his ere, of Southworke as ye
And thenkid al the company both high and lowe,
So wele kepeing the covenaunt in Southwork that was made,
That every man shuld by the wey with a tale glade
All the whole company in shorting of the wey;
And al is wele performed: but than now thus I seȝ,
That we must so homeward eche man tel anothir,
Thus we wer accordit, and I should be a rathir
To set you in governaunce by right ful judgement
" Trewly Hoost," quod the Frer, " that was al our assent,
With a litil more that I shall sey therto:
Yee graunted of yeur curtesy that we shuld also
All the hole company sope with yewe at nyght?
Thus I trowe that it was; what sey you, sir knyght?"
" It shal nat nede," quod the Hoost, " to axe no witnes;
Your record is good I nowe; and of yeur gentilnes
Yit I prey yew efft ageyn; for by Seynt Thomas shryne
And ye woll hold covenaunt I woll hold myne,"
" Now trewely Hoost," quod the Knyght, " ye have right wel yseyd;
And as towching my persone I hold me payde;
And so I trowe that al doith: sirs, what sey ye?"
The monk and eke the marchaunte and al seid " Ye."
" Then al this aftir-mete, I hold it for the best;
To sport and pley us," quod the Hoost, " eche man as hym lest,
And go by tyme to soper and to bed also,
So mowe we erly rysen our journey for to do."
The Knyght arose therwithal, and cast on a fresshe gown,
And his sone anothir, to walk in the town,
And so did all the remnaunt that were of that aray,
That had their chaungis with them, they made them fresh and gay,
Sortid them togidir, right as their lostis lay,
As they were more usid travelling by the way.
The Knyght with his meyne went to see the walle
And the wards of the town, as to a knyght befall,
Devising ententiflich the strengthis al about,
And appointid to his sone the perell and the dout
For shot of arblast and of bowe, and eke for shot of gonne, [wooe;
Unto the wardis of the town, and how it might be
And al defence ther ageyn aftir his intent
He declarid compendiously, and al that evir he ment
He sone perseyvid every poynt, as he was ful abil
To armes and to travaile and persone convenabill
He was of alle factur aftir fourm of kynd,
And for to deme his governaunce it semed that his mynd
Was much in his lady that he lovid best, [nore seyd;
That made hym offt to wake when he shuld have his rest.
The Clerk that was of Oxenforth onto the Sompnour
" Me semeth of grete clerge that thow art amayde,
For thou puttest on the frer in maner of repreff,
That he knoweth falshede, vice, and eke a theff;
And I it hold vertuouse and right commendabill
To have very knowlech of thinges reprovabill;
For who so may eschew it, and let it pas by,
And els he might fall theron unward and sodenly.
And thoughe the Frer told a tale of a Sompnour,
Thow oughtist for to take it for no dishonour,
For of al craftis and of eche degre
They be not al perfite, but som nyce be."
" Lo! what is worthy," seyd the Knight, " for to be a clerk; [derke:
To sommon among us them this mocioune was ful
I comend his wittis and eke his clerge,
For of ether part he saveth honeste."
The Monk toke the Parsone then and the grey Frer
And preyd them for curtesy for to go in fere:
" I have ther acquaintaunce that al this yeres thre
Hath preyd hym by his lettris that I hym wold se;

And ye my brothir in habit and in possessioune,
And now I am here methinketh it is to doon,
To preve it in dede what chere he wold me make,
And to yew my frende also for my sake."
They went forth togidir talking of holy matere,
But woot ye wele in certeyn they had no mind on watere
To drynk at that tyme, when they wer met in fere,
For of the best that myght be founde, and therewith mery chere,
They had, it is no doubte; for spycys and eke wine
Went round about the gastoyn and eke the royne.
The Wyfe of Bath was so wery, she had no wyl to walk,
She toke the Priores by the honde; "Madam, wol ye stalk,
Pryvely into the garden to se the herbes growe,
And aftir with our host's wife in hir parlour rowe?
I wol gyve yewe the wyne and ye shul me also,
For tyl we go to soper we have nought els to do,"
The Priores, as women taught of gentil blood and hend,
Assentid to hir counsel, and forth gon they wend,
Passyng forth softly into the herbery,
For many a herb grewe for sewe and surgery,
And all the aleys feir, and parid, and raylid, and ymakid,
The savige and the isope yfrethid and ystakid,
And othir beddis by and by fresh ydight,
For comers to the hooste righte a sportful sight.
The Marchaunt and the Mancipill, the Miller and the Reve,
And the Clerk of Oxenforth, to townward gan they meve,
And al the othir meyne, and lafft noon at home
Save the Pardonor, that pryvelich when al they wer goon
Stalkid into the tapstry; for nothing wol he leve
To make his covenaunte in certeyn that same eve;
He wold be loggit with hir, that was his hole ententioune.
But hap and eke Fortune, and all the constellacioune,
Was clere hym ageyns, as ye shul aftir here;
For him had better be yloggit al nyght in a myere
Than he was the same nyght or the Sun was up;
For such was his fortune he drank without the cupp;
But thereof wist he no delay; ne *No man of us alle*
May have that high connyng to know what shall befall.
He stappid into the tapstry wondir pryvely,
And fond hir ligging lirylong with half slopy eye,
Pourid fellich undir hir hood, and saw all his comyng,
And lay ay still, as naught she knewe, but feynid
He put his hond to hir brest; "Awake," quod he, "awake."
"A, *benedicite!* Sir, who wist yew her? out tho I myght betake
"Prisoner," quod the Tapstere, "being al aloon;"
And therwith breyd up in a frite, and began to groon.
"Now sith ye be my prisoner yeld yew now," quod
"I must nedis," quod she, "I may nothyng fle;
And eke I have no strengith, and am but yong of age,
And also *It is no mastry to cach a mouse in a cage*
That may no where stert out, but closid wondir fast;
And eke, sir, I tell yew though I had grete hast
Ye should have coughed when ye com. Wher lern you curtesy?
Now trewlich I must chide, for of right pryvety
Women ben som tyme of day when they be aloon.
Wher coud I yew prey when ye com eftsone?"
Nowe mercy, dere swetyng! I wol do so no more;
I thank you an hundrit sithis; and also by your lore
I wol do hereaftir in what plase that I com:
But lovers, Kitt, ben evil avysid full oft, and to lom;
Wherfore I prey you hertlich hold me excused,
And I behote yew trewly it shall no more be usid.
But now to our purpose: how have ye fare
Sith I was wyth you last! that is my most care;
For yf yee eylid eny thing othir wise then good,
Trewly it wol chaunge my chere and my blood."
"I have farid the wers for yewe," quod Kitt; "do ye no drede
God that is above? and eke ye had no nede
For to congir me, God woot, wyth your nygromancy,
That have no more to vaunte me but oonly my [body,
And yf it were disteynid then wer I ondo:
I wis I trowe, Jenkyn, ye be nat to trust to;
For evir more ye clerkis con so much in book
Yee wol wynn a woman at first look."
Thought the Pardonere, "This goth wele," and made his beter chere,
And axid of hir softly, "Love! who shall ligg here
This night that is to comyng? I prey yewe tell me."
"I wis it is grete nede to tell yewe," quod she:
"Make it nat overqueynt though you be a clerk;
Ye knowe wele inough iwis by loke, by word, by work."
"Shal I com than, Cristian, and fese awey the cat?"
Shal ye com? *per benedicite!* what question is that?
Wherfor I prey you hertly to be my counsail?
Comyth somwhat late, and for nothing faill;
The dore shall stond that up; put it from you soft,
But be wele avysid ye wake nat them on lofft."
"Care ye nat," quod Jenkin, "I can theron at best;
Shal no man for my stepyng be wakid of his rest."
Anon they dronk the beverage, and were of oone accord,
As it semed by their chere and also by their word;
And al a staunce she lovid hym wele, she toke hym by the swere,
As though he had lernyd cury favel of som old frere,
The Pardoner plukkid out of his purs I trow the dowry,
And toke it Kitt in hir hond, and bad her pryvely
To orden a rere sopor for them both to, [also,
A cawdell ymade with swete wyne and with sugir
"For trewly I have no talent to ete in your absence,
So longith my herte toward yew to be in yewr presence."
He toke his leve, and went his wey as though nothing wer,
And met wyth al the felship; but in what plase ne [wher
He spake no word therof, but held hym close and styll,
As he that hopid sikirlich to have had al his wyll,
And thought many a mery thought by hymself aloon:
"I am a loggit," thought he best, "how so evir it goon;
And thoughe it have costid me, yet wol I do my peyn,
For to pike hir purs to nyghte and win my cost [ageyn."
Now leve I the Pardonere tyll that it be eve,
And wol returne me ageyn righte, ther as I did leve.
Whan al wer com togider in their herbergage
The Hoost of Southwork, as ye knowe, that had no spice of rage,

But al thing wrought prudenciall, as sobir man and wise; [avyse,"
"Now wol we to the soup, sir Knyght, seith yeur
Quod the Hoost ful curteysly, and in the same wise.
The Knyght answer'd him ageyn, "Sir as ye devyse
I must obey, ye woot wele: but yf I fail wytt
Then takith these prelatis to yewe, and washith and go sit; [one,
For I woll be yewr marchall and serve yewe, ech
And then the officers and I to soper shall we gone."
They wish, and set right as he bad, eche man wyth his fere,
And begonne to talk of sportis and of chere
That they had the aftir-mete whiles they wer out,
For othir occupacioune tyll they wer servid about
They had nat at that tyme, but every man kitt a loff; [thing of
But the Pardoner kept hym close, and told no-
The myrth and hope that he had, but kept it for hymself; [to solve
And though he did it is no fors, for he had nede
Long or it were mydnyght, as ye shul her sone,
For he met with his love in crokeing of the Moon.
They wer yservyd honestly, and eche man held hym payde,
For of o manere of service their soper was araide,
As skill wold and reson, sith the lest of all
Payid ylike much, for growing of the gall:
But yit as curtesy axith, though it were som dele streight, [dreyte;
The statis that were above had of the feyrest en-
Wherfor they did their gentilnes ageyn to all the rout,
They dronken wyne at their cost onys round about.
Now pass I lightly ovir. When they soupid had
Tho that were of governance, as wise men and sad,
Went to their rest, and made no more to doon,
But Miller and the Coke dronken by the Moon
Twyes to eche othir in the repenyng;
And when the Pardoner them espy'd anoon he gan to sing
Doubill me this bourdon, chokelyng in his throte,
For the Tapster shuld here of his mery note:
He clepid to him the Sompnour, that was his own discipill,
The Yeman and the Reve, ond the Mancipill,
And stoden so holowyng; for nothing wold they leve
Tyl the tyme that it was well within eve.
The Hoost of Southwork herd them wele, and the Marchaunt both, [wroth,
As they wer at a countis, and wexen somewhat
But yet they preyd them curteysly to rest for to wend. [an end.
And so they did all the rout; they dronk and made
And eche man droughe to *cusky* to slepe and take his rest [cheste
Save the Pardoner, that drew apart, and weytid by a
For to hide hymself tyl the candill wer out:
And in the meen while, have ye no doute,
The Tapster and hir paramour, and the hosteler of the house,
Sitt togidir pryvelich, and of the best gouse
That was yfound in town and yset at sale [ale;
They had there of sufficiaunt, and dronk but litill
And sit and ete the cawdell for the Pardoner that was made, [bade;
With sugir and with swete wyne, right as himself
So he that payd for all in feer had not a twynt,
For offt is more better ymerkid then ymynt:
And so farid he ful right as ye haue yherd,
But *Who is that a woman coud not make his berd*,
And she wer therabout, and set hir wytt therto?
Ye woot wele I ly nat, and wher I do or no
I wol nat here termyn it, lest ladies stond in plase
Or els gentil women, for lesing of my grace
Of daliaunce and of sportis and of goodly chere;
Therfor anenst their estatis I wol in no manere
Deme ne determyn, but of lewd kitts,
As tapsters, and othir such that hath wyly wytts,
To pike mennys pursis, and eke to bler their eye;
So wele they make seme foth when they falsest ly.
Now of Kitt Tapster, and of hir paramour,
And the hosteler of the house, that sit in Kittis bour,
When they had ete and dronk right in the same plase,
Kitt began to rendir out all things as it was;
The wowing of the Pardoners and his cost also,
And how he hopid for to lygg al nyght wyth hir also;
But therof he shall be sikir as of God is cope;
And sodenly kissid her paramour, and seyd, "We shul sclope
Togidir hul by hul, as we have many a nyght,
And yf he com and make noyse, I prey yewe dub hym knyght." [agast;
"Yes, dame," quod hir paramour, "be thou not
This is his own staff thou seyst, therof he shall atast.
"Now trewly," quod the hostler, "and he com by my lot
He shall drink for Kittis love wythout cup or pot;
And he be so hardy to wake eny gist [mist;"
I make a vowe to the pecock there shal wake a foul
And rose up therewithal and toke his leve anoon:
It was a shrewid company; they had servid so many oon. [dele,
With such manere of feleship ne kepe I never to
Ne no man that lovith his worship and his hele.
Quod Kitt to hir paramour, "Ye must wake a whyle,
For trewlich I am siker that within this myle
The Pardoner wol be comyng, his bete to aswage,
But loke ye pay hym redelich to kele his corage;
And therfor, love, dischance yewe not tyll this chek
"No, for God, Kitt, that wol I no." [be do."
Then Kitt went to bed, and blewe out all the light,
And by that tyme it was ner hond quarter nyght,
Whan all was still, the Pardoner gan to walk,
As glad as eny goldfynch that he herd no man talk, [list,
And dorwghe to Kittis droward to herken and to
And went to have fond the dor up; but the hasp and eke the twist
Held hym out a whils, and the lok also;
Yit trow he no gile, but went ner to, [his mowith
And scrapid the dorr welplich, and wynyd wyth
After a doggis lyden, as ner as he couith.
"Awey dog, with evill deth!" quod he that was within,
And made hym all redy the dore to unpin.
"A!" thought the Pardoner, "tho I trow my berd be made; [glade
The Tapster hath a paramour, and hath made them
With the cawdell that I ordeyned for me, as I guess;
Now the devill hir spede, such oon as she is,
She seid I had yeongerid hir; our lady gyve hir sorowe; [borowe,
Now wold to God she wer in stokis tyl I shuld hir

For she is the falsest that evir yit I knewe;
To pik the mony out of my purs, lord! she made hir trewe." [sot,
And therewyth he caught a cardiakill and a cold
For who have love longing, and is of corage hote,
He hath ful many a myry thought tofore his delyte;
And right so had the Pardoner, and was in evil plight;
For fayling of his purpose he was nothing in ese,
Wherfor he fill sodenlich into a wood rese,
Entryng wondir fast into a frensy
For pur very angir and for jelousy; [wood
For when he herd a man within, he was almost
And because the cost was his no mervel tho the mood
Wer turned into vengaunce, of it myght be:
But this was the myschief; all so strong as he
Was he that was within, and lighter man also,
As provid wele the bataile betwene them both to.
The Pardonere scrapid efft ageyn; for nothyng wold he blyn, [within.
So feyn he wold have herd more of hym that was
"What dog is that?" quod the paramour; "Kit, wost thou ere?" [donere."
"Have God my trowith," quod she, "it is the Par-
"The Pardoner, with myscheff! God gyve hym evil preff!" [theff."
"Sir," she seid; "by my trowith he is the same
"Thereof thou liest," quod the Pardoner, "and might nat long forbere.
"A thy fals body!" quod he; "the devil of Hell the tere!
For by my trowith a falsher sawe I nevir noon,"
And nempnid hir namys many mo then oon,
Though to rech hir wer noon honeste
Among men of good worship and degre
But, shortly to conclude; when he had chid inowe
He axid his staff spitouslich, with wordis sharp and rowe.
"Go to bed," quod he within; "no more noyse thow make;
Thy staff shal be redy to morowe I under take,"
"In soth," quod he, "I wol nat fro the dorr wend
Tyl I have my staff."—"Thow bribour, than have the todir end,"
Quod he that was within; and leyd it on his back,
Right in the same plase as chapmen berith their
And so he did to mo, as he coud a rede, [pak;
Graspying aftir with the staff in lengith and eke in brede;
And fond hym othir whyle redlich inoughe
With the staffys end high upon the browe.
The hosteler ley oppon his bed and herd of this affray, [asay:
And stert him up lightlich, and thought he wold
He toke a staff in his hond, and highed wondir blyve
Tyl he wer with the feleship that shuld never thryve.
"What be yee?" quod the hosteler; and knew them both wele.
"Hyust! pese," quod the paramour: "Jak, thow must be fele;
Ther is a theff, I tell the, within this hall dorr."
"A theff?" quod Jak; "this is a nobill chere
That thou hym hast yfound, yf wee him myght cach."
"Yis, yis, care the nought; with hym we shul mach
Wele inowe or he be go, yf so we had lighte,
For we to be strong inowe with o man for to fighte."
"The devil of Hell," quod Jak "breke this thev'is bonis!
The key of the kitchen, as it wer for the nonys,
Is above with our dame: and she hath such usage,
And she be wake of her slepe, she fallith in such a rage
That al the weke aftir there may no man hir plese,
So she stirith about this house a wood rese.
But now I am avisid but how we shul have lyte;
I have too gistis within that this same nyght
Supid in the halle, and had a litill feir: [pire,
Go up," quod Jak, "and loke, and in the ashis
And I wol kepe the dorr; he shall not stert out."
"Nay, for God that wol I nat, lest I cach a clout,"
Seid the todir to Jak, "for thou knowist bettir than I
All the estris of this house; go up thyself and spy."
"Nay, for soth," quod Jak, "that were grete unrighte. [fighte:
To aventur oppon a man that with hym did not
Sithens thou hast hym bete and with thy staff ypilt,
Me thinkith it wer no reson that I shuld ber the gilt; [hede,
For by the blysyng of the cole he myght se myne
And lightly lene me such a stroke my hond to be dede. [about;
Then wol we do by common assent sech hymal
Who that metith hym first pay him on the snout;
For methought I herd hym here last among the pannys,
Kepe thou the toder side, but ware the watir cannys,
And if he be herein ryght sone we shull hym fynde,
And we to be strong inowghe o theffe for to bynde."
"Aha ha!" thought the Pardoner, "beth the pannys aryn?" [a gynne;
And drowhe oppon that side, and thought oppon
So at last he fond oon, and set it on his hede,
For as the case was fall ther' to be had grete nede:
But yit he graspit ferthirmore to have somwhat in honde,
And fond a grete a ladill right as he was gonde,
And thought for to sterte out betwene them both to
And waytid wele the paramour that had doon hym woo, [nose,
And set him with the ladill on the gruscill on the
That all the week aftir he had such a pose,
That both his eyin waterid erliche by the morowe,
But she that was the cause of it had ther' of no sorowe.
But now to the Pardoner. As he wold stert awey
The hosteler met with hym, but nothyng to his pay:
The Pardoner ran so swith the pan fill him fro
And Jak hosteler aftir him as blyve as he myght
And stapid oppon a brondeal unware, [go,
That hym had bin beter to have goon more asware,
For the egg of the pann met with his shynne,
And karff atoo a veyn and the next fyn:
But whils that it was grene he thought litil on,
But when the greneness was apast the greff sat ner the bone;
Yit Jak leyd to his hond to grope wher it sete,
And when he found he was yhurt the Pardoner he gan to threte,
And swore by Seynt Amyas that he shuld abigg
With stroks hard and sore even oppon the rigg;
Yf he hym myght fynd he nothyng would hym spare: [a square,
That herd the Pardoner wele, and held hym bettir
And thought that he had strokis ryght inough.
Wytnes on his armis, his back, and his browe.

"Jak then," quod the paramour, "where is the theff ago?" [fro,
"I n'ote," quod tho Jak; "right now he lept me
That Crist'is curs go with hym, for I have harm and spite:
Be my trowith and I also and he goith nat al quyte:
But and we myght hym fynd we wol aray him so
That he shuld have legg ne foot to morrowe on to go.
But how shull we hym fynd? the Moon is adown,"
(As grace was for the Pardoner) and eke when they did roun [asyde,
He herd them evir wel inowe, and went the more
And drew him ever bakward, and let the strokis glide.
"Jak," quod the paramour, "I hold it for the best,
Sith the Moon is down, for to go to rest,
And make the gatis fast; he may not then astert,
And eke of his own staff he berith a redy mark,
Wherby thou mayst him knowe among all the route,
And thou ber a redy ey, and weyt wele aboute
To morowe when they shul wend; this is the best rede:
Jak, what seyst thou therto? is this wele yseyd?"
"Thy wit is clere," quod Jak; "thy wit mut nodis stond."
He made the gatis fast; ther is no more to doon.
The Pardoner stode aside, his chekis ron and bled,
And was ryght evil at ese al nyght in his hede:
He must of force lige lyke a colyn swerd, [berd;
Yit it mevid him, wondir sore for making of his
He payd nat full therfore though a womans art
For wyne and eke for cawdill, and had ther'of no part: [derstonde,
He ther'for preyd Seyn Julianc, as ye mowe on-
That the devill her shulde spede on watir and on londe,
So to dissceive a travellyng man of his herbergage,
And coud not els save curs his angir to aswage;
And was distract of his wit, and in grete despayr
For aftir his hete he caught a cold through the nyght's eyr,
That he was ner afound it, and coud, none othir help: [whelp
But as he sought his lodggyng he happid oppon a
That ley undir a steyir, a grete Walssh dog,
That bare about his neck a grete huge clog;
Because that he was spetouse, and wold sone bite,
The clog was hongit about his nek, for men shuld nat wite
Nothyng dogg'is maister yf he did eny harm,
So for to excuse them both it was a wyly charm.
The Pardoner wold have loggit hym ther, and lay somwhat nigh, [thigh,
The warrok was awakid and caught hym by the
And bote hym wondir spetously, defending wele his couch,
That the Pardoner myght nat ne hym nether touch.
But held hym a square by that othir side,
As holsom was at that tyme for tereing of his hyde:
He coud noon othir help, but leyd adown his hede
In the dogg'is littir, and wishid aftir brede
Many a time and offt, the dog for to plese,
To have yle ymore nere for his own ese:
But wish what he wold, his fortune seyd ney;
So trewly for the Pardoner it was a dismal dey.
The dog ley evir grownyng, redy for to snache.
Wher'for the Pardoner durst nat with hym mache,
But ley as still as eny stone, remembring his foly,
That he wold trust a tapster of a common hostry;
For commonly for the most part they ben wyly echon.
But now to alle the company a morrow whan they shuld gon
Was noon of all the feleship half so sone ydight
As was the gentil Pardoner; for al tyme of the nyght
He was aredy in his aray, and had nothing to doon
Saffe shake alite his eris, and trus and be goone.
Yet or he cam in company he wissh away the blood.
And bond the sorys to his hede with the typet of his hood,
And made lightsom chere for men shuld nat spy
Nothyng of his turment ne of his luxury; [pry,
And the hosteler of the house, for nothing he coud
He coud nat knowe the Pardoner among the company
A morowe when they shuld wend, for ought that they coud pour, [bour,
So wysely went the Pardoner out of the dogg'is
And blynched from the hosteler, and turned offt about,
And evirmore beheld hym amydward of the rout,
And was evir syngyng to make al thyng good;
But his notis wer somwhat low for aking of his hede;
So at that tyme he had no more grame,
But held hym to his happynes to scape shame.
The Knyght and all the feleship froward gon they wend,
Passyng forth merely to the toun'ys end;
And by that tyme they were ther the day began to
And the son merely upward gan he pike, [rype,
Pleying undir the egge of the firmament,
"Now," quod the Hoost of Southwork, and to the feleship bent,
"Who sawe evir so feyre or so glad a day,
And how sote this seson is entring into May?
The thrustelis and the thrushis, in this glad morn-yng, [gale
The ruddok and the goldfynch; but the nyghtin-
His amerous notis lo how he twynith small!
Lo how the trees grenyth that nakid wer, and nothing
Bare this month afore but their sommer clothing!
Lo how nature makith for them everichone!
And as many as ther be he forgettith noone!
Lo how the seson of the yere and averell shouris
Doith the busshis burgyn out blossoms and flouris!
Lo the prymerosis how fresh they ben to seue!
And many othir flouris among the grasis grene.
Lo how they sprynge, and sprede, and of divers hue!
Beholdith, and seith both rede, white and blue!
That lusty bin and comfortabill for mann'ys sight!
For I sey for myself it makith my herte to light.
Now sith almighty soveryn hath sent so feir a dey
Let se now, as covenant is, in shorting of the wey,
Who shall be the first that shall unlace his male
In comfort of us al, and gyn some mery tale;
For and we shuld now begyn to draw lot
Peraventure it might fal ther it ought not,
On som unlusty persone that wer not wele awakid,
Or semybousy ovyr eve, and had ysong and crakid
Somwhat ovir much: how shuld he than do:
For *Who shuld tell a tale he must have good wyll therto.*
And eke som men fastyng beth glewid and ybound
In their tongis; and som fastyng beth nothyng jocound,

And som men in the morning ther mouthis beth adoun; [soun.
Tyll that they be charmyd their wordis woll not
So thys is my conclusioune and my last knot,
It were great gentilnes to tell without lot."
"By the rood of Bromholm," quod the Merchant
"As fer as I have sailed, riden and ygo, [tho,
Sawe I nevir a man yet tofore this ilk day
So wele coud rule a company as our Host, in fay
His wordis ben so comfortabill, and comyth so in seson,
That my wit is ovircome to make eny reson
Contrary to his counsaill at myn ymagynacioune,
Wher'for I woll tell a tale to your consolacioune,
In ensampill to yowe that when that I have do
Another be right redy then for to tell, ryght so
To fulfyll our Hoost'is wyll and his ordinaunce.
There shall no fawte be found in me: gode wyl shal be my chaunce:
With this I be excusid of my rudines,
Altho' I cannot peynt my tale, but tell it as it is,
Lepyng ovir no sentence, as ferforth as I may,
But tell yewe the yolke and put the white away."

THE

MERCHANT'S SECOND TALE;

OR, THE HISTORY OF BERYN.

WHILOM yeris passed in the old dawis
When rightfullich by reson governyd wer the lawis,
And pryncipally in the cete of Rome, that was so rich,
And worthiest in his dayes, and noon to him ilich
Of worship ne of wele, ne of governaunce,
For alle londis christened ther' of had dotaunce,
And all othir natioums, of what feith they were,
Whils the emperour was hole, and in his paleys there
I mainteynid in honour; and in pop'is se
Rome was then obeied of all christiante.
But it farith ther'by as it doith by othir thingis;
For though nethir cete, regioune, ne kyngis,
Beth nat nowe so worthy as were by olde tyme,
As we fynd in romaunces, in gestis, and in ryme,
For all things doith wast, and eke mann'ys lyff
Ys more shorter than it was; and our wittis fyve
Mowe nat comprehende now in our dieties
As som tyme myght these old wise poetes.
But sith that terrene thinges ben nat perdurabill,
No mervail is though Rome be somwhat variabill
Fro honour and fro wele sith his friendis passid;
As many anothir town is payrid and ylassid
Within these few yeris, as we mowe se at eye;
Lo! sirs, here fast by Wynchelse and Ry.
But yit the name is evir oon of Rome as it was groundit
After *Remus and Romulus*, that first that cete foundit,
That brethren weren both to, as old bokis writon;
But of ther lef and governaunce I wol not now enditen,
But of othir mater that fallith to my mynd;
Wher'for, gentill sirs, ye that beth behind
Drawith somwhat nere thikker to a rout,
That my wordis may soune to eche man about.
Aftir these two brethren Romulus and Remus
Julius Cæsar was emperour, that rightful was of *Domus*.

This cete he governed nobilich wele, [telle;
And conquered many a regioune, acronicull doth us
For, shortly to conclude, al tho wer adversaryes
To Rome in his dayis he made them tributaries;
So had he in subjectioune both frend and foon,
Of which I tell yew trewly Englond was oon.
Yit aftir Julius Cæsar, and sith that Crist was bore,
Rome was governed as wele as it was before,
And namelich in that tyme and in the same yeris
When it was governed by the Doseperis;
As semeth wele by reson, who so can entend,
That *O mann'ys wyt ne wyll may not comprehend*
The boucheff and the myscheff, as may many hedis;
Ther'for ther operaciouns, ther domes, and ther dedes,
Were so egallich ydoon; for *in all cristen londis*
Was noon *that they sparid for to* mend wrongis,
Then Constantyne the third, aftir these Dosiperis,
Was emperour of Rome, and regnyd many yeris,
So shortly to pas ovir, after Constantyn's dayis
Phus Augustinus, as songen is in layes,
That Constantyn'ys son, and of plener age,
Was emperour ychose, as fill by heritage,
In whose tyme sikerlich the seven sages were
In Rome ydwelling decently; and yf yee lust to lere
How they were yclepid, or I ferther goon,
I woll tell you the names of them everichone,
And declare yeu the cause why they ther namys
The first was ycleped Sother Legifeer, [bere,
This is thus much for to sey, as man bering the lawe:
And so he did trewly; for lever he had be sclawe
Then do or sey eny thing that sowned out of reson,
So clene was his conscience, ysef in trowith and reson.
Marcus Stoyeus the second, so pepill hym highte;
That is to mene in our constert, *a keper of the right:*
And so he did full trewe; for the record and the plees
He wrote them evir trewly, and took noon othir fees
But such as was ordynid to take by the yere:
Now, Lord God! in Cristendom I wold it were so clere.
The third Crassus Asulus among men clepid was,
An house of rest, and ese, and counsail, in every case:
For to onderstond that was his name full right,
For evirmore the counsails he helpid wyth al his
Antonius Judeus the ferth was yclepid, [myght.
That was as much to meen, as wele we myght have
As any posed of all the long yere, [clepid
That myght have made hym sory or chongit onys chere,
But evirmore rejoycing, what that evir betid,
For his hert was evir mery, right as the somer
Summus Philopater was the fifft'is name, [bridd.
That thoughe men wold slee hym, or do hym al the shame,
Angir, or disease, as evil as men couthe,
Yet wold he love them nevir the wers in hert ne in mowith. [above,
His will was cleen undir his foot, and nothing hym
Ther'fore he was clepid *Father of perfite love.*
The sixth and the sevinth of these sevin sages
Was Stypio and Sithero, as thes word astrolages
Was sirname to them both aftir their sciences;
For of astronomy sikerlich the cours and al the fences
Bothe they knowhit wele inoughe, and wer right sotil of art.
But now to other purpose, for her I woll depart
As lightly as I can, and draw to my matere,
In that same tyme that these sages were

Dwellyng thus in Room, a litill without the walles,
In the subarbis of the town, of chambris and of hallis,
And all other howseing that to a lord belongit,
Was noon wythyn the cete, ne noon so wele behongit
With docers of highe pryse, ne wallid so aboute,
As was a senatours hous wythyn and eke withoute.
Favinus was his name, a worthe man and rich;
And, for to sey shortlych, in Room was noon hym lyche.
His portis and his estris were full evenaunte
Of tresour and of lordshyp; also the most vailant
He was, and eke ycom of high lynage:
And at last he toke a wyff like to his peerage:
For *Noriture and connyng, bewte and parentyne,*
Wer tho countid more worth than gold or sylvir fyne.
But now it is al othir in many mann'ys thought,
For *Muk ys now ymarried, and vertu set at nought.*
Fawnus and his worthy wyff wer to gidir aloon
Fyveteen wyntir fulliche, and issu had they noon,
Wher'for ther joyis wer not half parfite,
For utterlich to have a child was al ther delite,
That myght enjoy ther heritage and weld their honour,
And eke when they were febill to their trew sowle,
Their fastyng and their prayir, and all that evir they wrought,
As pilgrimage and almsded, ever they besought
That God would of his goodnes som fruyte betwene them send:
Ere gynnyng of their spousaill, the myddil and the end,
This was their most besynes, and all othir delites,
And eke this world is rychis, they set at littil price.
So at last, as God wold, it fill oppon a dey,
As this lady fro chirchward went in the wey,
A child gan stere in her womb; as God'is wyl was,
Wher'of she gan to mervill, and made shortir pas,
Wyth colour pale and eke wanne, and full in hevynes,
For she had nevir tofore that day such manere sekenes.
The wymmen that with hir were gon to behold
The lady and her chere, but nothing they told,
But feir and soft wyth ese homward they her led:
For her soden sekenes ful sore they were adred,
For she was inlich gentil, kynd and amyabill,
And eke trewe of hert, and nothing variabill.
She lovid God above all thing, and dred syn and shame,
And Agea sikerly was her rightfull name.
So aftir, in breff tyme, whan it was purseyved
That she had done a womans dede, and had a child conseyved,
The joy that she made ther may no tung tell;
And al so much, or more, yf I ne ly shell,
Favinus made in his behalf for this glad tyding,
That I trowe I leve the emperour ne the kyng
Made no bettir cher to wyff, ne no more myrth,
Than Fawnus to Agea. And when the tyme of birth
Nyghid ner and ner, aftir cours of kynd,
Wetith wele in certen that all the wyt and mynd
Of Fawnus was continuell of feir delyveraunce
Betwene Agea and his child, and made grete ordenaunce
Ageyn the tyme it shuld be bore, as it was for to doun.
So as God wold whan tyme cam Agea had a son;
But joy that Fawnus made was dobil tho to fore
When that he knew in certen she had a son ybore,
And sent anoon for nursis four, and no less,
To reule this child: Afterward as yeris did pas,
The child was kept so tenderly that it throff wel the bet,
For what the norishes axit anoon it was ysett. [go:
In his chambir it norished was; to town it mut nat
Fawnus lovid it so cherely hit might nat part hym fro.
It was so feyr a creature as myght be on lyve
Of lyms and of fetours, and growe wondir blyve.
This child that I of tell, Berinus was his name,
Was ovir much cherished, which turned hym into grame, [spase;
As yee shull here aftir, when time comyth and
For *Aftir swete the soure comyth full oft in many a place:*
For as sone as he coud go and also speke
All that he set his ey on, or aftir list to beke,
Anoon he should it have, for no man hym wernyd.
But it had be wel bettir he had be wele ylernyd
Noriture and gentilnes, and had yhad some hey,
For it fill so aftir wyth what child he did pley
Yf the pley ne likid hym he wold breke his hede,
Or with a knyff hym hurt ryght nygh hond to be dede:
For ther nas knyght ne squyer in his fadirs house,
That thought his own persone moste corajouse,
That did or seyd eny thing Berinus to displese
That he n'old spetously anoon oppon him rese;
Wher'of his fadir had joy and his modir also:
Yet it semith to many a man it was nat wisely do.
When Beryn passed was seven yere, and grew in more age,
He wrought full many an evil chek; for such was his corage
That there he wist or might do eny evill dede
He wold nevir sese for ought that men him seid;
Whe'fore many a pore man ful oft was agrevid;
But Fawnus and Agea ful light theron belevid:
And thoughe men wold pleyne ful short it shuld availe,
For Fawnus was so myghty, and cheff of all counsaill
With Augustyn the emperour, that all men hym drad,
And lete pas ovir mischefe and harmys that they had.
Berinus furthermore lovid well the disc,
And for to pley at hazard, and held ther' of grete pryse,
And all othir gamys that losery was in,
Aud evirmore he lost, and nevir myght wyn.
Berynus at hazard many a nyght he wakid,
And oft tyme it fill so that he cam hom al nakid:
And that was all his joy, for right wele he knew
That Agea his modir wold cloth hym newe.
Thus Berynus lyvid, as I have told to fore,
Tyll he was of the age of eightene yere or more,
But othir whyls amongis for pleyntis that were grete
Fawnus made amendis and put them in quiete:
So was the fadir cause the sone was so wyld;
And so have many mo such of his own child
Be cause of his undoyng, al we mowe se al day;
For *Thing ytake is hard to put awey,*
As hors that evir trottid, trewlich I yew telle,
It were hard to make hym aftir to ambill welle:
Ryght so by Beryn; when he had his lust and wyll
when he was lite
It shuld be hevy afterward to reve his old delite,
Save the whele of Fortune, that no man may withstonde,
For every man on lyve ther'on he is gond; [spoke she turnyd bakward, right at high noone,
O
All ageyn Berynus, as ye shull here sone,
Agea his modir fell in grete sikenes,
And sent aftir husbond wyth wordis hire to lis,

And for she wold tell hym hir hole hert'is wyll
Er she out of the world partid, as it was right and skill.
When Fawnus was ycome, and saw so rodylese
Hys wyff that was so dere, that for love he chese,
No mervell though his hert wer in grete morning,
For he purseyvyd fullich she drewe to hir endyng:
Yit made he othir chere then in his hert was
To put awey discomfort, dissimilying wyth his fase
The hevynes of his hert: wyth chere he did it close, [glose;
For such a manner craft ther is wyth them can
Save that tournyth all to cautele: but Fawnus did nat so,
For wetith wele in certeyn his hert was full of wo
For his wyff Agea; and yit for craft he couth
The teris fro his eyin ran doun by his mowith:
When he saw the pangis of deth comyng so fast
Oppon his wyff Agea almost his hert to brast.
Agea lyfft up hir eyen, and beheld the chere
Of hir husbond Fawnus, that was so drew a fere,
And seyd, "Sir, why do ye thus? this is an elying
In comfort of us both, yf yee might spare [fare
And put awey thys hevynes whyle that yee and I
Myght speke of othir thyngis, for deth me nyghith nygh,
For to body ne to soule this vailyth nat a karse."
"Now tellyth on," quod Fawnus, "and I wol lete it
For the time of talkyng as wele as I may [pas
But out of my remembraunce onto my endying day
Yeur deth woll nevir, I woot it wele, but evir be in my mynd." [kynd
"Then, good Sir," quod Agea, "beth to my soule
When my body is out of sight, for therto have I nede,
For truer make then yee be in word ne in dede
Had nevir woman, ne more kyndnes
Hath shewed unto his make, I know right wele iwis:
Now wold ye so her after in hert be as trewe,
To lyve without make, and on yeur sone rewe,
That litill hath ylernid sithens he was bore: [fore
Let hym have no stepmodir, for children have to-
Comelich they lovith nat: wherfore wyth hert I prey
Have chere onto yeur sone aftir my endyng day;
For so God me help and I lafft yew behynd
Shuld nevir man on lyve bryng it in my mynd
To be no more yweddit, but lyve soule aloon.
Now yee know all my wyll, good sir, think ther'on."
"Certis," quod Fawnus, "whils I have wyttis fyve
I think nevir aftir yew to have another wyff."
The preest was com therwythall for to do hir rightis;
Fawnus toke his leve, and all the othir knyghtis,
Hir kyndrid and frendis kissed hir echone:
It is no nede to axe where ther was dole or noon.
Agea cast her ey up, and lokid all aboute, [oute,
And wold have kissid Beryn, but then was he wyth-
Pleying to the hazard, as he was wont to doon,
For as sone as he had ete he wold ren out anoon;
And when she saw he was not ther that she thought most on [anoon.
Hire sekenes and hir mournyng brest her hert
A damsell tofore that was ron into the toune
For to feche Beryn, that pleyed for his gowne,
And had almost lost it, right as the damsell cam,
And swore and starid as he was wood, as longit to the game.
The damsell seyd to Beryn, "Sir, ye must com home,
For but ye hygh blyve that yee wer ycome
Yeur mothir woll be dede, she is yit on lyve:
Yf ye wol speke wyth her yee must hygh blyve."
"Who bad so, lewd Kitt?"—"Your fadir, sir," quod she.
"Go home, lewd visenag, that evil mut thow the!"
Quod Beryne to the damsell, and gan her fray and feer,
And bad the devill of Hell hir should to tere.
"Hast thow ought els to do but let me of my game?
Now by God in hevin, by Peter, and by Jame,"
Quoth Beryn in grete angir, and swore be book and bell,
Rehersyng many namys mo than me lyst to tell,
"N'er thow my fadirs messenger wer thou shuldist nevir ete brede:
I had levir my modir and also thou wer dede
Than I shuld lese the game that I am nowgh in;"
And smote the damsell undir the ere, the weet gon upward spyn:
The death of Agea he set at litill pryse;
So in that wrath frolick Beryn threw the dyse,
And lost wyth that same cast al was leyde adown,
And stert up in a wood rage, and ballid on his crown, [abyde;
And so he did the remnaunt, as many as wold
But for drede of Fawnus his felawis gan to hyde,
And nevir had wyll, ne list, wyth Beryn for to fyght,
But evir redy to pley and wyn what they myght.
The deth of Agea sprang about the towne,
And every man that herd the bell for her sowne
Bemony'd her full sore; saff Beryn toke none hede,
But sought anothir feleship, and quyklich to them yede,
To such manner company as shuld nevir thryve,
For such he lovid bettir than his modir's lyve;
And evirmore it shuld be nyght or he wold home drawe,
For of his fadir in certeyn he had no manner awe;
For evir in his yowith he had al his wyll,
And was ypassed chastising but men wold hym kyll.
Fawnus for Agea, as it was well fitting,
Made grete ordenaunce for hir burying,
Of prelatis and of preestis, and of all othir thyng,
As thoughe she had be a wyff of a worthy king
It myght nat have be mendit; such was his gentilnes,
For at hir enteryng was many a worthy messe.
For four weeks full, or he did her intere, [there,
She ley in lede wythyn his house; but Beryn cam not
Namelich into the place where his modir ley,
Ne onys wole he a *Pater noster* for hir soule sey:
His thought was all in unthryft, lechery, and dyse,
And drawyng all to foly, for *Yowith is rechles,*
But ther it is refreyned and hath som manere eye:
And ther'fore methynkith that I may wele sey
A man ypassid yowith, and is wythout lore,
May be wele likyned to a tre wythout more,
That may nat bowe ne bere fruyte, but root and ever wast:
Ryght so by yowith farith that no man list to chast,
This mowe we know verely by experience,
That *Yerd makith vertu and benevolence.*
In childhode for to growe, as provith ymagynacioune:
A plant whils it is grene, or it have dominacioune,
A man may wyth his fyngers ply it wher hym lyst,
And make ther'of a shakill, a with, or a twist;
But let the plant stond, and yeris ovirgrowe,
Men shull not wyth both his hondis unnethis make it bowe:

No more myght Fawnus make his sone Beryn,
When he grew in age, to his lore enclyne;
For every day when Beryn rose unwash he wold dyne,
And draw hym to his feleship as even as a lyne,
And then com home and ete, and soop, and sclepe at nyght:
This was al his besynes but yf that he did fight;
Wher'for his fadir's hert Fawnus gan for to blede,
That of his modir that ley at home he toke no more hede:
And so did all the pepill that dwellid in the town
Of Beryn's wildnes gon speke and eke roun.
Fawnus oppon a dey, when Beryn came at eve,
Was set oppon a purpose to make his sone leve
All his shrewd taichis wyth goodnes if he myght,
And taught hym feir and soft, but Beryn toke it light,
And countid at litill pryse al his fadir's tale.
Fawnus saw it wold nat; with colour wan and pale
He partid from his sone, and wyth a sorowfull herte.
I ne can write halfyndele how sore he hid smert
The disobeying of his sone and his wyf's deth,
That, as the book tellith, he wished that his breth
Had yheen above the serkill celestyne,
So fervent was his sorrowe, his angir, and his pyne.
So, shortly to conclude, Agea was interid,
And Fawnus livid wyfles three yere were ywerid,
Wher'of ther was grete speche for his high honour;
Tyll at last word cam onto the emperour
That Fawnus was without wyfe, and seld was jocounde,
But mournyng for Agea that he was to ybound,
And lyvid as an hermyte, soule and destitute,
Wythout consolacioune, pensyff oft and mute:
Wher'for Augustinus, of Rome the Emperour,
Was inwardlich sory, and in grete dolour.
Wyth that the seven Sagis and Senatouris all
Were assemblid, to discryve what shuld ther'of fall;
The wych seyd shortly, "For a molestatioune
Ther was noon othir remedy but a consolacioune;
For *Whoso wer in eny thing displesid or agrevid*
Must by a like thing egall be remevid." [cioune,
And when the emperour knew all their determina-
Quicklich in his mynd he had imaginacioune
That Fawnus for Agea was in high distres,
And must ycurid be wyth passyng gentilnes
Of som lusty lady, that of pulchritude
Were excellent al othir: so, shortly to conclude,
The emperour had a love tofore he had a wyf
That he lovid as hertlich as his own lyf,
As was as feir a creature as sone myght beshyne;
So excellent of bewte that she myght be shryne
To all othir wymmen that wer tho lyvand:
But for the emperour had a wyf ye shul wele onderstond
He cam nat in hir company to have his delite;
For Cristendome and conscience was tho more perfite
Then it is now adayis, yf I durst tell:
But I wol leve at this tyme. Than Fawnus al so well
Was aftir sent in hest, of seknes to be curyd;
So what for drede and ellis they wer both ensuryd
In presence of the emperour, so Fawnus myght nat flee;
It was the emperours wyll, it myght noon othir be.
So wythin a tyme Agea was forgete,
For Fawnus thought litill on that he hir behight:
For as the seven Sagis had afore declarid
It cam all to purpose; for Fawnus litil carid
For eny thing at all save his wyff to plese,
That Rame was yclepid: for rest nethir ese
Fawnus nevir had but of her presence: [fence,
So was his herte on her yset that he coud no de-
Save evirmore be wyth hir, and stare on hir visage,
That the most part of Room held it for dotage,
And had much marvell of his variaunce:
But *What is that Fortune cannat put in chance?*
For ther n'as man on lyve on woman more bedotid
Then Fawnus was in Rame, ne half so much ysotid.
Wyth that Rame had knowlech that Fawnus was ysmyt
Wyth the dart of Love: ye mowe ryght wele it wyt
That all that evir she coud cast or ythynck
Was all ageyn Berynus, for many a sotill wrench
She thought and wrought day by day, as meny wemen doon,
Tyll they have of their desire the full conclusioune:
For the more that Fawnus of Rame did made
The more dangerous was Rame and of chere sade,
And kept wele hir purpose undir covirture:
She was the las to blame; it grew of nature.
But though that Rame wrought so, God forbede that alle [gall,
Wer of that condicioune. Yet touch no man the
It is my plein counsell, but doith as othir doith:
Take yeur part as it comith of roughe and eke of smoothe. [mynde,
Yit noritur, wit and gentilnes, reson and perfite
Doth all these worthy women to worch agenys kynde, [dure,
That thoughe they be agrevid they suffir and en-
And passith ovir for the best, and folowith nothing nature. [sire,
But now to Rame's purpose, and what was hir de-
Shortly to conclude, to make debate and ire
Betwene the fadir and the sone, as it was likely tho;
What for his condicioune, and what for love also
That Fawnus owt to his wyff, the rathir he must hir leve,
And grant for to mend, yf ought hir did greve.
Berinus evir wrought right as he did before,
And Rame made hym chere of love, ther myght no woman more,
And gaff hym gold and clothing evir as he did lese,
Of the best that he coud ought wher in town chese,
And speke full feir wyth hym, to make al thyng dede; [brede:
Yit wold she have yete his herte wythout falt or
She hid so hir felony, and spak so in covert,
That Beryn myght nat spy it but lite of Ram'ys hert.
So, shortly to pas ovir, it fill oppon a nyghte,
When Fawnus and his fresh wyf wer to bed ydight,
He toke hir in his armys and made hir hertely chere,
Ther myght no man betir make to his fere,
And seyd, "Myn ertly joy, myn hertis full plesaunce,
My wele, my woo, my paradise, my lyv'is sustenaunce!
Why ne be ye mery, why be ye so dull,
Sith ye know I am your own right as yeur hert woll?
Now tell on love, myn own hert! yf ye eylith ought,
For and it be in my power anoon it shall be wrought."
Rame wyth that gan sighe, and wyth a wepeing chere [nere:
Undid the bagg of trechery, and seide in this ma-
"No mervell though myn herte be sore and full of dele, [whele.
For when I to yew weddit was wrong went my

But who may be ageyns hap and aventure?
Therfor as wele as I may myne I mut endure."
Wyth many sharp wordis she set his herte on feir
To purchase with hir practik that she did desire:
But hoolich all hir wordis I cannot wele reherse,
Ne write ne endite how she did perce
Through Fawny's herte and his scull also;
For more petouse compleynt of sorowe and of woo,
Made nevir woman, ne more petously,
Then Rame made to Fawnys: she smote full bitterly
Into the veyn, and through his herte blood;
She bloderit so and wept, and was so high on mode,
That unneth she myght speke but othir while among
Wordis of discomfort, and hir hondis wrong;
For alas and woo the tyme that she weddit was!
Was evir more the frefreit when she myght have spase,
"I am yweddit; ye, God woot best in what maner and how!
For yf it wer so fall I had a child by you,
Lord! how shuld he lyve, how shuld he com awey?
Sith Beryn is yeur first sone, and heir aftir yeur day?
But yf that he had grace to scoole for to goo,
To have som maner conning that he myght trust to,
For as it now stondeth it were the best rede,
For, so God me help, I had levir he wer dede
Than wer of such condicioune or of such lore
As Beryn yeur sone is; it wer bett he wer inbore,
For he doith nat ellis save at hazard pley,
And comyth home al nakid ech othir dey;
For within this month that I have wyth yeu be
Fiftene sithis, for verry grete pite
I have yclothid hym al new when he was to tore,
For evirmore he seyde the old were ylore.
Now and he wer my sone I had levir he were ysod,
For and he pley so long half our lyvelode
Wold scarsly suffise hymself oon, [John
And n'ere yee wold be grevid, I swere be Seynt
He shuld aftir this dey be clothid no more for me,
But he wold kepe them bettir and draw fro nycete."
"Now gentill wyff, grāmcy of yeur wise tale,
I thynk wel the more that I sey no fale; [nakid,
For towchyng my grevaunce, that Beryn goith al
Treulich that grevaunce is somwhat asclakid:
Let hym aloon, I prey yew, and I woll con yew thank,
For in such losery he hath lost many a frank.
The devil hym spede that rech yf he be to tore,
And he use it hereaftir as he hath doon to fore."
Beryn arose a morowe, and cried wondir fast,
And axid aftir clothis, but it was all in wast;
Ther was no man tendant for hym in all the house;
The whele was ychaungit into anothir cours.
Fawnus herd his sone wele how he began to cry,
And rose up anoon and to hym did high,
And had forgete nothyng that Rame had yseyde,
For he boilid so his herte he was nat well apayde.
He went into the chambir ther his sone ley,
And set hym down in a chair, and thus he gan to sey:
"My gentil sone Beryn, now feir I wol ye teche;
Rew oppon thy self, and be thyne own leche.
Manhode is ycom now, myne own dere sone,
It is tyme thow be aweynyd of thyn old wone:
And thow art 20 wynters, and naught hast of doctryne; [be thyne,
Yit woldist thow draw to perfite the worship wold
To noritur and goodship, and al honest thing,
Ther myght com to myn herte no more glad tyding.
Leve now al thy foly and thy rebawdry,
As tablis and mervellis, and the hazardry, [good,
And draw the to the company of honest men and
Els leve thow me as wele as Criste died on the rode;
And for al menkynd his ghost pas lete,
Thow shalt for me heraftir stond on thyn own fete,
For I woll no longir suffir this aray
To clothe the al new eche othir dey.
Yf thow wolt draw the to wit, and rebawdry withdraw, [thow:
Of such good as God have sent yn part have shalt
And if thow wolt nat, my sone, do as I the tell,
Of me shalt thow naught have, trust me right well.
Wenyst thow wyth thy disc-pleying hold myn honoure
Aftir my deth dey?" Then Beryn gan to loure,
And seide, "Is this a sermon or a prechement?
Ye were nat wont herto; how is this ywent?
Sendith for some clothing that I wer ago;
My felawis lokith aftir me, I woot well they do so:
I woll nat leve my feleship ne my rekelagis,
Ne my dise-pleying, for all yeur heretages:
Doith yeur best wyth them by yeur lyf day,
For when they fall to me I wol do as I may.
Benedicite! fadir, who hath enformyd you,
And set you into ire, to make me chere rowe?
But I know wele inough whens this counsaill cam;
Trewlich of yeur own wyfe, that evil dame;
Com oppon hir body that fals putaigne,
For trewlich, fadir, yee dote on hir, and so all men seyne,
Alas that evir a man shuld, that is of high counsaile,
Set all his wisdom on his wyv's taile!
Yee lovith hir so much she hath benome yeur wyt,
And I may curs the tyme that evir ye wer yknyt,
For now I am in certen I have a stepmodir:
They been shrewis, som ther been, but few, othir.
Vel Fikil Flaptail, such oon as she ys,
For all my pleying at dise yit do yee more amys:
Yee have ylost yeur name, yeur worship, and yeur feith,
So dote ye on hir, and levith all she sayith."
Fawnus wyth the same word gaff the chayir a but,
And lepe out of the chambir, as who seyd Cut,
And swore in verrey woodnes be God omnipotent
That Beryn of his wordis shuld sore repent.
Beryn set nought ther'of, with a proude herte
Answerd his fadir, and axid a new shert.
He gropid al about to have found oon,
As he was wont to fore, but ther was noon.
Then toke he such wilokis as he fond ther,
And beheld hymself what man he wer;
For when he was arayde then gan he firste be wrothe,
For his womb lokid out and his rigg both.
He stert aftir his fadir, and he began to cry,
"For seth myn array, for the villany
Ys as wele yeurs as it is myne."
Fawnus let him clatir and cry wel and fyne,
And passid forth still and spak nat a word.
Then Beryn gan to think it was nat al bord
That his fadir seyde when he wyth hym was,
And gan to think all about, and therwyth seid "Alass!
Now know I wele forsoth that my modir is dede;"
For tho gan he to glow first a sory mann'yis hede.
Now kepe thy cut, Beryn, for thou shalt have a fit
Somwhat of the world to lern betir wit;
For and thow wist sikerly what ys for to com
Thow woldist wissh aftir thy deth full oft and ylone;
For *Ther w'ys belying half so sore wyth staff nethir sword*
As man to be bete with his own yerd.

The pyry is yblowe, hop, Beryn, hop,
That ripe wol heraftir and on thyn hede drop:
Thou tokist noon hede whils it shoon hoot,
Ther for wynter the nyghith asay by thy cote.
Beryn for shame to town durst he nat go,
He toke his wey to churchward; his frend was made his foo,
For angir, sorowe, and shame, and hevynes, that he had,
Unneth he might speke, but stode half as mad.
"O alas!" quod Beryn, "what wyt had I
That coud nat tofore this dey know sikerly
That my modir dede was? but now I know to sore,
And drede more that eche day heraftir more and more
I shall know and fele that my modir is dede.
Alas! I smote the messangere, and toke of hir noon hede:
Alas! I am right pore; alas! that I am nakid:
Alas! I sclept to fast, tyl sorowe now hath me wakid:
Alas! I hunger sore; alas! for dole and peyn,
For eche man me seith hath me in disdeyn."
This was all his mirth to the churchward
That of his modir Agea he toke so litill reward.
When Beryn was within the chirch then gan he wers fray:
As sone as he saw the tomb where his modir lay
His colour gan to chaunge into a dedely hew:
"Alas, gentill modir! so kynd you wer and trew,
It is no mervell for thy deth though I sore smert."
But therwythal the sorowe so fervent smote his hert
That sodenly he fil down stan dede in swowe:
That he had part of sorowe methynkith that myght I avowe.
Beryn lay so long or he myght awake,
For al hys fyve wittis had clene hym forsake,
Wel myght he by hymself, when reson ycom were,
Undirstond that Fortune had a sharp spere,
And eke grete power among high and lowe,
Som to avaunce and som to ovirthrowe.
So at last whan Beryn a litill wakid were
He trampelid fast with his fete, and al to tere his ere
And his visage both, right as a wodeman,
With many a bitir tere that from his eyen ran,
And sighid many a sore sigh, and had much hevynes,
And evirmore he cursid his grete unkyndnes
To foreyit his modir whils she was alyve,
And lenyd to hir tombe opon his tore sclyve,
And wishid a thowsand sithis he had ybe hir by,
And beheld hir tombe with a petouse eye.
"Now, glorious God!" quod Beryn, "that al thing madist of nought,
Heven and erth, man and beste, sith I am mys-wrought
Of yewe I axe mercy, socour, and help, and grace,
For my mysdede and foly, unthryffe and trespase:
Set my sorowe and peyn somwhat in mesure
Fro dispeir and myscheff as I may endure.
Lord of all lordis! though Fortune be my foo
Yit is thy myght above to turn hym to and fro.
First my modirs lyfe Fortune hath me berevid,
And sith my fadirs love, and nakid also me levid.
What may he do more? Yis, take awey my lyfe;
But for that wer myn ese, and end of al stryfe,
Ther'for he doith me lyve for my wers I sey,
That I shuld evirmore lyve and nevir for to dey."
Now leve I Beryn wyth hys modir tyl I com aye,
And wol return me to Raine, that of hir sotilte
Bethoughte hir al aboute, when Beryn was agoon
That it shuld be wittid hir, wher'for she anoon
In this wise seyd to Fawnus: "Sir, what have ye do,
Althoughe I speke a mery word, to suffir your sone go
Nakid into the town? it was nat my counsaill.
What wol be seyd ther'of? siker without faile,
For I am his stepmodir, that I am cause of alle
The violence, the wrath, the angir, and the gall,
That is betwene yew both, it wol be wit me;
Wher'for I prey you hertely doith hym com hom aye."
"Nay, by trowith," quod Fawnus, "for me comyth he nat yit;
Sithe he of my wordis so litil prise set
As litil shall I charge his estate also:
Sorowe have that rechith though he nakid go,
For every man knowith that he is nat wise;
Wher'for may be supposid his pleying at dise
Is cause of his aray, and nothing yee, my wyff,"
"Yes, iwis," quod Rame, "the tale woll he ryff
Of me and of noon othir, I know right wel afyne;
Wher'for I prey you, gentil sir, and for love myn,
That he wer yfet hom, and that in grete hast,
And let asay offt agein with feirnes hym to chaste;
And send Beryn clothis and a new shert;" [hert.
And made al wele in eche side, and kept close her
"Now sith it is your wyll," quod Fawnus tho anoon,
"That Beryn shall home com, for yeur sake aloon
I woll be the messager to put your herte in ese;
And els, so God me help, wer it nat yew to plese
The gras shuld grow on pament or I hym home bryng."
Yet nethirles forth he went, wyth too or thre riding,
From o strete to anothir, enqueryng to and fro
Aftir Beryn in every place wher he was wont to go,
Seching eviry halk howris two or thre,
With hazardours, and othir such, ther as he was wont to be,
And fond hym not ther; but to chirche went echone,
And at dorr they stode a while and herd Beryn made his mone: [here.
They herd all his compleynt, that petouse was to
Fawnus into the chirch pryvelich gan pire,
But al so sone as he beheld wher Agea lay
His teris ran down be his chekis, and thus he gan to sey:
"A, Agea! myn old love, and my new also!
Alas, that evir our hertis shuld depart atoo!
For in your graciouse dayis of hert'is trobilnes
I had nevir knowlech, but of all gladness;"
Remembryng in his herte, and evir gan renewe
The goodnes betwene them both, and hir herte trewe,
And drew hym ner to Beryn with an hevy mode.
But as sone as Beryn knew and ondirstode
That it was his fadir, he would no longir abide,
But anoon he voidit by the todir side,
And Fawnus hym encountrid, and seyd, "We have the sought
Through the town, my gentil sone, and ther'for void the nought.
Though I seyd a word or two, as me thought for the best
For thyne erudicioune, to drawe the onto lyfe honest, [hert:
Thou shuldist nat so fervently have take it to thyn
But sith I know my wordis doith the so sore smert
Shall no more hereaftir; and eche dey our diete
Shall be mery and solase, and this shall be forgete;

For wele I woot for thy modir that thou art to tore,
Also thou hast grete sorowe, but onys nedith, and no more:
And ther'for, sone, on my blessing to put sorowe away;
Drawe the nowe heraftir to honist myrth and pley,
Lo ther is clothing for yewe, and yeur hors ydight
With harneys all freshe new; and if yee list be knyght
I shall yit or eve that bergeyn undirtake,
That the Emperour for my love a knyght shall you make;
And what that evir ye nede anoon it shall be bought,
For whils that I have eny thing ye shall lak naught."
"Graunt mercy!" quod Beryn with an hevy chere,
"Of yeur worshipfull profir that ye have proferid me here:
But ordir of knyghthode to take is nat my liking:
And sith yeur will is for to do somwhat my plesing,
Ye have a wyfe ye love wele, and so tenderlich,
That and she have children I know right sikerlich
All that she can devyse both be nyght and dey
Shall be to make her childryn heirs of that she may,
And eke sowe sedis of infelicite, [me:
Wher'of wold growe devysioune betwene yewe and
For yf ye spend on me yeur good, and thus riallich
Levith wele, in certen yeur wyfe woll sikerlich
Eche dey for angir her tuskis whet, [to set.
And to smyte with her tunge, your herte in wrath
Toward me from dey to dey, but ye wold aply
Somwhat to hir purpose and aftir hir yew guy;
She wold wex so ovirtwart and of so lither tach,
And evir lour undir her hood a redy for to snache;
She wold be shorfyng of your lyfe, and that desire I naught:
Wher'for to plese all about, my purpose and my thought
Is for to be a marchaunte, and leve myn heritage,
And relese it for evir, for shyppys fyve of stage
Full of marchaundise the best of all this londe:
And yf ye woll so, fadyr, quyk let make the bonde."
Fawnus was right well apayd that ilk word outsterte,
But yit he seyd to Beryn, "I mervell in myn herte
Wher haddist thou this counsaille to leve thyne honour,
And lyve in grete aventure and in grete labour;"
And rid so forth talkyng a soft esy pase
Homward to his place ther that Rame was.
And as sone as Fawnus was ylight adown,
And highid fast to his wyfe, and with hir gan to rown, [chere,
And told hir all the purpose, and made Fawnus
She did hym nat half so much the tyme she was his fere.
She hullid hym, and mollid hym, and toke hym about the nekk,
And went low for the kite, and made many a bekk;
And seyd, "Sir, by yeur spech now right well I here
That yf ye list ye mowe do thing that I most desire;
And that is this, yeur heritage there yeu best likid
That ye myght gyve:" and evir among the brussh awey she pikid
From hir clothis here and there, and sighid therwithall.
Fawnus of his gentilnes by hir myddil smale
Hertlich hir braeyd, and seyd, "I woll nat leve,
I suyr yew my trowith that onys or it be eve
That I shall do my devoir without feintise
For to plese your herte fullich in all wyse."
"Graunt mercy! myn own soverene," quod Rame tho mekely,
And made protestatioune that she shuld sikerly
All the dayis of hir lyfe be to hym as hende
As evir woman was to man, as ferforth as hir mynd
And wit hir wold serve, and made grete othe.
Fawnus bood no longir, but forth therwith he goith.
A! precious God in Heven, Kyng of majeste!
So plentivouse this world is of iniquite!
Why is to ysuffrid that trowith is brought adown
Wyth trechery and falshede in feld and eke in town?
But now to Fawnus and his entent. When he his sone met
He toke hym soft by the hond; his tung he gan to whet,
Sotilly to engyne him. First he gan to preche,
"Leve thy foly, my dere sone, and do as I the teche:
Sith thou hast wit and reson, and art of mann'ys age,
What nedith the be marchaunt and shall have heritage?
For and thy good wer ylost the sorowe wold be myne,
To tell the soth, right nigh peregall to thyne;
And yf that I were dede whils thow wer oute
Lond and rent, and all my good, have thou no doute,
It wold be plukkid from the; thy part wold be lest:
And also ferthermore, I make oon beheest,
That I trowe my mobbis wol nat suffise
To charge fyve shippis ful of marchandise
But yf I leyd in mortgage my lond and eke my rent,
And that I leve be nat thy wyll ne thyn entent:
Yit nethirles yf thy hert be so inly set
For to be a marchaunt, for nothing woll I let
That I n'yl do thy plesaunce as ferforth as I mey
To go ryght nygh myn own estate, but levir I had nay." [twene,
Their wordis ne their dedis, ne matters them be-
I wol nat tary now ther'on my perchemen to spene:
But fynallich, to the end of their accordement,
Fawnus had so goon about, yturned and ywent,
That he had brought his sone tofore the emperour,
To relese his heritage and al his honour,
That he shuld have aftir his dey, for shippis fyve, and full
Yled of marchaundise of lynnen and of wool,
And of othir thingis that wer yusid tho.
Engrosid was the covenaunt betwene them to
Yn presence of the emperour, in opyn and no rown,
Tofore the gretist cenators and eldest of the town.
So when the relese selid was with a syde bonde
They wer yleyd both in a meen bonde
Into the tyme that Beryn fullich sesid were
In the fyve shippis that I yew told ere.
But who was glad but Fawnus? and to his wyff went [entent
And seyd, "Now, my hert'is swete! all thyn hole
Ys uttirlich perfourmyd; us lakkith now no more
But marchaundise and shippis, as I told tofore."
"That shall not faill," quod Rame, and began to daunce,
And aftirward they speken of the purveaunce.
Alas! this fals world, so ful of trechery?
In whom shuld the sone have trust and feith sikirly
If his fadir faylid hym? whether myght he go
For to fynd a sikir frend that he myght trust to?
So when these five shippis wer rayid and dight
Fawnus and his sone to the emperour ful right
They went, and many a grete man for the same cause,
To see both in possessioune, as ther covenaunte was.

Beryn first was sesid in the shippis fyve,
And Fawnus had the relese, and bare it to his wyff;
And eche held them payde, and Rame best of all,
For she had conquerid thing that causid most hir gall. [aunce
Now leve I Fawnys and his wyff, and of the govern-
Of Beryn I wol speke, and also of his chaunce.
When lodismen and maryneris in al thing redy was
This Beryn into Alisaunder, yf God wold send hym grace
That wynde hym wold serve, he wold: so on a day
The wynd was good, and they seylid on ther wey
Too dayis fullich, and a nyght therwythal,
And had wedir at wyll, tyll at last gan fall
Such a myst among them that no man myght se othir, [modir.
That welc was hym that had ther the blessing of his
For thre dayis incessantly the derknes among them was, [Alas!
That no shipp myght se othir; wherfore full oft
They seyd, and to the high God they made their preyere,
That he wold of his grace them govern and stere
So that their lyvis myght savid be,
For they were cleen in dispeyr, because they myght nat se
The loder, wherby these shipmen ther cours toke ech one.
So at last, the ferth day, making thus hir mone,
The dey gan clere; and then such wynd arose
That blew their shippis elswhere then was their first purpose.
The tempest was so huge and so strong also,
That wele was hym that coude bynde or ondo
Any rope within the shipp that longit to the craft;
Every man shewed his connyng to fore the shipp and bafft.
The wynd a wook the see to brast, it blew so gresly sore, [more
That Beryn and all his company of synnys las and
Eche man round about shroff hymself to othir,
And put in Godd'is gowernaunce lyf, shipp, and strothir; [hale,
For ther was shippis meyne, for owght they coud
That myght abate of the shipp the thikues of a scale:
The wedir was so fervent of wynd and eke of thun-dir [asondir,
That every shipp from othir was blowe of sight
And durid so al day and nyght, tyll on the morowe
I trowe it was no questioune wher they had joy or sorowe.
So aftirward, as God wold, the wynd was somwhat soft,
Beryne clepid a maryner, and bad hym sty on loft,
And weyte aftir our four shippis aftir us doith dryve,
For it is but grace of God yf they be alyve,
A maryner anoon wyth that, right as Beryn bad,
Styed into the top castell, and brought hym tydings glad:
"Sir," he seith, "beth mery; yeur shippis comith echone
Staff and sound sailing, as ye shul se anoon;
And eke, sir, ferthermore, lond also I sigh,
Let draw our cors estward, thys tyde woll bryng us ny."
"Blessed be God!" quod Beryn, "then wer our shippis com,
We have no nede to dout werr ne molestatioune,
For ther n'ys wythin our shippis no thyng of spoliatioune,
But al trew marchaundise; wherefor lodisman
Stere onys into the costis as well as thou can;
When our shippis be ycom, that we mowe pas in fere, [nere."
Lace on a bonnet or tweyn, that we mowe saile
And when they wer the costis nygh was noon of them alle
That wist what lond it was: then Beryn gan to calle
Out of every ship anoon a maryner or tweyne
For to take counseil, and thus he gan to seyne:
"The frountis of this ilk town been wondir feir wyth-all,
Methinketh it is the best rede, what that evir befall,
That I my self aloon walk into the towne,
And here and se both her and ther, upward and downe,
And enquere fullich of their governaunce.
What sey ye sirs? woll ye sent to this ordenaunce?"
All they accordit well therto and held it for the best,
"For thus yf it be profitabill we mowe abide and rest,
And yf it be othirwise the rathir shall we go,
For aftir that the spede we woll work and do."
But nowe mowe ye her right a wondir thing:
In all the world wyde so fals of their lywyng
Was no pepill undir sone, ne none so disseyvabill,
As was the popill of this town, ne more unstabill,
And had a cursed usage of sotill ymaginacioune,
That yf so wer the shippis of any straunge nacioune
Were com into the port, anoon they wold them hide
Within their own howsis, and no man go ne ryde
In no strete of alle the town; ascaunce that they wer lewde,
And coud no skill of marchandise, a skill it was a shrewde,
As ye shull here aftir of their wrong and falshede;
But yit it fill, as worthy was, oppon their own hede.
Beryn arayd hym freshly, as to a marchand longith,
And set hym on a palfrey wel be sey and hongit,
And a page rennyng by his hors fete;
He rode endlong the town, but no man could he
The dorrys wer yclosid in both too sidis, [meet;
Wherof he had mervell: yet ferthermore he ridis,
And waytid on his right hond a mancipil's place
All fresh and new, and thidir gan he pase:
The gatis wer wyde up, and thidir gan he go,
For throughout the long town he found so no mo.
Therin dwellid a burgeyse the most scliper man
Of all the town throughout, and what so he wan
With trechery and gile, as doith som freris,
Right so must he part with his comperis.
Beryn light down on his hors, and inward gan he dres; [ches
And fond the good man of the house pleying at
With hys neyghbour, as trewe as he, that dwellid hym fast by.
But as sone as this burgeyse on Beryn cast his eye
Sodenly he stert up, and put the chess hym fro
And toke Beryn by the hond, and seyd these wordis tho;
"*Benedicite*; what manere wynd hath ybrought you here?
Now wold to God I had wherof, or coud make yew chere!
But ye shull lowe my good wyll, and take such as ther is,
And of yeur gentil paciens suffir that is amys."
For well he wist by his aray and by his countenaunce
That of the shippis that wer ycom he had som governaunce,

Wherfor he made hym chere semyng amaybill,
Icolerid all with cautelis, and wondir disseyvabill:
He bracyd hym by the myddil, and preyd hym sit adoun,
And lowly with much worshipp dressid his cosshon.
"Lord God!" seyd this burgeyse, "I thank this ilk dey [contray;
That I shuld see yew hole and sound here in my
And yf ye list to tell the cause of yewr comyng,
And yf ye have nede to any manere thing,
And it be in my power, and thoughe I should it sech,
It shuld go right wonder streyte, I sey yew sikerlich,
But yee it had in haste, therwith yew plese, [ese."
For now I see yew in my house my hert is in grete.
The todir burgeyse rose hym up for to make rouse,
And axid of his felaw, that lord was of the house,
"Whens is this worshipfull man?" with wordis hend and low,
"For it semith by the manere that ye hym shuld knowe,
And have sey hym tofore this tyme."—"I have sene," quod the todir,
"Ye ywis an 100 sithis, and right as to my brodir
I wol do hym plesaunce in al that evir I can,
For trewlich in his contray he is a worshipful man:"
"Forsoth, sir, and for your love, a thousand in this town
Wold do hym worship, and be right feyne and bown
To plese hym, and avail to have thonk of you:"
"I woot wele, God them yeld, so have they oft er nowe."
And arose up therwithall, and with his felaw spak
Of such manere mater that faylid nevir of lakk.
So when their conseill was ydo this burgeyse preyd his fere [chere,
To sit a down be Beryn, and do hym sport and
"And in the while I wol se to his hors,
For every gentil hert, afore his own cors
Desirith that his riding best servid and ydight
Rather than hymself; wherfor wyth all my myght
I woll have an eye therto; and sich parte wyyn
Wich tonne or pipe is best and most fyne."
Beryn was all abashid of his soden chere,
But nethirles the burgeyse sat hym somwhat nere,
And preyd hym of his gentilnes his name for to tell,
His contrey and his lynnage: and he answer'd snell,
"Berinus I am ynamid, and in Rome ybore,
And have fyve shippis of myn own, las and more,
Full of marchaundise, ligging tofore the town;
But much marvaille have I the good man is so boun
To serve me and plese, and how it might be."
"Sir," seyd the burgeyse, "no mervelle it is to me,
For many a tyme and oft, I cannot sey how lome,
He hath be in your marchis; and as I trow in Room
Also he was ybore, yf I ne ly shall:" [all
"Yf it be so," quoth Beryn, "no mervelle it is at
Thoughe he may have ysey, and eke his gentill chere [dere
Previth it all opynly; but be hym that bought me
I have ther'of no knowlech, as I am now avysid."
With that cam in the good man with countenaunce disgisid,
And had enqueryd of the chikl that with Beryn cam
Fro gynnyng to the endyng, and told his mastris name,
And of Agea his modir, and all thing as it was,
Wher-through he was ful perfite to answere to every cas;
So entryng into the hall the burgeys spak anoon,
"A! my gentill Beryn, alas! that under stonne
Myn own hert Agea, thy modir left and dere!
Now God assoyl hir soule, for nevir bettir chere
Had I of frend woman, ne nevir half so good.
Benedicite! a marchant comyng ovir flood!
Who brought yew in this purpos, and beth your fadir's heir?
Now by my trew conscience ryght nygh in dispeyr
I wax for your sake, for now frendlese
Ye mowe wele sey that ye been; but yit for nethirles
Yee mut endure fortune and hevynes put awey;
Ther is noon othir wisdom. Also yeur shippis gey,
That been ycom in savete, ought to amend yeur mode, [rood,
The wich when we have dyned, I swere for by the
We wol se them trewly within and eke without,
And have wyne, wyth us and drynk al about."
They set and wissh, and fed them, and had wherof plente;
The burgeyse was a stuffid man, ther lakkid noon deynte.
So when they had ydined the cloth was up ytake,
A chese ther was ybrought forth, but tho gan sorowe to wake.
The ches was all of ivory, the meyne fressh and new,
I pulshid and ypikid of white, asure, and blew.
Beryn beheld the cheker, it semed passyng feir;
"Sir," quod the burgeyse, "ye shul fynd her a payr
That wolt mate yew trewly in las than half a myle,"
And was yseyd of sotilte Beryn to begile. [nay,
"Now in soth," quod Beryn, "it myght wel hap
And ne'er I must my shippis se els I wold assay."
"What nedith that," quod the burgeyse? "trewlich I wol nat glose,
They been nat yit ysetelid ne fixid in the wose;
For I have sent thries sith ye hither cam
To wait oppon their governaunce; wher'for let set o game,
And I shall be the first that shall yew atast."
The meyne wer yset up, and gon to pley fast.
Beryn wan the first, the second, and the third,
And at fourth game in the ches amyd
The burgeyse was ymatid; but that lust him wele;
And all was doon to bryng hym yn, as ye shul her snel.
"Sir," then, seyd Beryn, "ye woot well how it is,
Me list no more to pley, for yee know this,
Wher is noon comparisoun, of what thing so it be,
Lust and liking fallith ther: as it semeth me
Ne myrth is nat commendabill that ay is by o side,
But it rebound to the tothir; wherfore tyme is to ryde;
And as many thonkis as I can or may
Of my sport and chere, and also of yeur pley."
"Nay iwis, gentill Beryn, I woot ye wol nat go,
For noritur wol it nat for to part so,
And eke my condicioune; but I ley something
Is no more to pley then who so shoke a ryng
Ther no man is wythyn the ryngyng to answere;
To shete a fethirles bolt almost as good me were:
But and ye wold this next game som manir wager legg, [yplegg,
And let the trowith on both sidis be mortgage and
That whoso be ymatid graunt and assent
To do the todirs bidding, and whoso do repent
Drynk all the watir that salt is of the see."
Beryn bclevid that he coud pley betir than he,
And sodinly assentid, with hond in hond assurid.
Men that stode besides, ycappid and yhurid.
Wist wele that Beryn should have the wers mes,
For the burgeyse was the best pleyer at ches

Of all the wyde marchis, or many a myle about;
But that ne wyst Beryn of, ne cast ther'of no doute:
He set the meyne efft ageyn, and toke betir hede
Then he did tofore; and so he had nede.
The burgeyse toke avisement long on every draught,
So wyth an hour or two Beryn he had ycaught
Somwhat upon the hipp, that Beryn had the wers.
And albeit his mynd and wyll was for to curs,
Yit must he dure his fortune when he was so fer ygo;
For *Who is that that Fortune may alway undo!*
And namelich stout even in eche side
Of *pro* and *contra:* but God help down woll he glide.
But now a word of philosophy that fallith to my mynd;
Who take hede of the begynnyng what fal shall of the end [*ryde:*
He leyth a bush tofore the gap ther Fortune wold in
But comynlich yowith forgetith that throughout the world wyde. [rakid,
Right so Beryn I may wele sey that counsaillis in
Likly to lese his merchaundise, and go hymself al nakid. [availid;
Beryn studied in the ches, although it nought
The burgeyse in the mene while with other men counsailid [ado.
To fech the sergauntis in the town for thing he had
So when they come were, they walkid to and fro
Up and down in the hall, as skaunce they knew nought; [thought,
And yit of all the purpose, wit, and mynd, and
Of the untrew burgeyse, by his messengeris
They wer ful enformyd: wherfor with eye, and eris, and best,
They lay await full doggidly Beryn to arest,
Forther for they were after sent, and was their charge.
Lord! how shuld o sely lomb among wolvis weld,
And scape unyharmyd? it hath been seyn seld.
Kepe thy cnt now, Beryn, for thow art in the case.
The hall was full of pepill, the serjauntis shewid their mase;
Beryn kast up his hede, and was ful sore amayid,
For then he was in certen the burgeyse had hym betrayde.
"Draw on," seyd the burgeyse; "Beryn, ye have the wers;"
And every man to othir the covenaunt gan reherse
The burgeys, whils that Beryn was in hevy thought,
The next draught aftir he toke a vook for nought.
Beryn swat for angir, and was in hevy plight,
And drede full sore in hert; for wele he wist al qhyt
He shuld nat escape, and was in high distress;
And pryvelich in his hert that ever he saw the ches
He cursid the day and tyme: but what avaylid that?
For wele he wist then that he shuld be mate:
He gan to chaunge his colour both pale and wan.
The burgeyse seith; "Comyth nere, ye shul se this man,
How he shul be matid with what man me list"
He droughe and seyd, "Chek mate." The serjauntis wer full prest,
And sesid Beryn by the scleve, and seyd, "Sirs, what think ye for to do," [so?
Quod Beryn to the serjauntis, "that ye me hondith
Or what have I offendit? or what have I seide?"
"Trewlich," quod the serjauntis, "it vaylith nat to breyde;
Wyth us ye must a while wher ye wol or no
Tofore the steward of this town; aryse, and trus and go; [wrought:
And ther it shal be openyd how wisely thow hast
This is the end of our tale, make it nevir so tought."
"Sirs, farith feir, ye have no nede to hale."
"Pas forth," quod the serjauntis, "we wol nat her thy tale."
"Yis, sirs, of yeur curtesy I prey yew of o word:
Although my gentill hoost hath pleyed with me in borde,
And ywon a wager, ye have naught to doon:
That is between hym and me; ye have nothyng to doon." [haut,
The hoost made an hidouse cry, in gesolreut the
And set his hand in kenebowe, he lakkid nevir a faute. [me?
"Weynst thow," seid he to Beryn, "for to scorne
What evir thow speke, or stroute, certes it woll nat be. [pase;
Of me shalt thou have no wrong; pas forth a betir
In presence of our steward I woll tell my case."
"Why, hoost, say yee this in ernest or in game?
Ye know my contray, and my modir, my lynnage, and my name;
And thus ye have yseyd me X sith on this dey."
"Ye, what though I seyd so? I know wele it is nay:
Ther lyth no more ther'to. But anothir tyme
Leve me so much the les when thow comest by me;
For all that evir I seyd was to bryng the in care,
And now I have my purpose I woll nothyng the spare."
Thus jangling to ech othir, endenting every pase,
They entrid both into the hall ther the steward was:
Evandir was his name, that sotill was, and so fell,
He must be well avised tofore hym shuld tell.
Anothir burgeyse wyth hym was, provost of the
That Hanybald was yclepid, but of sotilte [cete
He passid many anothir, as ye shul here sone.
Beryns hoost gan to tell al thyng as it was doon
Fro gynnyng to the endyng, the wordis wyth the dede,
And how they made their covenaunt, and wager how they leyd.
"Now Beryn," quod the steward, "thou hast yheard this tale, [bale;
How and in what manere thou art ybrought in
Thow must do his byddyng, thow maist yn no wise
Or drynk all the watir that salt is in the see: [flee,
Of these too thingis thow must chese the toon;
Now be well avysed, and sey they will anoon.
To do yee both law I may no betir sey,
For thow shalt have no wrong, as ferforth as I mey:
Chese the self right as the list, and wit thou nothing me
Though thow chese the wers and let the betir be."
Beryn stode astonyd, and no mervaill was, [case;
And preyd the steward of a dey to answere to the
"For I might lightlich in som word be ycaught,
And eke it is right herd to chese of to that beth right naught: [to morowe
But and it wer yeur likyng to graunt me day tyl I wold answer through Godd'is help."—"Then must thow fynd a borowe,"
Seyd the steward to Beryn, "and yit it is of grace."
"Now herith me," quod Hanybald, "I prey a litil space:

He hath five shippis ondir the town, lyggyng on the strong,
The wich been sufficiant ysesid in our hond;
By me that am yeur provost to execute the law."
"He must assent." Quod Evander, "let us onys here his saw."
"I graunt wele," quod Beryn, "sith it may be noon othir."
Then Hanybald arose hym up to sese both ship and stothir, [wey,
And toke Beryn wyth hym: so talkyng on the
"Beryn," quod Hanybald, "I suyr the be my fay
That thou art much ybound to me this ilk dey,
So is thy ple amendit by me; and eke of such a wey
I am avysid in thy cause, yf thow wolt do by rede,
That lite or nought by my counsaill ought the to drede.
Yee know wele to morrowe the dey of ple is set
That ye mut nedis answere, or els wythout lett
I must yeld them yeur shippis; I may in no wyse blyn;
So have I undertake: but the merchandise wythin
Is nat in my charge, ye knowe as wele as I,
To make ther'of no lyvery: wher'for now wysely
Worch, and do aftir rede: let all your merchaun-
Be voidit of yeur shippis, and at hiest prise [dise
I wol have it every dele in couenaunt, yf ye list
To se myne house here onys tofore, I hold it for the best,
Wher ye shull se of divers londis, houses to or thre
Full of marchandise, that through this grete cete
Is no such in preve, I may right well avowe.
So when he have all seyn, and I have yeur also,
Let som bargen be ymade betwene us both too."
"Graunt mercy! sir," quod Beryn, "yeur profis is feir and good;
Feyn wold I do ther'aftir yf I ondirstood
I myght wythout blame of breking of arest."
"Yis," quod Hanybald, "at my perell me trust."
So to Hanybald's house togidir both they rode,
And fond, as Hanybald had yseyd, an houge house, long and brode,
Full of merchaundise as rich as it may be,
Passyng all the marchantis that dwellid in that cete.
Thus when all was shewid they dronk and toke their leve,
So se Beryn's shippis in hast they gon to meve.
And when that Hanybald was avysed what charge the shippis bere [nere
He gan to speke, in his wyse ascaunce, he rought
Whethir he bargenynd or no, and seyd thus:
"Beryn, frend,
Your marchaundise is feir and good, now let us make an end
If yee list; I can no more; ye knowith how it is.
Com, of short let tuk them yn, methinkith I sey nat mys,
And then yeur meyne and ye, and I, to my house shall we go,
And of the marchaundise I saw I wol not part ther-
Chese of the best of that ye find there [fro;
Throughout the long house, ther shal no man yeu dere,
And therwith shall yeur shippis be filled all fyve:
I can sey no betir: yf ye list to dryve
This bargen, to the end counsellith with yeur men;
I may nat long tary, I must nedis hen."
Beryn clepid his meyne counsell for to take;
But his first mocioune was of the woo and wrake,
And all the tribulacioune, for pleying at ches,
That he had, every dele his shame and his dures
Fro poynt to poynt, and how it stode, he told how it was, [case,
And then he axid counsaill what best was in the
To chaunge with the burgeyse or els for to leve?
Eche man seyd his avise; but al that they did meve
It wer to long a tale for to tell it here:
But fynally, at end, they cordit al in fere [fall
That the chaunge shuld stond, for as the case was
They held it clerely for the best, and went forth wythall
The next wey that they couth to Hanybald's plase.
But now shull ye here the most sotill fallace
That ever man wrought till othir, and highest trechery, [pany.
Wich Hanybald had wrought hymself to this com-
"Go in," quod Hanybald, "and chese, as thy covenaunt is."
In goon these Romeyns ech oon, and fond a mys;
For there was nothing that eny man might sé
Saff the wall and tyle stonys, and tymbir made of tre; [there;
For Hanybald had do void it of all thing that was
Whils he was at the shippis his men away it bere.
When Beryn saw the hous ler that ful was ther'tofore
Of riche marchaundise, alas! thought he, I am lore,
I am in this world; and wittith wele his hert
Was nat al in likeing; and outward gan he stert
Like half a wodeman, and bete both his lippis,
And gan to hast fast towards his own shippis,
To kepe his good within wyth al that evir he myght,
That it were nat dischargit, as hym thought verrey right.
But al for naught was his hast, for 300 men,
As fast as they myght, they bare the good then,
Through ordenaunce of Hanybald, that pryvelich tofore
Had purposid and ycast shuld be out ybore. [let;
Beryn made a swyff pase; ther myght no man hym
But Hanybald was ware inough, and with Beryn met: [fyne
"All for nought: Beryn, thou knowest well and
The shippis ben areistid, and the good is myne.
What woldest thow do ther? thow hast ther nowght to do;
I wold hold my covenaunt and thow myn also.
For yit saw I nevir man that was of thy manere;
Sometyme thou wilt avaunte, and some tyme arere:
Now thow wilt, and now thow n'olt. Wher shul men the fynd?
Now sey oon, and sith anothir. So variant of mynd
Saw I nevir bofore this dey man so variabill.
Sith I the fynd in such plyte, our bargen for to stabill, [right."
We woll tofore the steward, ther we both shull have
"Nay, forsoth," quod Beryn. "Yis treulich the tite," [the charge
Quod Hanybald, "wher thou wolt or no; and so I
As provost: know that yf me list my warant is so large,
And thow make any diffence, to bynym thy lyffe.
Take thyn hors; it gaynyth nat for to make stryffe."
So wyth sorowfull hert Beryn toke his hors,
And softly seyd to his men, "Of me," quod he, "no fors,
But wend to yeur shippis; I wol com when I may;
Ye seth well everichone I may no bet awey."

Now here by the same tale both fre and bond
Mow fele in their wittis; and eke ondirstonde
That *Litill vailith wysdom or els governaunce*
Ther Fortune evir werrith and eke Hap and Chaunce,
Or what availeth bounte, bewte, or riches,
Frendship, or sotilte, or els hardines,
Gold, good, or catell, wyt, or hy lynage,
Lord, or lordis service, or els high peerage?
What may all this avayle ther Fortune is a foo?
I wis right litill, or nevir a dele: full oft it fallith so.
So, shortly to pas ovir, they fill to such an end
That Beryn shuld have day ageyn a morowe, and so to wend
He set hym in ful purpose to his shippis ward:
But yit or he cam ther he fond the passage hard:
For how he was begiled throughout al the towne
Ther and ther a coupill gan to speke and to roune;
And every man his purpose was to have parte
With falsnes, and with sotiltees; they coud noon othir art,
Beryn rode forth in his wey, his page ran hym by,
Full sore adred in hert, and cast about his eye
Up and down, even long the strete, and for angir swet;
And er he had riden a stone's cast, a blynd man with him met,
And spake no word, but sesid hym fast by the lap,
And cried out and harrowé, and nere hym gan to stap.
"All for nought," quod this blynd; "what! wenyst thow for to skape?" [be jape.
Beryn had thought to prik forth, and thought it had
The blynd man cast awey his staff, and set on both his hondis;
"Nay, thow shalt nat void," quod he, "for all thy rich londis,
Tyll I of the have reson, lawe, and eke righte,
For trewlich I may wit it the that I have lost my sight."
So for ought that Beryn coud othir speke or prey
He myght in no wyse pas; ful sore he gan to may,
And namelich for the pepill throng hym so about,
And eche man gan hym hond, and seyd, "Without doute
Ye must nedes stond, and rest, and bide the lawe,
Be ye nevir so grete a man."—"So wold I wonder fawe,"
Quod Beryn, "yf yee had cause, but I know noon."
"No, thou shalt know or thow go thow hast nat al ydoon, [quod he
The blynd man seyd to Beryn. "Tell on then,"
"Her eis no place to plete," the blynd man seyd age,
"Also we have no juge here of autorite; [me.
But Evandir the steward shall deme both the and
When I my tale have told, and thow hast made answere, [clere.
By that tyme men shull know how thow canst the
Now, soveren God! I thank the of this ilk dey:
Then I may preve the, be my lyve, of word and eke of say [ymakid.
Fals, and eke untrewe of covenaunt thow hast
But litill is thy charge now though that I go nakid
That sometyme wer partinere, and rekenydst nevir yit;
But thou shalt bere or we depart ther of a litill witt,
For aftir comyn seyng, Evir atte ende
The trowith woll be previd how so men evir trend."
Thus they talkid to eche othir tyl they com into the plase,
And wer yentrid in the hall ther the steward was.

The blynd man first gan to spake: "Sir steward, for Godd'is sake,
Herith me a littill while, for here I have ytake
He that hath do me wrong most of man of mold;
Be my help, as law woll, for hym that Judas sold.
Ye know wele that oft tyme I have to yew ypleynid
How I was betrayed, and how I was ypenid,
And how a man some tyme and I our yen did chaunge: [straunge:
This is the same persone, though that he make it
I toke them hym but for a tyme, and wenyd trewly
Myne to have that yhad ageyn; and so both he and I
Were ensured uttirlich, and was our both will;
But for myne the bettir were wrongfullich and ille
He hath them kept hidirto, wyth much sorowe and pyne [myne
To me, as ye wele knowith; because I have nat
I may nat se with his; wherfor me is ful woo:
And evirmore ye seyd that ye myght nothing do
Without presence of the man that wrought me this unquert:
Now sith he is tofore you now let hym nat astert;
For many a tyme and oft yee behete me
And he myght be take he shuld do me gre.
Sith ye of hym be sesid, howevir so ye tave,
Set hym nevir pas tyl I myn yen have."
"Beryn," quod Evandir, "herist thou nat they selve
How sotilly he pletith, and ware by eche halve?"
Beryn stode all muët, and no word he spake;
And that was tho his grace; ful sone he had be take
And he had mysséyd onys, or els yseyd nay;
For than he had been negatyff, and undo for ay:
For they were grete sevilouns, and usid probat law,
Where evirmore affirmatyf shuld preve his own saw:
Wher'fore they were so querelouse of all myght com in mynd,
Though it wer nevir in dede ydo; such matere they wold fynd
To benym a man his good through som manir gile;
For the blynd man wist right wele he shuld have lost his whyle [good,
To make his pleynt on Beryn, and suyd oppon his
For shippis and eke marchaundise in a balaunce stode;
Ther'for he made his chalenge his yen for to have,
Or els he shuld for them syne yf he wold them have,
And ligg for them in hostage tyil the synaunce cam:
This was all the soilte of the blynd man.
Beryn stode all muët, and no word he spak.
"Beryn," quod Evander, "lest thow be ytake
In defaute of answere thou myghtiest be condempnyd,
Be right wele avysid, sith thou art examenyd."
"Sir," seyd Beryn, "it wold litill availe
To answere thus aloon without good counsaill;
And also ferthermore, full litill I shuld be levid,
Whatevir I answerid, thus stonyd and reprevid;
And eke my wit doith faille; and no wondir is;
Wher'for I wold prey yew, of yewr gentilnes,
To graunt me dey tyll to morowe I myght be avyside [mysid."
To answere forth, wyth othir that on me been sur-
"Deperdeux!" quod the steward, "I graunt wel it be so."
Beryn toke his leve, and hopid to pas and go:

But as sone as Beryn was on his hors ryding
He met a woman and a child wyth sad chere
comyng, [fast,
That toke him by the reyn, and held hym wondir
And seid, "Sir, voidith nat yit, vailith nat to haste;
Ye mow in no wyse scape; ye must nedis abyde;
For though ye list to know me nat, yit lieth by yeur
side
I have ful many a tyme, I can nat tell yew lome.
Come tofore the steward, ther shall ye here yeur
dome [to ly:
Of thing that I shall put on yew, and no word for
To leve me thus aloon it is yeur villany.
Alas the day and tyme that evir I was yeur make
Much have I endured this too yere for yeur sake!
But now it shall be know who is in the wronge."
Beryn was all abashid, the pepill so thik thronge
About him in eche side: for ought that he couth
peyn
He must to the steward of fyne fors ageyn. [tale
Now shull ye here how sotilich this woman gan hir
In presence of the steward. With colour wan and
pale
Petously she gan to tell; and seid, "Sir to yew
Full oft I have compleynyd in what manere and
My childlis fadir left me by myself aloon, [how
Without help or comforte, as grete as I myght
goon,
Wyth my son here and his, that shame it is to tell
The penury that I have yhad, that afors sell
I must nedis myne aray, wher me list or lothe,
Or els I must have beggit for to fynd us bothe;
For there was nevir woman I leve, as I ges,
For lak of hede of lyvelode that lyvid in more distres
Then I my self for oft tyme for lake of mete and
drink;
And yit I trow no creature was seyner for to swinke
My lyff to sustene: but as I mut nede
Above all othir thingis to his child take hede,
That wondir is and mervaile that I am alyve;
For the sokyng of his right as it were a knyve
It ran into my hert; so low I was of mode
That well I woot in certen with percell of my blode
His child I have ynorishid; and that is by me seen;
For my rede colour is turnid into grene:
And he that cause is of all here be stondith by me;
To pay for the fosteryng methinkith it is tyme.
And sith he is my husbond, and hath on me no
rowith,
Let hym make amendis in saving of his trowith.
And yf he to any word onys can say nay
Lo! here my gage, al redy to preve all that I sey."
The stewarde toke the gage, and spak in soft wyse;
"Of this perouse compleynt a mann'ys hert may
grise,
For I know in percell hir tale is nat all lese,
For many a time and oft this woman that here is
Hath ybe tofore me, and pleynid of hir grease,
But without a party hir cause myght nat presse.
Now thou art here present that she plenyth on,
Make thy defence now, Beryn, as wele as thow con."
Beryn stode all muët, and no word he spak.
"Beryn," quod the steward, "doist thow sclepe or
Sey onys oon or othir: is it soth or nay. [wake?
As she hath declarid? tell on saunce delay."
"Lord God!" quod Beryn, "what shuld it me
availe
Among so many wise, without right good counsaill,
To tell eny tale? full litil as I ges:
Wher'for I wold prey you of your gentilnes
Graunt me day tyl to morrowe to answer forth
with othir," [and modir,
"I graunt wele," quod the steward, "but for fadir
Thow getist no lenger tyme pleynly I the tell."
Beryn toke his leve; his hert gan to swell
For pure very anguysh; and no mervaill was;
And who is that that n'old and he were in such
case?
For all his trist and hope in eny worldlich thing
Was cleen from hym passid, save sorowe and mys-
lykyng;
For body, good, and catell, and lyff, he set at nought,
So was his hert ywoundit for angir and for thought.
Beryn passyd softly, and to his hors gan go;
And when he was without the gates, he lokid to
and fro, [page he seyd,
And coud none othir countenaunce; but to his
"Preciouse God in Heven! how falsly am I be-
trayd!
I trow no man alyve stont it wers plight,
And all is for my synne, and for my yong delite;
And pryncipally above all thyng for grete un-
kyndnes
That I did to my modir; for littil hede iwis
I toke of hir, this know I wele, while she was alyve,
Therfor all this turment is sent to me so ryve:
For ther was never womon kynder to hir child
Than she was; and ther ageyns nevir thing so
wyld
Ne so evil thewid as I was my self,
Ther'for sorowe and happs environ me by eche
helve,
That I n'ote whider ryde nethir up ne down,
Ther ben so many devillis dwellyng in this town,
And so ful of gile and trechery also,
That well I woot in certeyn they woll me ondo.
Now wold to God in Hevyn what is my best rede!"
He toke his hors to his page and thus to hym he
sayd,
"Lede my hors to shipward, and take it to some
man,
And I woll go on foot as prywely as I can,
And assay yf I may in eny manere wise
Escape unarrested more in such manner wise."
The child toke his maistir's hors, and laft hym
there aloon,
Walking forth on foot, making oft his moon;
And in his most musing, I can nat sey how lome,
He wosshid nakid as he was bore he had be in
And no mervaill was it as the case stode, [Room,
For he drad more to lese his eyen than he did his
shippis or his good.
Now ye that listith to dwell and here of aventure,
How petously Dame Fortune, Beryn to inure,
Turnyth hir whele about in the wers side;
With hap of sorowe and anguyssh she gynyth for
to ride, [were,
Beryn passid toward the strond ther his shippis
But yee mow ondirstond his hert was full of fere;
Yet nethirles he sat hym down softly on a stall,
Semy'ryfe for sorowe, and lenyd to the wall
For turment that he had, so wery he was and fent
And to God above thus he made his pleynt:
"Glorious God in Heven! that al thing maidst of
nought, [for nought,
Why sufferist thow these cursid men to stroy me
And knowest well myn innocent, that I have no gilt
Of al that they pursu me or on me is pilt?"
And in the meen whils that Beryn thus gan pleyn
A cachepoll stode besidis, his name was Machaign,
And herd all the wordis, and knew also tofore
How Beryn was turmented both with las and more:

It was ysprong through the town; so was he full ensensid
How he hym would engyne as he had propensid,
And had araid hym sotillich as man of contemplacioune,
In a mantell wyth the list, with fals dissimulacioune.
And a staff in his honde, as thoughe he febill were,
And drow hym toward Beryn, and seid in this manere: [nought,
"The high God of Heven, that al thing made of
Bles yew, gentil sir, for many an hevy thought
Me thinketh that ye have, and no wondir is:
But, good sir, dismay yew nat, but levith yewr hevines,
And yf ye list to tell me somwhat of yeur distres
I hope to God Almighty in party it redes [oon
Through my pore counsaill, and so I have many
For I have pete on yew be God and by Seint Jon:
And eke pryvy hevines doith eche man apeir
Sodenly or he be ware, and fall in dispeir;
And who be in that plague that man is incurabill.
For consequent comyth aftir sekenes abominabill;
And ther'for, sir, diskeverith yewe, and be nothing adrad." [and sad;
"Graunt mercy! sir," quod Beryn, "ye semie trew
But o thing lyith in myn hert, I n'ote to whom to trust, [arest,"
For tho that dyned me to dey ordeyned me to
"A sir! be yew that man? of yew I have yherd.
Gentill sir, doutith nat, ne be nothing aferd
Of me, for I shall counsell yew as well as I can,
For trewlich in the cete dwellith many a fals man,
And usyn litil els but falshode, wroug, and wyle,
And how they might straungers with trechery begile: [sail.
But ye shul do right wisely somewhat be my coun-
Speke with the steward; that may you most avail;
For ther is a comyn byword, yf ye it herd havith,
Wele setith he his peny that the pound savith.
The steward is a covetouse man, that long hath disirid [wirid;
A knyff I have in keeping, wherwith his hert I
Shall be yew to help, in covenaunte that yee
Shall give me five mark yeur treu frend to be.
The knyff is feir, I tell yew; yet nevir tofore this day
Myght the steward have it for ought he coud prey,
The wich ye shuld gyve hym, the betir for to spede,
And behothe hym 20*l.* to help yew in your nede;
And yf he grauntith, trustith wele ye stond in good plight;
For betir is then lese all the las the more quyt.
And I woll go wyth yew straight to his plase,
And knele down and speke first to amend yewr case,
And say yee be my cosin; the betir ye shul spede;
And when that I have all ytold the knyff to hym yee bede."
Beryn thankid hym hertlich, and on hym gan trust,
With hond in hond ensurid, and all for the best;
Beryn thought noon othir, al that it othir was.
Machaign hym comfortid, talkyng of their case,
And passid forth stylly toward the steward blyve
Beryn and Machaign; but Beryn bare the knyff,
And trust much in his felawe to have som help:
But or they departed were they had no cause to yelp
Of no manir comfort, as ye shull here anoon;
For as sone as Machaigne tofore the steward com
He fill plat to the erth: a grevous plynt and a huge [juge
He made; and seyd, "Sir Steward, now be a trew
Ageyns this fals treytour that stondith me besyde;
Let take of hym good hede, els he woll nat abide.
Now mercy gode steward, for yee have herd me
For my fadir Melan pleyn to you ful sore, [yore
That with seven dromedarys, as I have told yew lome,
With marchandise chargit went toward Rome,
And it is seven yere ago and a litill more
Of hym or of his goodis that I herd les or more;
And yet I have enquered as by ely as I couthe.
And met nevir man yit that me coud tell with
Any tyding of hym onto this same day; [mowth
But now I know too much, alas! I may wel sey."
When Beryn herd these wordis he kist down his hede;
"Allas" he thought in hert, "alas, what is my rede?"
And wold fayn have voidit and outward gan to stapp,
But Machigne arose and sesid by the lapp:
"Nay, thow shalt not voide," he seid; "my tale is nat ydo;
For be trowith of my body yf thou scapidist so
I shuld nevir have mery whils I wer on lyve,"
And set hond fast on Beryn's othir scleve,
And seid, "Good sir steward my tale to the end
I prey ye wold here, for wend how men wend
There may no man hele murdir, but it will out at last: [past
The same knyff my fadir bere when he of contre
Let serch wele this felon, ther ye shul hym find;
I know the knyff wele inough, it is nat out of my mynd:
The cotelere dwellith in this toun that made the same knyff, [blyve."
And for to preve the trowith he shall be here as
Beryn swat for angir, his herte was full of fere;
He toke the knyff to the steward or he serchid were.
The steward unto Beryn, "My frend, lo!" quod he,
"And thow think the well about this is foule plee:
I can know noon othir but thow must or thow go
Yeld the body of Melan and his good also.
Now be well avysid ageyne to morowe day,
Then shalt thou have thy jugement; there is no more to say."
When Beryn fro the steward thus departid was,
And was without the gate, he lokid oppon the plase,
And cursid it wondir bitterly in a fervent ire,
And wishid many tymes it had been a fire;
"For I trowe that man of lyve was never wors betrayid [maryd,
Then I am; and therwithall my hert is cleen dis-
For here I have no frendship, but am all counselles,
And they ben falsher then Judas, and eke mercyles.
A, Lord God in Hevyn! that my hert is woo;
And yit suyrly I mervel nat though that it be so,
For yit in all my lyve sith I ought undirstond
Had I nevir wyl for to lern good:
Foly I hauntid it ever, ther myght no man me let,
And now he hath ypaid me, he is clene out of my dett;
For whils I had tyme; wisdom I myght have lernyd,
But I drow me to foly, and wol nat be governed,
But had al myne own wyll, and of no man aferd,
For I was nevir chastisid; but now myne own yerd
Betith me to sore; the strokis been too hard:
For these devillis of this town takith but littil reward

To sclee my body to have my good. The day is
set to morowe;
Now wold to God I were in grave, for it wer end
of sorowe.
I was iwis to much a fole; for hate I had to Rame
I wold forsake myn heritage, ther'for sorowe and
shame
Is oppon me fall, and right wele deservid,
For I toke none maner hede when my mod'r stervid,
And disobeyid my fadir, and set *him* at naught also;
What wondir is it than though that I have woo?
Fortune and eke Wisdom have werrid with me evir,
And I with them in all my lyf, for Fortune was me
levir. [hate;
Then eny wit or governance, for them too I did
And though I wold be at oon now it is too late.
O myghtfull God in Heven! wher was evir man
That wrought hymself more foly than I my self
did than?
A cursid be the tyme that I out of Rome went!
That was my fadir's right heir of lyvelode and of
rent,
And al the rial lordship that he hath in the town.
Had I had wit and grace, and hold me low and
It were my kynd now among my baronage [boun,
To hauk and to hunt, and eke to pley and rage
With feir freshe ladies, and daunce when me list;
But now it is to late to speke of Had I wist.
But I fare like the man that for to swele his flyes
He stert into the bern, and aftir stre he hies,
And goith about the wallis with a brennyng wase,
Tyll it was at last that the leem and blase
Entrid into the chynys where the wheate was,
And kissid so the evese that brent was all the plase;
But first in the begynnyng, tyll feer smote in the
raftris, [aftir
He toke no manere kepe, and thought of nothing
What perell there myght fall: ne more did I ywis,
That wold forsake myn honour for the unkyndnes
Of Rame that was my stepmodir; for yf I shall
nat ly
They beth soure; wherfore the more wisely
I shuld have wrought, had I had wit, and suffrid
for a tyme,
And aftir com to purpos wel inowghe of myne;
But evil avengit he is deol that for a litil mode
And angir to his neybour sellith awey his good,
And goith hymself a beggyng: aftir in breff tyme
He mut be countid a lewd man in all manere ryme.
So have I wrought and wers, for I dout of my lyve,
How that it shal stond, for plukking of my sceve
The knyff that was me take, as ye have herd tofore;
And yit it grevith mine hert also much more
Of myn own pepill, that no disese aservid.
I wote wele aftir pleding ryght nought wolf be re-
servyd
To sustene their lyvis: I trow ryght nought or lite,
And peraventur lightly stond in wors plight.
Of me it is no fors though I be thus arayed,
But it is dole and pete that they shull be betrayid
That hath nought aservid but for my gilt aloon."
And when that Beryn in this wise had ymade his
mone
A crepill he saw comyng with grete spede and haste
Oppon a stilt ondir his kne bound wondir fast,
And a crouch undir his armys, with hondis al for-
skramyd; [amenyd?"
"Alas!" quod this Beryn, "shall I be more ex-
And gan to turn aside onto the see stronde,
And the crippill aftir, and wan oppon hym londe.

Tho began Beryn to drede inwardlich sore,
And thought thus in his hert, "Shall I be comberid
more?
And it wer Godd'is wyll my sorowe for to cese
Methinkith I have inowghe." The cripill began
to preche,
And had yrought nere hond Beryn by the sceve:
Beryn turnyd as an hare, and gan to ren blyve;
But the cripill knew betir the pathis smale and
grete [mete.
Then Beryn, so to fore hym he was, and gan hym
When Beryn saw it vaylid naught to renne ne to
lepe, [speke,
What for dole and anguyssh no word myght he
But stode still amasid, and starid fast about:
The crepill began to speke; "Sir, to drede or to
dout
Of me wold ye right light, and ye knew myne hert,
So where ye like well or ill fro me shall ye nat
part
Tyl I have tretid with yew, and ye with me also,
Of all yeur soden happis, yeur mysche**ff**, and yeur
wo; [case,
For by the tyme that I have knowlech of yeur
Yeur rennyng, and yeur trotting into an esy pas,
I shall turn or that we twyn, so ye aftir my stole
Woll do, and as I rede yew; for yee wer a fole
When ye cam first alonde, ye had met with me,
For I wold have ensensid yew all the iniquite
Of these fals marchauntes that dwellen in this
town,
And outid all your chaffare without gruch or groun;
For had ye dwellid within yeur shippis, and nat
go them among,
Then had ye been undaungerid, and quyt of all
their wrong [tioune."
On yew that ben surmysid through fals sugges-
Beryn gan to sigh, unneth he might soune
Saf o word or tweyn, and "Mercy" was the first,
Preying with all his hert that he myght have his
rest,
And be no more enpledit, but pas fro hym quyte.
"Good sir," quod Beryn, "doith me no more dis-
pite,
And suffir me to pas, and have on me routhe,
And I suyr yew feithfully, have here my trowith,
To morowe when I have pledit, and eny thing be
laft
Of ship or marchandise, afore the ship or baft,
I woll shew yew all ifere, and opyn every chest,
And put it in yewr grace to do what ye lest."
And in the meen while that Beryn gan to clapp
The crypill nyghid hym nere and nere, and hent
hym by the lap;
And as sone as Beryn knew that he was in honde
He unlacyd his mantell for drede of some com-
mand,
And pryvelich ovir his shuldris let hym down glide,
And had levir lese his mantell then abide. [sceve
The crepill all perceyvid and hent hym by the
Of his nethir surcote. "Alas! now mut I strive,"
Thought Beryn by himself, "now I am yhent,
There helpith naught save strengith;" therwith the
sceve to rent
Beryn gan; to scappe he sparid for no cost.
"Alas!" thought this crepill, "this man woll be lost,
And be ondo for evir, but he counsell have;
Iwis thoughe he be lewde my contremen to save:
Yit will I my besines do and peyn that I may,
Sith he is of Room, for that is my contray."

This oripill was an hundrit yere full of age,
With a long thik berd, and a trew visage.
He had; and manly and july was he,
And Geffrey was his name yknow in that contre.
"Alas!" thought this Geffrey, "this man hath grete drede [nede:
Of me that by my power wold help hym in his
I wis though he be nyce, untaught and unwise,
I woll nat for his foly leve myne enprise;"
And lept aftir Beryn, and that in right good spede.
Beryn was so sore agast he toke no maner hede
To look onys bakward tyll he to the watir cam,
Then lokid he behynd and saw sir Clekam
Commaund wondir fast with staff and with his stilt.
"Allas!" thought Beryn, "I now am yspilt,
For I may no ferthir without I wold me droune,
I n'ote wich were the betir, or go ageyn to toune."
Geffrey was so nigh com that Beryn myght nat fle:
"Good sir," quod this Geffrey, "why do yee void me?
For by Heven quene, that bare Crist in hir barme,
But right as to my self I woll yew no more harme.
Sittith down here by me oppon this see stronde,
And yf ye drede any thing clepe yewr men to londe,
And let them be here with us all our speche tyme,
For I woll nat feyn oon word, as makers doon to ryme, [me grace:
But counsell yew as prudently as God woll send
Take comfort to yew, and herk a litill spase."
And when that Beryn had yherd his tale to the end, [frende,
And how goodly as Geffrey spak, as he were his
None obstant his drede, yet part of sapience
Stremyd into his hert for his eloquence,
And seyd; "God me counsaill for his high mercy!
For I have herd this same dey men as sotilly
Speke, and of yeur semblant, and in such manere,
And byhete me frendship outward by their chere,
But inward it was contrary their intellectioune,
Wherfor the blame is les, though I suspectioune
Have of yewr wordis, lest othir be yewr entent,
For I n'ote whom to trust by God omnipotent;
Yit nethirles yf your will is to com into the ship with me
I woll somwhat do by yeur rede how so it evir be."
"Then," quod Geffrey, "if it be so that I in yewr powere [mystere,
Entir into your shippis, and yew help in yewr
That ye ageyn yewr adversaryes shull have the betir syde, [pride,
And gyve yow such counsell to bate down their
And that yee wynne in every pleynt, al so much or more [ybore,
As they purpose to have of yew; yf they be down
And ye have amendis for their iniquite,
And I yew bring to this end, what shall my guerdon be?" trust
"In verrey soth," quod Beryn, "yf I yew may
I woll quyte yew trewly, I make yew behest."
"In feith then," quod Geffrey, "I woll with yew wende." [frende?"
"What is yewr name," seid Beryn, "though my
"Gefferey," he seid; "but in these marchis I was nat bore,
But I have dwellid in this cete yeeris heretofore
Ful many, and turmented wers then wer yee,
And endurid for my trowith much adversite,
For I wold in no wise suffir their falshedes,
For in all the world so corrupt of their dedis
Been noon men alyve, I myght ryght well avow.
For they set all their wittis in wrong all that they mowe; [and I
Wher'for full many a tyme the grettist of them
Have stonden in altercatioune for their trechery;
For I had in valew in trew marchaundise
A M. l. all have they take in such maner wise:
So ferforth to save my blode no longer myght I dryve dure; [figure,
For drede of wors thus thought I myself to dis-
And have among them 12 yere go right in this plighte, [quyte;
And evir have had in memory how I myght them
And so I hope now, as sotill as they be,
With my wit engine them and help yew and me.
My lymes been both hole and sound, me nedith stilt ne crouch."
He cast asyde them both, and lepe oppon an huche
And adown ageynes, and walkid to and fro,
Up and down, within the ship, and shewid his hondis tho,
Stretching forth his fingris in sight and all about
Without knot or knor, or eny sign of goute,
And dyght them efft ageyns right disfetirly,
Som to ride ech othir, and som aweward wry.
Geffrey was right myghty, and wele his age did bere, [wer
For natur was more substantiall when tho dayis
Then now in our tyme; for all thing doith waste
Saff vile and cursid lyving, that growith all to faste.
What shuld I tell more? But Geffrey sat hym down, [rown,
And Beryn hym besydis; the Romeyns gan to
And mervelled much in Geffrey of his disgisenes,
And Beryn had anothir thought, and spake of his distresse
"Now Geffrey," seid this Beryn, "and I durst trust in yewe
That and ye knewe eny man that is alyve anowe
That had of discrecioune so much influence
To make my party good to morowe in my defence,
And deliver me of sorowe, as ye behote have,
I wold become his legeman, as God my soule save."
"That wer to much," quod Gefferey; "that woll I yew relese;
But I desire of othir thing to have yewr promes,
That and I bryng yewr enmyes into such a traunce
To make for yewr wrong is to you right high fenaunce,
And so declare for you that with you pas such dome,
That yee oppon your feith bryng me at Rome,
Yf God wol send yew wedir and grace to repase."
Quod Beryn, "But I grant yew I were lewder than an asse,
But or I fullich trust yew holdith me excusid;
I woll go counsell with my men lest they it refusid."
Beryn drew asyde, and spake with his meyne,
And expressid every word in what plight and degre
That he stode from poynt to poynt, and of his falsarestis:
His meyne wer astonyd, and starid forth as bestis.
"Spekith som word," quod Beryn, "sith I am betrayd;
Yee have yherd what Geffrey to me hath sayd."
These Romeyns stode alle still; o word ne cuud they meve; [relevе,
And eke it passid their wittis. Then Beryn gan
And to Geffrey eft ageyn, and mercy hym besought.
"Help me, sir," quod Beryn, "for his love that us bought

Dying on the rood, and wept full tendirly; [medy,
"For but ye help," quod Beryn, "ther is no re-
For comfort nethir counsaill of my men have I noon:
Help me, as God yew help, and els I am undoon."
When Geffrey saw this Beryn so distract and wept,
Pite into eche veyn of his hert crept.
"Allas!" quod Geffrey, "I might nat do a more synful dede,
I leve by my trowith, then fayl yew in this nede;
Faill me God in Heven yf that I yew faill!
That I shall do my besines, my peyn, and my travaile,
To help yew be my power; I may no ferther goo."
"Yis, yee behete me more," seid Beryn, tho,
"That yee wold help me at all that I shuld stond
Beryn gan to wepe and make wers chere [eler."
"Stillith yew," quod Geffrey, "for how so evir ye
More than my power ye ought nat desire, [tire
For thorough the grace of God ye shul be help wele;
I have ther of no dout; but trewlich I you tele
That ye woll hold me covenaunte and I woll yew
To bryng me at Rome when it is all ydo. [also,
In signe of trowith of both sidis of our acordment
Eche of us kys othir of our comyn assent;"
And all was do. And aftirward Beryn commaundit wyne;
They dronk, and then Geffrey seid; "Sir Beryne,
Yee mut declare yeur maters to myne intelligence,
That I may the bet perseyve all inconvenience,
Dout, pro, contra, and ambiguite,
Thorough your declaratioune, and enformyd be;
And with the help of our soveren lord celestiale
They shall be behynd, and we shull have the ball,
For now the tyme approchith for their cursidnes
To be somwhat rewardit; and cause of yewr dis-
Hath my hert ysetlid and fixed therin a nye, [tres
As trowith woll and reson, for their trechery:
For many a man tofore this day they have do out of daw,
Distroid and turmentid thorough their fals law;
For they think litill ellis, and all their wytlis fyve,
Save to have a mann'ys good and to benym his lyve;
And hath a cursid custom, all ageyns reson,
That what man they empeche they have noon en- [treve:
cheson
Thoughe it be as false a thing as God hymself is
And it touche a straunger that is com of newe
Atte first mocioune that he begynneth to meve
Ther stondith up an hundrit hym to repreve.
The lawes of the cete stont in probacy;
They usen noon enquestis the wrongis for to try:
And yf thow haddist eny wrong, and woldist pleyn
And were as trewe a cause as eny myght be, [the,
Thow shuldist nat find o man to bere the witnes,
Though every man in the town knew it more or les;
So burith they togidir, and holdith with eche othir,
That as to counterplede them, though ye wer my brothir, [ment,
I wold gyve yew no counsaill, ne their empeche-
In no word to deny, for that were combirment;
For then were they in the affirmatyf, and wold preve anoon, [anoon:
And to yew that wer negatyff the law wold graunt
So for to plede ageyn them it woll litill availl,
And yit to every maun'ys wit it ought be grete mervaile, [naunce
For their lawes been so streyt, and peynous ordi-
Is stallid for their falshede; for this is their synaunce,

To lese their lyff for lesing, and Isope it may knowe, [lowe,
That lord is riall of the town, and holdith them so
Wherfor they have a custom a shrewid for the nonys,
Yf eny of them sey a thing they cry all at onys,
And ferm it for a soth, and it bere eny charge;
Thus of the danger of Isope they kepe them ever at large;
And therfor wisdom weer, whoso might eschewe,
Nevir to dele with them; for were it wrong or trewe
It shuld litill availl ageyns their falshedes,
For they ben acursid, and so ben their dedes;
Wherfore we must with all our wit sensibill,
Such answers us purvey that they ben insolibill,
To morow at our aparaunce, and shall be respon-
For of wele and ellis it is thy day fynall." [saill,
"Now soveren lord celestiale!" with many sorow-ful sighs,
Seyd Beryn to Geffrey, ymmemorat of lyes,
"Graunt me grace to morowe, so that God be plesid
Make so myne answere, and I somwhat y-esid
By the that art my counsaill, for othir help is noon."
"Reherce me then," quod Geffrey, "the causis of thy foon
Fro poynt to poynt, al in fere, on the is surmysid,
Wherthorough I myght to morowe the betir be avisid."
"Now in soth," quod Beryn, "thoughe I shuld dy
I cannat tell the tenyth part of their trechery,
What for sorowe and angir that they to me have wrought;
So stond I clene desperat but ye con help ought."
"Deperdeux!" seid Geffrey, "and I the woll not faill,
Sith I have ensurid the to be of thy counsaill;
And so much the more that thou art nat wise,
And canst nat me enform of no maner avise;
Here ther'fore a while, and tend wel to my lore.
The lord that dwellith in this town, whose name I told tofore,
Isope, efft rehersid, is so inly wise
That no man alyve can his pas devise,
And is so grow in yeris that LX yeer ago
He sawe nat for age; and yit it stondith so
That thorough his wit, and wisdom, and his go-vernaunce,
Who makith a fray ef, or stryvith aught, or mel to much or praunce,
Within the same cete, that he n'ys take anoon,
And hath his pernaunce forthwith, for pardon usith he noon:
For ther n'ys pore ne riche, ne what state he be,
That he ny's undefote for his iniquite;
And it be previd on hym ther shal no gold hym
Right as the forfete axith much or lite, [quyte,
For geyns his commaundment is noon so hardy quek,
So hard setith he his fote in every mann's nek;
For undir sky and sterris this day is noon alyve
That coud amend hym in o poynt, al thing to dis-tryve. [were,
The seven sages of Rome, though al ageyn hym
The shuld be insufficient to make his answere,
For he can all langagis, Greek, Hebrew, and La-tyne,
Caldey, Frenssh, and Lombard, ye know well fyne,
And al maner that men in bokis write;
In poyse and philosophie also he can endite:

Cevile and canoune, and al maner lawis,
Seneca and Sydrak, and Salamon'ys sawys,
And the seven sciences, and eke lawe of armys,
Experimentis and pomprey, and all maner charmys,
As ye shul here aftir er that I depart.
Of his imaginacioun and of his sotill art;
For he is of age 300 yere and more,
Wherfore of all sciences he hath the more lore.
In Denmark he was gotten and ybore also,
And in Grece ynorished tyl he coud spek and go;
Ther was he put to scole, and lernyd wondir fast,
For such was his grace that all othir he past,
But first in his begynnyng litil good he had,
But lernyd evir passyngly, and was wise and sad:
Of stature and of feture ther was noon hym like
Thorough the lond of Grece though men wold hym seke. [male
A kyng ther was in tho yeris that had noon heir
Saff a doughter, that he lovid as his own saal;
Isope was his servaunt, and did hym such plesaunce
That he made hym his heir, and did hym so avaunce [crowne,
To wed his doughter and aftir hym to bere the
Thorough prowes and his port so low he was and boun;
So as Fortune wold, that was Isop'is frend; [end.
This worthy king that same yere made his carnel
That twenty-seven yere is passid that Isope thus hath reigned, [pleyned
And yit was ther nevir for wrong on hym com-
For no jugement that he gaff; yit som ageyn hym wylid
A grete part of his pepil, and wold have hym exilid;
But his grete wisdom, and his manfulnes,
His governaunce, with his bounte and his rightfulnes,
Hath evir yit preserved hym unto this ilk day,
And woll whyle that he lyvith for aught that men can say:
For who hath eny quarrel or cause for to wonde
Within this same cete, quicklich woll he fond,
And it be sotill matir, to Isope for to fare,
For gynnyng to the end his quarrell to declare;
And eve afore, as custom is, peple shall be on the morowe; [sorowe;
But whoso ly he scapith nat wythout shame or
Beryn, thou must go thidir, wher thyn empechment
Shull be ymevid, and therfor pas nat thens
Tyll thou have herd them alle, and report them wele
To me that am thy counsell, and repeir snele.
But so rial mancioune as Isope dwellith in
Ther is noon in the world, ne so queynt of gyn,
Wherfor be well avisid how I enform the
Of the wondir wayis and of the pryvyte
That been wythyn his paleyse, that thou must pas by:
And when thou approchist and art the castell nygh,
Blench fro the brode gate, and enter thow nat there,
For there ben men to keep it; yit have thow no fere;
Pas down on the right hond by the castell walle
Tyll thow fynd a window, and what so the byfall
Entir ther yf thow may, and be nothyng agast,
But walk forth in that entre: then shalt thow see in haste
A porteolyse the tofore; pas in boldly
Tyll thow com to an hall the feyrist undir sky:
The wallis ben of marbill, yjoynid, and yclosid,
And the pilours of crystall, grete and wele proposid:
The keveryng of bove is of selondyn,
And the pament beneth of gold and asure fyne.
But whoso passith thorough this hall had nede to ren blyve,
Or els he myght be disware of his own lyve,
For ther wythin hith a stoon that is so hote of kynd
That what thing com for by anoon it woll atend,
As bryght as eny kandell leem, and consume anoon;
And so wold the hall also n'er coldnes of a stoon
That is yclepid Dionyse, that set is hym ageyn;
So and thow lepe lightly thou shalt have no peyn,
For ethir stone in kynd proportioned they be,
Of hete and eke of coldnes of oon equalite.
Thow must pas thorough the hall, but tary nat I rede,
For thou shult fynd a dur up right afore thyn hede:
When thow'art entrid ther, and the dore apast,
Whatso thow se ligg or stond be thow nat agast;
And yf thow drede eny thing do no more saff blowe,
But yit I rede the beware that it be somwhat lowe:
Ther been to libardis loos and untyed, [spied
If that thy blowing of that othir in eny thing be
Anoon he rakith on the to sese the by thy pate,
For ther n'ys thing in erth that he so much doth hate, [thee,
As breth of mann'ys mowith; wherfore refreyn
And blow but fair and soft, and when that need be.
When thow art passid this hall anoon then shalt thow com
Into the fayrest garden that is in Christendom,
The wich thorough his clergy is made of such device
That a man shall ween he is in Paradise, [rise
At his first comyng in, for melody and song,
And othir glorious thinges and delectabill among,
The wich Tholomeus, that somtyme Paynym was,
That of astronomy knew ev'ry poynt and case,
Did it so devise, thorough his high connyng,
That ther n'ys best in erth ne bird that doith sing
That he n'ys there in figur in gold and sylvir fyne,
And mow, as they wer quyk, knawe the sotill engyne.
In mydward of this gardyn stant a feir tre
Of al maner levis that undir sky be,
Yforgit and yfourmit echo in his degre.
Of sylvir and of gold fyne that lusty been to see.
This gardeyn is evir grene, and full of May flowris,
Of rede, white, and blew, and othir fresh colouris,
The which ben so redolent, and sentyn so about,
That he must be right lewde therin shuld route.
These monstrefull thingis I devise to the
Because thow shuldist nat of them abasshid be.
When that thow comyst there, so thow be strong in thought,
And do be my counsell, drede the right nought,
For ther beth eight tregetours that this gardyn kepith,
Four of them doith waak whils the four sclepith,
The wich been so perfite of nygramance,
And of the art of apparene and of tragetrie,
That they make semen as to a mann'ys sight
Abominable wormys, that sore ought be afright
The hertiest man on erth, but he warnyd were
Of the grisly sightis that he shuld see there.
Among all othir there is a lyon white
That and he se a straungir he rampith for to bite,
And hath tofore this tyme 500 men and mo
Devourid and yete, that thereforth have ygo:

Yit shalt thow pas suyrly so thow do as I tell.
The tre I told tofore, that round as eny bell
Berith bow and braunche, traylyng to the ground,
And thow touch oon of them thow art saff and sound;
The tre hath such vertu there shall nothing the dere:
Loke that be the first when thow comyst there.
Then shalt thow se an entre by the ferther side;
Thoughe it be streyte tofore, inner large and wyde
It growith more and more, and as a dentour wryith;
Yit woll that wey the bryng there that Isope liith,
Into the feyrist chambir that evir man saw with eye.
When thow art there wythyn govern the wisely,
For there shalt thow here al thyn empechement
Opynly declarid in Isop'is present.
Report them wele and kepe them in thy mynd,
And aftir thy relacionne we shall so turn and wend,
Thorough help of God above, such help for to make
That they shull be acombrit, and we right well to scape."
"Now in soth," quod Beryn, "a mann'ys hert may grise
Of such wondir weyis, for al my marchandise
I had levir lese them oppon me take
Such a wey to pas."—"Then, sir, for your sake
I woll my self," quod Geffrey: "sith I am ensuryd
To help the with my power thow shalt me amyrid
As ferforth as I may; that I woll do my peyn
To bryng yow plesaunt tyding, and retourn ageyn
Yit or the cok crow; and ther'for let me se
Whils I am out how mery ye can be."
Greffrey toke his leve; but who was sory tho
But Beryn and his company? for when he was go
Thei had no maner joy, but dout and hevynes,
For of his repeyryng thei had no sikernes;
So every man to othir made his compleynt,
And wishid that of felony they had been atteynt,
And so them thought betir to end hevynes
Then every day to lak brede atte first mes;
For when our good is go what shall fal of us?
Evir to be their thrallis, and peraventure wers,
To lese our lyf aftir yf we displese them ought.
Aftir Geffrey went this was all their thought
Throughout the nyght tyl cokkis gan to sing;
But then encresid anguishe; their hondis gan to wryng,
And cursed wynd and watir that them brought ther,
And wishid many tymes that he had been in bere,
And were apaffid and entrid into dispeyr,
In as much as Greffrey did nat repeir:
Eche man seyd to othir "It myght nat be ynayid
But Geffrey had utirlich falsly them betrayid"
Thoroughout all the long nyght.

.....

Tho went they to counsell a litill tofore the day,
And were all acordit for to sayl awey;
And so them thought betir, and leve their good ther,
Then abyde theroppon, and have more fere.
They made their takelyng redy, and wend the sail acros,
For to save their lyvis, and set nat of their los;
So sore they wer adred to be in servitute,
And hopid God above wold send them som refute
By som othir costis ther wynd them wold bryng:
And therwithall cam Geffrey on his stilt lepeing,
And cried wondir fast by the watir syde.
When Beryn herd Geffrey he bid his men abyde,
And to launch out a bote and bryng Geffrey in,
"For he may more avayl me now then al my kyn,
And he be trew and trusty, as myn hope is;"
But yit ther'of had Beryn no full sikernes.
These Romeyns set in Geffrey with an hevy chere,
For they had levir saill forth then put them in weer
Both lyve and goodis: and evill suspicioune
They had of this Geffrey; wherfore they gon roune,
Talkyng to eche othir, "This man woll us betray."
Geffrey wist well inowghe he was nat to their pay,
And for verry angir he threw into the see
Both stilt and eke his crouch, that made wer of tre,
And gan them to comfort, and seid in this manére:
"*Benedicite!* Beryn, why make ye such chere?
For and yee wex hevy what shall yewr men do
But take ensampill of yew? and have no cause to:
For yit or it be eve yewr adversaryes all
I shall make them spurn and have a sore fall,
And yee go quyte, and all yewr good, and have of theirs too,
And they to be right feign for to scape so
Wythout more daungir, and yewr wyl be;
For of the lawys her such is the equyte
That *Who pursu othir and his pleynt be wrong*
He shall make amendis be he nevir so strong;
Right as shuld the t'odir yf he condempned were
Right so shall the pleyntiff right as I yew lere:
And that shall preve by them, have ye no doute,
Yet or it be eve right low to yew to loute,
And submit them to yew, and put them in yewr grace
By that tyme I have ymade all my wanlase;
And in hope to spede wel let shape us for to dyne,"
Geffrey axid watir, and sith brede and wyne,
And seit, "It is holsom to breke our fast betyme;
For the steward woll to the court athour of pryme."
The sonne gan to shyne and shope a feir dey;
But for aught that Geffrey coud do or sey
These Romeyns spekyn fast all the dyner while,
That Geffrey with his sotill wordis wold them begile.
So when they had ydyned they rysen up echoone,
And drew them to counsell what was best to doon:
Som seyd "The best rede that we do may,
To throw Geffrey ovir the bord, and seyll forth our way:"
But for drede of Beryn som wold nat so,
Yit the more party assentid wele therto.
Geffrey and Beryn, and worthy Romeyns tweyn,
Stood a part within the ship, so Geffrey gan to seyn,
"Beryn, beth avisid; your men beth in distaunce:
Sith ye been her soveren put them in governance;
For methinkith they holdith contrary opynyouné,
And *Grace faylith comynlich wher is divisioune.*"
In the meen whyle that they gan thus to stryve
Hanybald was up, and ycom as blyve
To the brigg of the town ther the shippis rood,
And herd much noyse; but litil while he bood,
For when he saw the saylis stond all acros,
"Alas!" quod this Hanybald, "here growith a smert los
To me that am provost, and have in charge and hest
All these fyve shippis undir myn arest:
And ran into the town, and made an hidouse cry,
And chargit all the cetezins to armys for to hy
From o strete tyl anothir, and rerid up al the town,
And made the trompis blowe up and the bellis soun,
And sey that the Romeyns wer in poynt to pas,
Tyl ther wer a thousand, rathir mo then les,
Men y-armyd cleen, walkyng to the stronde
When Beryn them aspied: "Now, Geffrey, in thy honde

Stont lyf and goodis; doth with us what the list
For all our hope is on the, comfort, help, and trist:
For we must bide aventure, sueh as God wol shape,
For now I am in certen we mow in no wise scape."
" Have no doubt," quod Geffrey, " beth mery; let me aloon;
Getith a peir sisours, sherith my berd anoon,
And aftirwerd lete top my hede hastylich and blyve,"
Som went to with sesours, som wyth a knyffe,
So what for sorowe and hast, and for lewd tole,
Ther was no man alyve bet like to a fole
Then Geffrey was by that tyme they had al ydo.
Hanybald clepid out Beryn, to Mote Hall for to go,
And stode upon the brigg with an huge route.
Geffrey was the first to Hanybald gan to loute
And lokid out a fore ship: " God bles yew! Sir," quod he. [and se,
" Wher art thow now, Beryn? com forth, behold
Her is an huge pepill yrayd and ydight;
All these been my children that been in armys bryght;
Yistirdey I gat them: is nat mervaill,
That they been hidir ycom to be of our counsaill,
And to stond up by us, and help us in our ple?
A! myne own childryn, blessid mut ye be!"
Quod Geffrey, with an high voise, and had a nyce visage,
And gan to daunce for joy in the fore stage.
Hanybald lok'd on Geffrey as he wer amasid,
And beheld his countenaunce, and how he was yrasid,
But evirmore he thought that he was a fole
Naturell of kynde, and had noon othir tool,
As semed by his wordis and his visage both,
And thought it had been foly to wex with hym wroth,
And gan to bord ageyn, and axid hym in game,
" Sith thou art our fadir who is then our dame?
And how and in what plase were we begete?"
" Yistirday," quod Geffrey, " pleyng in the strete
At a gentil game that clepid is the Quek,
A long peny halter was cast about my nek,
And yknet fast with a riding knot,
And cast over a perch, and hale along my throte."
" Was that a game," quod Hanybald, " for to hang thy selve?" [self."
" So they seyd about me, a thousand eche by hym-
" How seapiddist thow," quod Hanybald, " that thou wer nat dede?"
" Therto can I answer without any rede:
I bare thre dise in myn own purs,
For I go nevir without, fare I betir or wers;
I kist them forth all thre, and too fill am'ys,
But here now what fill aftir, right a mervelouse case;
Ther cam a mowse lep forth, and ete the third boon,
That puffid out her skyn as grete as she myght goon;
And in this maner wise of the mowse and me
All ye be ycom my children fair and fre;
And yit or it be eve fall woll such a chaunce
To stond in my power yew all to avaunce,
For and we plede well to day we shall be riche inowghe."
Hanybald of his wordis hertlich loughe,
And so did all that herd hym, as they myght wele,
And had grete joy wyth hym for to tell,
For they knew hym noon othir but a sole of kynd
And all this was his discrecioune, and that previd the end,
Thus whils Geffrey japid to make their hertis light
Beryn and his company were rayid and ydight,
And londid them in botis, ferefull how to spede,
For all their thoughtis in balance stode betwene hope and drede:
But yet they did their peyn to make lightsome chere, [manere
As Geffrey them had enfourmed, of port and al
Of their governaunce all the long day
Tyll their plee wer endit; so went they forth their wey [sey,
To the court with Hanybald. Then Beryn gan to
" What nedith this, sir Hanybald, to make such aray
Sith we been pese-marchantis, and use no spoliacioune?"
" For soth, sir," quod Hanybald, " to me was made relacioune
Yee wer in poynt to void; and yef ye had do so
Yee had lost yewr lyvis, without wordis mo."
Beryn held hym styll. Geffrey spak anoon;
" No les wed them lyvis? Whi so, good sir Jon?
That wer somwhat to much as it semeth me;
But ye be ovirwise that dwell in this cete;
For ye have begonne a thing makith you right bold
And yit or it be eve as folis shull yee be hold:
And eke ye devyne for shipmanny's craft,
And wotith litill what longith to afore the ship and bafft, [arise,"
And namelich in the dawnyng when shipmen first
" My good frend," quod Hanybald, in a scornyng wise, [crecioune,
" Ye must onys enfourm me thorough yowr dis-
But first yee must answer to a questioune;
Why make men eros-sail in myddis of the mast?"
" *For to talow the ship and fech more blast.*"
" Why goon the yemen to bote ankirs to hale?"
" *For to make them redy to walk to the ale.*"
" Why hale they up stonys by the crane lyne?"
" *To make the tempest sese and the sonne shyne.*"
" Why close they the port with the soe bord?"
" *For the mastir shuld awake at first word.*"
" Thou art a redy reve," quod Hanybald, " in fay."
" Yee, sir, trewly, for sothe is that ye yew sey;"
Geffrey evir clappid as doith a watir myll,
And made Hanybald to laugh al his hert fyll.
" Beryn," quod this Greffrey, " retourn thy men ageyn;
What shull they do with the at court? no man on them pleyn.
Plede thy case thy selve right as thow hast ywrought;
To bide with the shippis my purpose is and thought."
" Nay, forsoth," quod Hanybald, " thow shalt abyde on lond,
Wee have no folis but the;" and toke hym by the hond,
" For thow art wise in law to plede all the case."
" That can I betir," quod Geffrey, " then eny man in this plase.
What seyst thow therto, Beryn? shall I tell thy tale?"
Hanybald likid his wordis wele, and forward gan hym hale.
Beryn made him angry, and sighid wondir sore,
For Greffrey hym had enfourmid of every poynt to fore,
How he hym shuld govern all the long day.
Geffrey chasid hym ageyn; " Sey me ye or nay;
Mayst'owe nat here speke some maner word?"
" Leve thy blab, lewd sole, me likith nat thy bord:
" I have anothir thought," quod Beryn, " wherof thow carist lite."
" Clepeist thow me a Fole," quod Geffrey? " al that I may the wite:

But first when we out of Rome saillid both in fere
Tho I was thy felawe and thy partinere,
For tho the marchandise was more then half myne,
And sith that thow com hidir thow takist all for thyne.
But yit or it be eve I wol make oon behest,
But thow have my help thy part shall be lest."
"Thyn help," quod Beryn; "lewde fole, thow art more then masid;
Dres the to the shippis ward with thy crown yrasid,
For I myght nevir spare the bet: trus and beagoo."
"I woll go with the," quod Geffrey, "wher thow wolt or no,
And lern to plede law to wyn both howse and lond."
"So thow shalt," quod Hanybald, and led hym by the hond,
And leyd his hond oppon his nek: but and he had yknow [snowe
Whom he had led, in sikernes he had well levir in
Have walkid xl. myle, and rathir then fail more;
For he wishid that Greffrey had ybe unbore
Full oft tyme in that day or the ple wer do,
And so did all that wrought Beryn sham and woo.
Now yee that list abide and here of sotilte
Mowe know how that Beryn sped in his ple,
And in what aray to the court he went,
And how Hanybald led Geffrey, disware of his entent; [pray?"
But yet he axid of Geffrey, "What is thy name I
"Gylhochet," quod Geffrey, "men clepid me yistirday." [vow,"
"And wher weer thow ybore?" "I n'ote I make a
Seyd Geffrey to this Hanybald, "I axe that of yew,
For I can tell no more but here I stond nowe."
Hanybald of his wordis hertlich lowghe,
And held hym for a passyng fole to serve eny lord.
Thus they romyd janglyng into the court ward,
But or they com ther the steward was yset,
And the grettist of the town a company ymet,
And gon to stryve fast who shuld have the good
That com was with Beryn ovir the salt flood.
Som seyd oon and som seyde anothir; [rothir;
Som wold have the shippis, the parell, and the
Som his eyen, som his dyf wold have, and no les,
Or els he shuld for them fyne or he did pas;
And in the mene whils they wer in this afray
Beryn and these Romeyns wer com, in good aray
As myght be made of woll, and of colour graynyd;
They toke a syde bench that for them was ordeynyd.
When all was husht and still Beryn arose anoon,
And stode in the myddis of the hall tofore them everichone,
And seyd, "Sir Steward, in me shall be no let;
I am ycom to answer as my day is set:
Do me ryght and reson; I axe yew no more."
"So shall I," quod the steward, "for ther'to I am swore."
"He shall have right," quod Geffrey, "wher thow wolt or no,
For and thow mys onys thy jugement ondo.
I woll to the emperour of Rome my cosyn,
For of o cup he and I full oft have dronk the wyne,
And yit we shull heraftir as oft as we mete,
For he is long the gladder when I send hym to grete."
This Geffrey stode upon a fourm, for he wold be sey
Above all othir the shouldris and the cry,
And starid al about with his lewd berd,
And was yhold a very fole of ech man hym herd.
The steward, and the officers, and the burgeysis all,
Laughid at hym hertlich; the criour gan to call
The burgeyse that had pleyd with Beryn at ches,
And he arose quiklich, and gan hym for to dres
Afore the steward at barr, as the maner is;
He gan to tell his tale wyth grete redines:
"Here me, sir Steward, this day is me set
To have right and reson; I axe yew no bet,
Of Beryn that here stondith, that with me yistirday
Made a certen covenaunt, and at ches we did pley,
That whoso were ymatid of us both too
Shuld do the todir's bidding, and yf he wold nat so
He must drink all the watir that salt wer in the se:
Thus I to hym surid and he also to me.
To preve my tale trew I am nat all aloon:"
Up rose ten burgeysis quyklich anoon,
And affermyd eviry word of his tale soth,
And made them all redy for to do their othe.
Evander the steward, "Beryn, now," quod he,
"Thow most answere nede; it woll noon othir be:
Take thy counsell to the: spede on; I have doon."
Beryn held hym styll: Geffrey, spak anoon;
"Now be my trowith," quod Geffrey, "I mervell much of yew [inowghe,
To bid us go to counsell, and knowith me wise
And evir ful avisid, in twynkelyng of an eye,
To make a short answer but yf my mowith be dry.
Shuld we go to counsell for o word or tweyn?
Be my trowith we n'yll; let se mo that pleyn;
And but he be yanswer'd, and that right anoon,
I geve yew leve to rise and walk out every choon,
And aspyd redily yf ye fynd me there,
In the meen whils I woll abyde here;
Nay, I tell trewly, I am wiser than ye ween,
For ther n'yis noon of you woot redely what I mean."
Every man gan laughe all his hert fill
Of Geffrey and his wordis; but Beryn held hym still,
And was cleen astonyd; but yit ner the lattir
He held it nat al foly that Geffrey did clattir,
But wisely hym governyd, as Geffrey hym taught,
For percell of his wisdom he had tofore smaught.
"Sir Steward," quod Beryn, "I undirstound wele
The tale of this burgeyse; now let anothir tell,
That I may take counsell and answer all at onys,"
"I graunt," quod the steward; then axing for the nonys,
"Sith thow wold be rewlid by the fol'is rede,
For he is right a wise man to help the in thy nede.
Up aros the accusours queyntlich anoon;
Hanybald was the first of them everichoon,
And gan to tell his tale with a proud chere.
"Yistirday, soverens, when I was here
Beryn and thes burgeyse gon to plede fast
For pleying at ches; so ferforth at last,
Thorough vertu of myn office, that I had in charge
Beryn's fyve shippis, for to go at large,
And to be in answer her this same day;
So walkyng to the strondward we bargeynyd by the wey
That I shuld have the marchandise that Beryn with hym brought,
Wherof I am sesid, as ful sold and bought,
In covenaunte that I shuld his shippis fill ageyn
Of my marchandise, such as he tofore had seyn
In myn own place, howsis to or thre,
Full of marchandise as they myght be;
And I am evir redy, whensoever he woll,
Let hym go or sende, and charge his shippis full
Of such marchandise as he findith there,
For in such wordis we acordit were."
Up rose x burgeysis, not tho that rose tofore,
But othir, and made them redy to have swore

That every word of Hanybald, from the begynnyng to the end,
Was soth and eke trewe, and with their mende
Full prest they wer to preve; and seyd they wer present
At covenaunt making, by God omnipotent.
"It shal nat nede," quod Geffrey, "whils that I here stond,
For I woll preve it my self with my right honde,
For I have been in four batellis heretofore,
And this shall be the fift, and therfor I am swore.
Beholdith, and seith," and turnyd hym about;
The steward and the burgeyse gamyd all about;
The Romeyns held them still, and lawhghid but a lite.
Wyth that cam the blynd man his tale to endite,
That God hym grant wynnyng right as he hath aservid.
Beryn and his company stood all astryvyd
Betwene hope and drede, right in high distres,
For of wele or of woo they had no sikernes.
"Beryn," quod this blynd, "thoughe I may nat see
Stond nere yit the barr, my comyng is for the,
That wrongfullich thow witholdist my both to eyen,
The wich I toke the for a tyme, and quyklich to me hijen,
And take them me ageyn, as our covenaunt was.
Beryn, I take no reward of othir mennys case,
But oonlich of myn oon: that stont me most an hond.
Now blessid be God in heven that brought the to this loud!
For sith our last parting many betir teris
Have I lete for thy love, that som tyme partineris
Of wynnyng and of lesing were yeris fele,
And evir I fond the trewe, tyl at the last thow didst stele
Awey wyth my too eyen that I toke to the
To se the tregetours pley and their sotilte,
As yistirday here in this same plase
Tofore yew, sir Steward, rehersid as it was.
Full trew is that byword, *A man to servesabill*
Ledith oft Beyard from his own stabill.
Beryn, by the I meen, though thow make it straunge,
For thow knowist trewly that I made no chaunge
Of my good eyen for thyn that badder were."
Therwith stode up burgeyse four witnes to bere,
Beryn held hym styll, and Geffrey spak anoon;
"Now of thy lewd complevnt, and thy masid moon,
By my trowith," quod Geffrey, "I have grete mervaill,
For though thow haddist eyen-sight it shuld litill availe;
Thow shuldist nevir fare the bet, but the wors, in fay,
For al thing may be still now for the in house and way,
And yf thow haddist thyn eyen thou woldist no counsell hele;
I know wele by thy sisnamy thy kynd wer to stele:
And eke it is thy profite and thyn ese also
To be blynd as thow art; for now wherso thow go
Thow hast thy lyvlode whilst thow art alyve,
And yf thow myghtist se thow shuldist nevir thryve."
Al the house throughout save Beryn and his feris
Lawghid of Geffrey, that watir on their levis
Ran down from their eyen for his masid wit.
Wythat cam the woman, hir tung was nat sclyt,
Wyth 15 burgeysis, and women also fele,
Her quarel for to preve, and Beryn to apele,
With a feir knave child yloke wythin their armys,
And gan to tel her tale of wrongis and of harmys,
And eke of unkyndnes, untrowith, and falshede,
That Beryn had ywrought to hir, that quyntlich from hir yede doon,
Anoon oppon her wedding, when he his wyl had
And brought hir wyth chyld, and lete hir sit aloon
Wythout help and comfort from that day, "and nowith
He proferid me nat to kys onys with his mowith,
As yistirday, sir Steward, afore yew eche word
Was rehersid here, my pleynt is of record,
And this dey is me set for to have reson.
Let hym make amendis, or els tell encheson
Why hym ought nat fynd, as man ought, his wyf."
These fiftene burgeysis quyklich al so blyve,
And as sele wymen as stode by hir ther,
Seyd that they were present when they weddit were,
And that every word that the woman seyde
Was trew, and eke Beryn had hir so betray'd.
"*Benedicite!*" quod Geffrey, "Beryn, hast thow a wyf?
Now have God my trowith the dayis of my lyf
I shal trust the the les thow teldist me nat to fore
As wele of thy wedding and of thy sone ybore.
Go to, and kys them both, thy wyf and eke thyn heir:
Be thow nat ashamyd, for they both be feyr.
This wedding was right privy, but I shall make it couthe:
Behold thy sone, it semith crope out of thy mowith,
And eke of thy condicioune both soft and some.
Now am I glad thyn heir shall with us to Rome,
And I shall teche hym, as I can, whils that he is young,
Every day by the strete to gadir houndis dung
Tyll it be abill of prentyse to craft of *Taverner* taury
And aftir I shall teche hym for to catche a fly,
And to mend mytens when they been to tore,
And aftir to cloute shoun whan he is elder more;
Yit for his parentyne to pipe as doith a mowse
I woll hym teche, and for to pike a snayl out of his howse,
And to berk as doith an hound, and sey 'Baw, baw,'
And turn round about as a cat doith wyth a straw,
And to blete as doith a shepe, and ney as doith an hors,
And to low as doith a cow; and as myn own corps
I woll cherissh hym every day for his modirs sake:"
And gan to stappe ner the child, to have ytake,
As semed by his countenaunce, although he thought nat so:
But modir was evir ware, and blenchid to and fro,
And leyd hir hond betwene, and lokid somwhat wroth,
And Geffrey in pur wrath beshrewid them all both;
"For by my trowith," quod Geffrey, "wel masid is thy pan,
For I woll teche thy sone the craftis that I can,
That he in tyme to come myght win his lyvlode,
To wex therfor angry thow art verry wood.
Of husbond, wyff, and sone, by the Trynyte
I n'ote wich is the wisest of them all thre."
"No, sothly," quod the steward; "it lith all in thy noll
Both wit and wysdom, and previth by thy poll:"
For all be that Geffrey wordit sotilly,
The steward and the burgeysis held it for foly
All that evir he seyd, and toke it for good game,
And had full litill knowlech he was Geffrey the lame.
Beryn and his company stode still as stone
Betwene hope and drede, disware how it shuld goon,

Saff Beryn trist in party that Geffrey wold hym help,
But yit into that hour he had no cause to yelp;
Wherfor they made much sorowe, that dole was and pete.
Geffrey herd hym sigh sore: "What devil is yew?" quod he:
"What nede yew be sory whils I stond here?
Have I nat enfourmid yew how and in what manere
That I yew wold help, and bryng them in the snare?
Yf ye coud plede as well as I, full litill wold ye care.
Pluk up thy hert," quod Geffrey, "Beryn, I speke to the."
"Leve thy blab tewd," quod Beryn to hym age;
"It doith no thing availl that sorowe com on thy hede;
It is nat worth a fly al that thow hast seyde.
Have we nat els now for to think oppon
Saff here to jangill?" Machyn rose anoon,
And went to the barr, and gan to tell his tale;
He was as fals as Judas, that set Criste at sale.
"Sir Steward," quod this Machyn, "and the burgeysis al, [pall,
"Knowith wele how Melan with purpill and with
And othir marchandise, seven yere ago
Went toward Rome, and how that I also
Have enquered sith, as reson woll and kynde,
Sith he was my fadir, to know of his ende;
For yit sith his departing tyl it was yistirday
Met I nevir creature that me coud wissh or say
Reedynes of my fadir, dede othir alyve;
But, blessid be God in heven! in this thev'is selyve
The knyff I gaff my fadir was yistirday yfound:
Sith I hym apele let hym be fast ybound.
The knyf I know wel inowe; also the man stont here,
And dwellith in this town, and is a cotelere,
That made the same knyf wyth his too hondis,
That wele I woot there is noon like to sech al Cristen londis;
For three preciouse stonys been wythin the haft
Perfectlich ycouchit, and sotillich by craft
Endendit in the haft, and that right coriously,
A saphir, and a salidone, and a rich ruby."
The cotelere cam lepeing forth with a bold chere
And seyd to the steward "That Machyn told now
Every word is trew, so beth the stonys set; [here
I made the knyf my self, who myght know it bet?
And toke the knyff to Machyn, and he me pay'd wele;
So is this felon gilty; there is no more to tell."
Up arose burgeysis by two by three by four,
And sey'd they wer present the same tyme and hour
When Machyn wept sore, and brought his fadir's gownd,
And gaf hym the same knyff oppon the see strond.
"Beth ther eny mo pleyntifs of record?"
Quod Geffrey to the steward: and he ageynward;
"How semeth the, Gylhochet, beth ther nat inowghe?
Make thyn answer, Beryn, case that thow mowe,
For oon or othir thow must sey, although it nat availle, [mervaill."
And but thow lese or thow go methinkith grete
Beryn goith to counsell and his company,
And Geffrey bode behinde to her more and se,
And to shew the burgeyse somewhat of his hert;
And seyd, "But I make the pleyntifs for to smert,
And alle that them meyntenith, for aught that is yseyd,
I woll grant yew to kut the eris fro my hede.
My master is at counsell, but counsell hath he noon
For but I hym help he is cleen undoon;
But I woll help hym al that I can, and meyntene hym also
By my power and connyng, so I am bound ther'to;
For I durst wage battell wyth yew, though yee be strong, [wrong;
That my maister is in the trowith and ye be in the
For and we have lawe I ne hold yew but distroied
In yewr own falshede, so be yee now aspied;
Wherfor yit or eve I shal abate yewr pride,
That som of yew shall be right feyn to slynk away and hide."
The burgeyses gon to lawgh, and scornyd hym ther'to.
"Gylhochet," quod Evander, "and thow cowdist so
Bryng it thus about, it were a redy wey."
"He is a good fool," quod Hanybald, "in fay,
To put hymself aloon in strengith and eke in wit
Ageyns all the burgeysis that on this bench sit."
"What clatir is this," quod Machyn, "al day with a fole?
Tyme is now to worch with som othir tole,
For I am certeyn of their answer that they wol fail,
And lyf for lyf of my fadir what may that avail?
Wher'for beth avisid, for I am in no doute
The goodis been sufficient to part al aboute,
So may every party pleyntif have his part."
"That is reson," quod the blind; "a trew man thow art;
And eke it were untrowith and eke grete syn
But eche of us that pleynith myght somwhat wyn."
Hanybald bote his lippis, and herd them both wele;
"Towching the marchandise o tale I shall yew tell,
And eke make a vow, and hold my behest,
That of the marchandise yewr part shall be lest;
For I have made a bargeyn that may nat be undo;
I woll hold his covenaunt and he shal myn also."
Up roos quicklich the burgeyse Syrophanes;
"Hanybald," quod he, "the law goith by no lanys,
But hold ferth the streyt wey, even as doith a lyne;
For yistirday when Beryn with me did dyne;
I was the first person that put him in arest;
And for he wold go large thow haddist in charge and hest
To sese both ship and goodis til I were answerid;
Then must I first be servid, this knowith al men ylerid."
The woman stode besidis, and cried wondir fast,
"Ful soth is that byword, *To pot who comyth last He worst is servid:* and so it farith by me:
Yit nethirles, sir Steward, I trust to yewr lentè,
That knowith best my cause and my trew entent;
I axe yew no more but rightful jugement:
Let me have part with othir sith he my husbond is:
Good sir, beth avisid; I axe yew nat amys."
Thus they gon to stryve, and wer of high mode
For to depart emong them othir mennys good,
Wher they tofore had nevir properte,
Ne nevir shuld theraftir by doom of equyte;
But they had othir cause then they had tho.
Beryn was at counsell, his hert was full woo,
And his meyny sory, distrakt, and al amayide,
For tho they levid noon othir but Geffrey had betrayide;
Because he was so long they coud no maner rede,
But everich by hymself wishid he had be dede.
"O myghtful God!" they seyd, "I trow tofore this day
Was nevir gretter tresoun, fere, ne affray,

Ywrought onto mankind then now is to us here,
And namelich by this Geffrey with his sotil chere;
So feithful he made it he wold us help echone.
And now we be ymyryd he letith us sit aloon."
"Of Geffrey," quod Beryn, "be as it be may;
We mut answer nede, ther is noon othir way;
And ther'for let me know your wit and your counsaile."
They wept, and wrong their hondis, and gan to waille [lyve
The tyme that they were bore, and shortly of the
They wisshid that they wer. With that came Geffrey blive,
Passing them towards, and began to smyle.
Beryn axid Geffrey wher he had be al the while?
"Have mercy oppon us, and help us as thow hight." [might;
"I woll help yow right wele through grace of Godd's
And I can tell yow tiding of their governaunce.
They stondin altercatioune and stryf in poynt to praunce
To depart your goodis, and levith verily
That it wer impossibil yew to remedy;
But their high pride and their presumpcioune
Shal be yit or eve their confusioune;
And to make amendis ech man for his pleynt,
Let se ther'for your good avise how they might be ateynt."
The Romeyns stode still, as who had shor their hede.
"In feith," quod Beryn, "we can no maner rede,
But in God and yew we submit us all,
Body, lyf, and goodis, to stond or to fall,
And nevir for to travers o word that thow seyst;
Help us, good Geffrey, as wele as thou mayst."
"Deperdeux!" quod Geffrey, "and I woll do my peyn
To help yow as my connyng woll strech and ateyn,"
The Romeyns went to barr, and Geffrey altofore
With a nice countenaunce, bare fote, and to tore,
Pleying with a yerd he bare in his honde,
And was evir wistlyng at every pase comaunde.
The steward and the burgeysis had game inowghe
Of Geffrey'is nice comyng, and hertlich lowghe;
And eche man seyd, "Gylhochet, com nere;
Thow art right welcome, for thow makist us chere."
"The same welcom," quod Geffrey, "that yee woll us
Fall oppon yewr hedis, I pray to God, and wers."
They held hym for a verry fole, but he held them wel more;
And so he made them in breff tyme, all though they wer nat shore.
"Styntith now," quod Geffrey, "and let make pese;
Of myrthis and of japis tyme is now to cese,
And speke of othir matir that we have to doon,
For and we hew amys eny maner stone
We know wele in certeyn what pardon we shul have;
The more is our nede us to defend and save.
My master hath be at counsell, and ful avisid is
That I shall have the wordis, speke I wele or mys;
Wherfor, sir Steward, and ye burgeysis all,
Sittith upright, and writtith nat, for aventuris that may fall;
For and ye deme untrewely, or do us eny wrong,
Ye shull be refourmyd, be ye nevir so strong,
Of every poynt and injury, and that in grete haste,
For he is nat unknowe to us that may yow chaste;
Hold forth the right wey, and by no side lanys.
And as towching the first pleyntif Syrephanes,
That pleyd with my master yistirday at ches,
And made a certeyn covenaunte, who that had the wers
In the last game, al thoughe I wer nat there,
Shuld do the todir's bidding, whatsoever it wer,
Or drynk all the watir that salt wer in the see;
Thus I trowe, sir Steward, ye woll record the ple,
And yf I have ymissid in lettir or in word
The lawe, wol I be rewlid aftir yewr record;
For we be ful avisid in this wise to answere."
Evander the steward, and al men that wer there,
Had mervil much of Geffrey, that spak so redely,
Whose wordis tofore semyd al foly,
And wer astonyed cleen, and gan for to drede,
And ev'ry man tyl othir lenyd with his hede,
And seyd he reported the tale right formally;
"He was no fole in certen, but wise, ware, and scly,
For he hath but yjapid us and scornyd heretofore,
And we have bold hym a fole, but we be wel more."
Thus they stodied on Geffrey, and laughed tho right naught.
When Geffrey had aspied they wer in such thought,
And their hertis trobelid, pensyf, and anoyed,
Hym lyst to dryve in bet the nayl, till they were fully cloyid.
"Soverens sirs," he seyd, "sith that it so is
That in reporting of our ple ye fynd nothing amys,
As provith wele yowr scilence, eke ye withseyth nat
O word of our tale, but clene without spot,
Then to our answer I prey yow take hede,
For we wol sey al the trowith right as it is in dede;
For this is soth and certen, it may nat be withseyd,
That Beryn that here stondith was thus ovirpleid
In the last game, when wagir was opon;
But that was his sufferaunce, as ye shull here anoon,
For in all this cete ther n'ys no maner man
Can pley betir at ches then my mastir can;
Ne bet then I, though I it sey, can nat *half* so much;
Now how he lost it by his wyll the cause *I* woll teche;
For ye wend and ween that he had hym engyned.
But ye shul fele in every veyn that ye be undirmined,
And ybrought at ground, and eke ovirmusid.
And agenst the first that Beryn is accusid
Herith now ententyflich. When we wer on the see
Such a tempest on us fill that noon myght othir se
Of thundir, wynd, and lightenyng, and stormys ther among.
Fiftene dayis during the tempest was so strong
That eche man till othir began hym for to shryve,
And made their avowis, yf they myght have the lyve,
Som to se the sepulkir, and som to othir plase,
To sech holy seyntis for help and for grace;
Som to fast and do pennaunce, and som do almysdede;
Tyl at last, as God wold, a voise to us seyd,
In our most turment, and desperat of mynd,
That yf we wold be savid my maister must hym bynd
Be feith and eke be vow, when he cam to lond,
To drink al the salt watir within the see strond,
Without drinking eny sope of the fressh watir;
And taught hym al the sotilte how and in what manere
That he shuld wirch by engyne and by a sotil charm,
To drink all the salt watir and have hymself no harm,
But stop the fresh rivers by every cost side,
That they enter nat in the se thorough the world wyde.

The voise we herd but naught we saw; so wer our witts ravid,
For this was end fynally, yf we lust be savid.
Wher'for my master Beryn, when he cam to this port,
To his avow and promys he made his first resort,
Or that he wold bergeyn eny marchandise,
And right doith these marchandis in the same wise
That maken their avowis in saving of their lyv'is,
They completyn their pilgremagis or they se their wyvis.
So mowe ye ondirstond that my master Beryn
Of fre will was ymatid, as he that was a pilgrym,
And myght nat perfourm by many thowsand part
His avow and his hest wythout right sotil art,
Without help and strength of many mennys myght.
Sir Steward, and sir Burgeyse, if we shul have right
Sirophanes must do cost and aventure,
To stop al the fresh ryvers into the see that entir,
For Beryn is redy in al thing hym to quyte,
So he be in defaute must pay for the wite.
Sith ye been wise al what nede is much chatir?
Ther was no covenaunte them betwene to drink fresh watir."
When Sirophanes had yherd al Geffrey's tale,
He stode al abashid, with colour wan and pale,
And lokid oppon the steward with a rewful chere,
And on othir frendship and neyhbours he had there,
And preyd them of counsell the answere to reply.
"These Romeyns," quod the steward, "been wondir scly,
And eke right ymmagytyf, and of sotil art,
That I am in grete dowte howe yee shul depart
Without harm in oon side: our lawis, well thow wost,
Is to pay damagis, and eke also the cost,
Of every party plentyf that fallith in his pleynt:
Let hym go quyt I counsell, yf it may so be queynt."
"I merveil," quod Sirophanes, "of their sotilte,
But sith that it so stondith, and may noon othir be,
I do woll be counsell, and graunted Beryn quyte."
But Geffrey thought anothir, and without respite,
"Sirs," he seyd, "me wetith wele that ye wol do us right,
And so ye must nedis, and so ye have us highte;
And therefore, sir Steward, ye occupy our plase,
And ye know wele what law wol in this case;
My mastir is redy to perfourme his avow."
"But natheless," quod the steward, "I cannat wete how
To stop all the fresh watir were possibilite."
"Yis, in soth," quod Geffrey, "who had of gold plente
As man coud wish and it myght well be do:
But that is nat our defaute, he hath no tresour to.
Let hym go to in haste, or find us suerte
To make amendis to Beryn for his iniquite,
Wrong, and harm, and trespas, and undewe wexacioune,
Lost of sale, and marchandise, disese, and tribulacioune,
That we have sustenyd thorough his iniquite.
What vaylith it to tary us? for though ye sotil pry
We shul have reson wher ye wol or no,
So woll we that ye knowe what that we woll do;
In certen full avisid to lsope for to pase,
And declare every poynt, them ore and eke the lase,
That of yeur opyn errours hath pleyne correctioune,
And agenys his jugement is noon protectioune:
He is yewr lord riall, and soveren jugge and lele,
That and ye work in eny poynt to hym liith our apele."
So when the steward had yherd, and the burgeysis alle, [gall,
How Geffrey had ysteryd, that went so nighe the
What for shame, and drede of more harm, and repreffe,
They made Sirophanes, weer hym looth or leffe,
To take Beryn gage, and plegg find also,
To byde the ward and jugement of that he had mysdo.
"Now fertherfore," quod Geffrey, "sith that it so is
That of the first plentyf we have sikernes,
Now to the marchant we must nedis answere,
That bergeyned with Beryn al that his shippis bere,
In covenaunte that he shuld his shippis fill ageyn
Of othir marchandise that he tofore had seyn
In Hanybald'is plase, howsis to or thre,
Full of marchandise as they might be;
Let us pas thidir, yf eny thing be there
At our lust and liking, as they accordit were."
"I graunt wele," quod Hanybald, "thow axist but righte;"
Up arose these burgeysis, "Thow axist but right."
The steward and his comperis entrid first the howse,
And saw nothing within, straw, ne leff, ne mowse,
Save tymbir, and the tyle stonys, and the wallis white.
"I trow," quod the steward, "the wynnyng woll be but lite
That Beryn woll now get in Hanybald is pleynte,
For I can se noon othir but they woll be ateynt,"
And clepid them in echone, and went out hymselve.
As sone as they were entrid they saw no maner selve,
For soris of their hert, but, as tofore is seyd,
The howse was eleen yswept; then Geffrey feir they preyde,
To help yf he coud. "Let me aloon," quod he,
"Yit shul they have the wers a sotil as they be."
Evander the steward in the mene while
Spak to the burgeyse, and began to smyle;
"Though Sirophanes be yhold thes Romeyns for to curs,
Yit I trow that Hanybald woll put hym to the wers,
For I am suyr and certeyn within they shul nat fynd?"
"What sey ye be my pleynt, sirs," quod the blynd?
"For I make a vow I woll nevir cese
Tyl Syrophanes have of Beryn a pleyn relese,
And to make hym quyte of his submissioune,
Els wol I have no pete of his contritioune,
But folow hym al so fersly as I can or may
Tyll I have his eyen both to away."
"Now in feith," quod Machyn, "and I wol have his lyffe,
For though he scape yew all, with me woll he nat stryffe,
But be right feyn in hert all his good forsake
For to scape wyth hys lyf, and to me it take."
Beryn and his feleship wer within the house,
And speken of their answer, and made but litill rouse,
But evir preyd Geffrey to help yf he coud ought.
"I woll nat faill," quod Geffrey, and was tofore bethought
Of too botirfliis, as white as eny snowe; [wowe
He lete them flee within the house, that aftir on the
They clevid wondir fast, as their kynd woll,
Aftir they had flew to rest anothir pull

When Geffrey saw the boterfliis cleving on the wall
The steward and the burgeyse in he gan call;
" Lo! Sirs," he sayd, " whoso evir repent,
We have those marchandise most to our talent
That we fynd herein. Behold, sir Hanybal,
The yondir botirfliis that clevith on the wall;
Of such ye must fill our shippis all fyve.
Pluk up thy hert Beryn, for thow most nedis thryve;
For when we out of Rome in marchantfare went,
To purchase botirfliis was our most entent;
Yit woll I tell the cause especial and why:
There is a leche in Room that hath ymade a cry
To make an oyntement to cure all tho ben blynde,
And al maner infirmytee that growith in mankynde.
The day is short; the work is long: sir Hanyball,
ye mut hy."
When Hanybald herd this tale, he seyd pryvely
In counsell to the steward; " In soth I have the wers,
For I am sikir by this pleynt that shall I litil purs."
" So me semeth," quod the steward, " for in the world rounde
So many botirfliis wold nat be founde
I trow o ship to charge; wher'for me thinkith best
Let hym have his good ageyn, and be in pese and rest.
And yit is an aventure and thow scape so
Thy covenaunt to relese without more ado."
The burgeysis everichone, that were of that cete,
Were anoyid sore when they herd of this plee;
Geffrey with his wisdom held them hard and streyte,
That they were acombrit in their own distreyte.
When Hanybald with his frendis had spoke of this manere:
They drow them towards Beryn, and seid in this manere:
" Only for botirfliis ye com fro your contrey,
And we you tell in sikirnes and opon our fey,
That so many botirflyes we shul nevir gete,
Wherefore we be avisid othirwise to trete;
That Hanybald shal relese his covenaunt that is makid,
And delyver the good ageyn that from you was rakid."
" Nay forsoth," quod Geffrey, " us nedith no relese;
Ye shull hold our covenaunt and we shall yeurs also,
For we shull have reson wher ye woll or no
Whils Isope is alyve; I am nothyng aferd,
For I can wipe all this plee cleen from your berd,
And ye blench onys out of the high wey."
Thei proferid hym plegg and gage without more deley.
" Now ferthirmore," quod Geffrey, " us ought to procede,
For to the blynd mann'ys poynt we must answer nede;
That, for to tell trowith, he lyvith all to long
For his own fawte and his own wrong
On Beryn he hath surmysid, as previth by his plee,
And that ye shull opynlich know wele and see;
For as I undirstode hym he seyd that fele yeris
Beryn, that here stondith, and he were pertyneris
Of wynnyng and of lesyng, as men it use and doith,
And that they chaungit eyen, and yit this is sothe:
But the cause of chaunging yit is to yow onknow,
Wher'fore I woll declare it both to high and lowe.
In that same tyme that this burgeyse blynd,
And my master Beryn, as fast as feyth myght bynde
Were marchaundis in comyn of al that they myght wyn,
Staff of lyf and lym, and of dedele fyn,
Ther fill in tho marchis of al thing such a derth
That joy, comfort, and solas, and al maner myrth;
Was exil cleen, saff oonly molestatioune,
That abood continuel—desperatioune:
So when that the pepil wer in most myscheffe
God that is above, that al thing doth releve,
Sent them such plente of mony, fruyte, and corn,
Wich turnid al to joy their mournyng al to forn;
Then gaf they them to mirth, revel, pley, and soug,
And thankid God above evir more among
Of their relevacionne from woo into gladnes,
For *Aftir sour when swete is com it is a plesant mes.*
So in the meen while of this prosperite
Ther cam such a pleyer into the same contre
That nevir thertofore was seyn such anothir,
That wele was the creture that born was of his modir
That myght se the mirthis of this jugeloure,
For of the world wide tho day is he bare the floure,
For there n'as man ne woman in that regioune
That set of hymself the store of a boton
Yf he had not sey his myrthis and his game.
So oppon a tyme this pleyer did proclame
That al manere of pepil his pleyis wold se
Shuld com oppon a certen dey to the grete cete:
Then among othir my master here, Beryn,
And this same blynd, that pledith now with hym,
Made a certen covenaunt that they wold se
The mervellis of this pleyer and his sotilte:
So what for hete of somer, age, and febilnes,
And eke also the long way, this blynd for werrynes
Fill flat adown to the erth; o fote ne myght he go;
Wher'for my master Beryn in hert was full woo,
And seyd, ' My frend, how now? mow ye no ferther pas?'
' No,' he sayd, ' by hym that first made mas;
And yit I had levir, as God my soule save,
Se thes wondir pleyis then all the good I have.'
' I cannot els,' quod Beryn, ' but yf it may nat be
But that ye and I mut retourn age
Aftir ye be refreshid of your weryness,
For to leve yew in this plite it wer no gentilnes.'
Then seyd this blynd, ' I am avisid bet;
Beryn, ye shull wend thidir without eny let,
And have myn eyen with yew that they the pley mow se,
And I woll have yewrs tyll ye come agé.'
Thus was their covenaunt made, as I to yowre port,
For ese of this blynd, and most for his comfort.
But wotith wele the whole science of all surgery
Was unyd or the chaunge was made of both eye
With many sotill enchantours and eke nygramancers,
That sent were for the nonys mastris and scoleris,
So when all was complete my mastir went his wey
With this mann'ys eyen and saw all the pley,
And hastly retourned into that plase age,
And fond this blynd seching on hondis and on kne,
Grasping all aboute to fynd that he had lore,
Beryn his both eyen that he had tofore.
But as sone as Beryn had pleyn knowleche
That his eyen were ylost, unneth he myght areche
O word, for pure anguysh that he toke sodenly,
And from that day till nowe ne myght he nevir spy
This man in no plase ther law was ymevid;
But now in his presence the soth is full yprevid,
That he shall make amendis or he hens pas
Right as the lawe wol deme, ethir more or las;
For my mastir'is eyen were betir and more clere
Then these that he hath now to se both fer and nere;
So wold he have his own, that proper were of kynd,
For he is evir redy to take to the blynde
The eyen that he had of hym, as covenaunt was,
So he woll do the same. Now, soverens, in this case

Ye mut take hede for to deme right,
For it wer no reson my mastir shuld lese his sight
For his trew hert and his gentilnes."
"Beryn," quod the blind, "tho I woll the relese
My quarell and my cause, and fall fro my pleynt."
"Thow mut nede," quod Geffrey, "for thow art ateynt,
So mut thow profir gage, and borowis fynd also,
For to make amendis, as othir have ydo.
Sir steward, do us law, sith we desire but right:
As we been pese marchandis us longith nat to fight,
But pleyn us to the law, yf so we be agrevid."
Anoon opon that Geffrey these wordis had ymevid
The blynd man fond borowis for all his maletalent,
And were yentrid in the court to byde the jugement;
For thoughe that he blynde were yit had he good plente,
And more wold have wonne through his iniquite.
"Now herith, sirs," quod Geffrey: "thre pleyntifs been assurid;
And as anenst the ferth this women hath averid,
That pleynith here on Beryn, and seyth she is his wyfe,
And that she hath many a dey led a peynous lyfe,
And much sorow endurid his child to sustene,
And al is soth and trew. Now rightfullich to deme
Whether of them both shall othir obey, [sey."
And folowe will and lustis, sir steward, ye mut
And therwith Geffrey lokid aside on this woman
How she chaungit colours, pale and eke wan.
"All for nought," quod Geffrey, "for ye mut with us go,
And endure with your husbond both wele and woo:"
And wold have take her by the hond, but she awey did breyde,
And with grete sighing these wordis she seyd;
That ageyns Beryn she wold plede no more,
But gagid with too borowis, as othir had do tofore.
The steward sat as still as who had shor his hede,
And specially the pleyntifs were in much drede:
Geffrey set his wordis in such maner wise [wise
That wele they wist they myght nat scape in no
Without loss of goodis for damage and for cost,
For such wer their lawis wher pleyntis wer ylost.
Geffrey had full perfeyte of their encombirment,
And eke he was in certen that the jugement
Shuld pas with his mastir; wherfore he anoon,
"Sovern sirs," he seyd, "yit must we ferthir goon,
And answere to this Machyn, that seith the knife is his [amys:
That found was on Beryn; ther'of he seith nat
And for more prefe he seith in this manere
That here stondith present the same cotelere
That the knyfe made, and the precious stonys thre
Within the haft been couchid, that in Crystyanite,
Thoughe men wold of purpose make serch and seche, [it liche;
Men shuld nat fynd in al thing a knyfe that were
And more opyn prefe than mann'ys own knowleche
Men of law ne clerkis con nat tell ne teche.
Now sith we be in this manere thus ferforth ago,
Then were spedfull for to know how Beryn eam first to [is his:
Have possessioune of the knyfe that Machyn seith
To yew unknowne I shall enfourm the trowith as it is.

Now seven yere and passid, opon a Tuysday
In the Passioun-week, when men leven pley,
And use mote devocioune, fastyng, and preyer,
Then in othir tyme or seson of the yere,
This Beryn's fadir erlich wold arise,
And barefote go to chirch to Godd'is servise,
And lay hymself aloon from his own wyfe,
In reverence of the tyme, and mending of his lyfe:
So on the same Tuysday that I tofore nempt
This Beryn rose and rayn hym and to the chirch went,
And mervelid in his hert his fadir was nat there,
And homward went ageyn with drede and eke fere.
Into his fadir's chambir sodenlich he rakid,
And fond hym ligg stan dede oppon the straw al nakid,
And the clothis halid from the bed awey. [dey!'
'Out, alas!' quod Beryn, 'that evir I saw this
They meyne herd the noise, how Beryn cried alas,
And cam into the chambir al that therein was;
But the dole, and the sorowe, and anguysh, that was there
It vaylith nat at this tyme to declare it here;
But Beryn had most of all, have ye no doute:
And anoon they serchid the body al aboute,
And fond this same knyfe, the poynt right at his
Of Beryn's fadir whose teres gan outstert [hert
When he drawith out the knyfe of his fadir's wound;
Then standede I saw hym fall down to the ground
In sight of the most part that beth with hym now here," [lere:
And they affermyd it for soth, as Geffrey did them
"And yit had I nevir suspecioun from that day tyll noweth [moweth
Who ded that cursed dede, tyll Machyn with his
Afore yew hath knowlechid that the knyfe is his;
So mut he nedis answer for his deth ywis."
When Machyn had yherd all Geffrey'is tale
He rose of beneh sodenly with colour wan and pale.
And seyd onto Beryn, "Sir, ageyn the
I woll plete no more, for it were gret pete
To combir yew with actions that beth of nobill kynde."
"Graunt mercy! sir," quod Geffrey; "but yit ye shull fynde
Borowis or ye pas, amendis for to make
For our undewe vexacioune, and gage also us take
In sign of submyssioune for your injury,
As law woll and reson, for we woll uttirly
Procede tyll we have jugement finall;
And ther'for, sir steward, what that evir fall
Delay us no longer but gyve us jugement,
For tristith ye noon othir but we be fullich bent
To Isope for to wend, and in his high presence
Reherce al our plees, and have his sentence;
Then shull ye make fynys, and highlich be agrevid."
And as sone as the steward herd thes wordis mevid,
"Reson, ryght, and law," seyd the steward tho,
"Ye mut nedis have wher I woll or no;
And to preve my full wyll, or we ferther goon,"
Quicklich he commaundit, and sparid nevir oon,
24 burgeysis in law best ylerid, [swerid,
Rehersyng them the plees, and how Geffrey an-
And on lyf and lym, and forfetur of good, [hood,
And as they wold nat lese the ball within their
To draw a-part togidir, and by their all assent
Spare no man on lyve to gyve true jugement.
And when these 24 burgeysis had yherd [aferd
The charge of the steward, right sore they wer
To lese ther own lyvis but they demed trowith;
And eke of their neybours they had grete rowith,
For they perseyvid clerelich in the plee through-out [no dout,
Their frendis had the wors side, ther'of they had

"And yf we deme trewly they woll be sore anoyid,
Yit it is betir then we be shamyd and distroyid."
And anoon they were accordit, and seyd with Beryn,
And demed every pleyntif to make a grete fyne
With Beryn, and hym submyt hoolich to his grace
Body, good, and catell, for wrong and their tres-
So ferforth, tyll at last it was so bout ybore [pase;
That Beryn had the doubill good that he had to-
fore,
And wyth joy and myrth, with all his company,
He droughe hym to his shippis ward wyth song
and melody.
The steward and the burgeyse from the court bent
Into their own placis, and evir as they went
They talkid of the Romeyns, how sotill they wer
To away hym like a fole that for them shuld an-
swer. [to curs?
"What vylith it," quod Hanybald, "to angir or
And yit I am in certen I shall fare the wers
All the dayis of my lyfe for this day's pleding,
And so shal al the remnaunt; and their hondis
wryng, [Machyn,
Both Syrophanes, and the blynd, the woman, and
And be bet avisid er they eftsonys pleyne,
And al othir personys wythyn this cete
Mell the les wyth Romeyns whils they here be;
For such anothir fole was nevir yit yborn,
For he did naught ellis but evir with us scorn
Tyll he had us caught even by the shyn
With his sotill wittis in our own grene."
Now woll I retourn to Beryn ageyn,
That of his grete lukir in hert was right feyne.
And so was all his meyne, as them ought wele,
That they were so delyverid from turment like to
Hell,
And graciusly relevid out of ther grete myschef,
And yset above in comfort and bouchef. [denied
"Now in soth," quod Beryn, "it may nat be
N'ad Geffrey and his witt be we had be destroyid:
Ithanked be Almyghty God omnipotent
That for our consolacioune Geffrey to us sent!
And in protest opynly, here among yew alle,
Half my good, whils that I lyve, whatevir me befall,
I graunt it here to Geffrey, to gyve or to sell,
And nevir to part from me, yf it wer his wyl,
And fare as well as I a morrow and eke on eve,
And nevir for a man on lyve his company for to
leve."
"Graunt mercy! sir," quod Geffrey, "yewr profir
is feir and grete,
But I desire no more but as ye me behete,
To bryng me at Room, for this is covenaunte."
"It shall be do," quod Beryn, and all the rem-
naunt. [wele do."
"Deperdeux!" quod Geffrey, "ther'of we shull
He rayid hym othirwise; and without wordis mo
They went to the dyner the hole company,
With pipis and with trompis, and othir melody:
And in the myddis of their mete gentil women fyve,
Maidens fresh atirid as myght be on lyve,
Com from the duke Isope, lord of that rigioune,
Everich wyth a present, and that of grete renown:
The first bare a cup of gold, and of asure fyne,
So corouse and so nobill that I can nat devyne;
The second brought a sword yshethid, wyth seyntur
Ifretid all with perelis orient and pure;
The third had a mantell of lusty fresh colour,
The uttir part of purpill, yfurrid with pelour;
The ferth a cloth of gold, a worthy and a riche,
That nevir man tofere saw cloith it liche;
The fift bare a palme that stode tofore the deyse
In tokyn and sign of trowith and pese,
For that was the custome through all the contray;
The message was the levir and more plesant to
pay.
The cup was uncoverid, the sword was out ybrayid,
The mantell was unfold, the cloth along ylayid;
They knelid adown echone right tofore Beryn;
The first did the message, that taught was wel and
fyne: [riall,
"Isope," she seyd, "sir Beryn, that is our lord
And gretith yew, and sendith yew these presentis
all, [naunce,
And joy hath of yewr wisdom and of yewr gover-
And preyd you to com and have with hym ple-
saunce [there,
To morowe, and se his palayse, and to sport you
Yee and all your company." Beryn made noon
answere, [dis;
But sat styll, and beheld the women and the son-
And afturward avisely the sword first he hondis
And commaundit therewith all the wymmen wassh
and sit, [wit
And pryvelich chargit officers that with al their
To serve them of the best, and make them herily
chere
Ressevyng al the presentis in worshipful manere.
I cannat wele express the joy that they had, [glad
But I suppose tofore that day that they wer nat so
That they wer so ascapid fortune and myschefe,
And thankid God above that all thing doith relefe;
For *Aftir mysty cloudis ther comith a clere sonne,*
So aftir hale comyth bote, whoso byde conne.
The joy and nobley that they had whils they wer
at mete,
It vaylith nat at this tyme ther'of long to trete:
But Geffrey sat with Beryn, as he had servid wele;
Their hedis they leyd *togidir*, and begon to tell
In what maner the wymen shuld be answered.
Geffrey evir avisid Beryn ther of he leryd,
And of othir thinges how he hym shuld govern;
Beryn saverid wele theron, and fast he gan to lern.
When al wer up the wymmen came to take their
leve; [releve,
Beryn, as sat hym wele of blode, them toward gan
And prey'd them hertly "hym to recommend
Unto the worthy lordship of Isope, that you send
To me that am unworthy, save of his grete nobley,
And thank hym of his gyftis as ye can best, and sey
To morow I woll be redy his hest to fulfill,
With this I have save condit I may com hym tyll,
For me and al my feleship saff to com and go,
Trusting in his discrecioune that thoughe I ax so
He wol nat be displesid: for in my contray
It hath evir be the custom, and is unto this day,
That yf a lord riall desirith for to see
Eny maner persone that is of las degre, [honde
Er he approch his presence he woll have in his
A saff condit enselid, or els som othir bonde,
That he may com and pas without disturbance;
Throughout all our marchis it is the observaunce."
Thes wymmen toke their leve without wordis mo,
Repeyring onto Isope, and all as it was do
They rehersid redely, and faylid nevir a word,
To Isope with his baronage ther he sat at his borde,
Talkyng fast of Romayns, and of their high pru-
dence,
That in so many daungers made so wise defence.
But as sone as Isope had pleynlich yherd
Of Beryn's governaunce, that first sesid the swerd

Afore al othir presentis, he demed in hys minde
That Beryn was ycom of som nobill kynde.
The nyght was past; the morowe cam; Isope had nat forgete;
He chargit barons twelf with Beryn for to mete
To cond hym saff and his meyne; and al perfourmyd was. [solas,
Thre dayis ther they sportid hym in myrth and
That throughe the wise instructioune of Geffrey nyght and dey
Beryn plesid Isope with wordis al to pay,
And had hym so in port and in governaunce
Of all honeste myrthis and witty daliaunce,
That Isope cast his chere to Beryn so groundly,
That at last there was no man with Isope so pryvy,
Resorting to his shippis, comyng to and fro,
Thoroughe the wit of Geffrey, that eche day it fil so
That Isope coude no wher chere when Beryn was absent;
So Beryn must nedis eche day be aftir sent:
And chefe he was of counsell within the first yere,
Thoroughe the wit of Geffrey, that eche dey did hym lere. [wyfe
This Isope had a doughtir betwene hym and his
That was as feir a creature as myght bere lyfe,
Wyse, and eke bountevouse, and benying with all,
That heir shuld be aftir his dey of his lordshippis alle;
So, shortly to conclude, the mariage was made
Betwene hir and Beryn, many a man to glade,
Saff the burgeysis of the towne of falshede that were rote:
But they wer evir hold so low ondir fote
That they might nat regne, but at last fawe
To leve their condicioune and their fals lawe.
Beryn and Geffrey made them so tame
That they amendit eche dey, and gat a betir name.
Thus Geffrey made Beryn his enemyes to ovircom,
And brought hym to worship thoroughe his wysdom
Now God us graunt grace to fynd such a frende
When we have nede! and thus I make an ende.

GLOSSARY,

ABRIDGED FROM MR. TYRWHITT'S.

A, WHICH is commonly called the indefinite article, is really nothing more than a corruption of the Saxon adjective *ane*, or *an*, before a substantive beginning with a consonant.

It is sometimes prefixed to another adjective; the substantive, to which both belong, being understood.

A Frere there was, *a wanton* and *a mery*.

It is also joined to nouns plural, taken collectively; as, An hundred frankes, A thousand frankes—and to such as are not used in the singular number; as, A listes. So the Latins said, Unæ literæ, Cic. ad Att. v. 9. and the French, formerly, unes lices; unes lettres; unes trèves. Froissart. v. i. c. 153, 237. v. ii. c. 78.

A, prep. before a gerund, is a corruption of *on*. To go *a begging*, i. e. on begging. The prep. is often expressed at length. *On hunting* ben they ridden. To ride *on hawking*.

In the same manner, before a noun it is generally a corruption of *on* or *in*. A'bed, A'fire, A'Goddes name, A'morwe, A'night, A'werke: though in some of these instances perhaps it may as well be supposed to be a corruption of *at*.

A, in composition, in words of Saxon original, is an abbreviation of *af*, or *of*; of *at*; of *on*, or *in*; and often only a corruption of the prepositive particle *ge*, or *y*. In words of French original, it is generally to be deduced from the Latin *ab*, *ad*, and sometimes *ex*.

A, interj. Ah!

Abacke, adv. Sax. Backwards.

Abaist, part. pa. Fr. Abashed, ashamed.

Abate, v. Fr. To beat down.

Abawed, part. pa. Fr. Esbahi. Astonished. I was *abawed* for marveile. Orig. Moult *m'esbahy* de la merveille.

Abegge, *Abeye*, *Abie*, v. Sax. To suffer for.

Abet, n. Sax. Help.

Abide, v. Sax. To stay.

Abidden, *Abiden*, } part. pa.

Abit for *Abideth*.

Able, adj. Fr. Fit, proper.

Abote, part. pa. of *Abate*.

Abought, part. pa. of *Abegge*.

Aboulen, prep. Sax. On-burzan. About.

Abraide, v. Sax. To awake; to start. See *Braide*.

Abraide, pa. t. Awaked, started.

Abrede, adv. Sax. Abroad.

Abrege, v. Fr. To shorten, to abridge.

Abroche, v. Fr. To tap, to set abroach; spoken of a vessel of liquor.

Abusion, n. Fr. Abuse, impropriety.

Accesse, n. Fr. Properly, the approach of a fever; A fever.

Accidie, n. Fr. from Ακηδια, Gr. Negligence; arising from discontent, melancholy, &c.

Accord, n. Fr. Agreement.

——— v. Fr. To agree.

Accordeden, pa. t. pl.

Accordant, *According*, } part. pr.

Accuse, v. Fr. To discover.

Achate, n. Fr. Purchase.

Achatour, n. Fr. A purchaser; a caterer.

Acheked, part. pa. Sax. Choaked.

Acheve, v. Fr. To accomplish.

Ackele, (*Akele*) v. Sax. To cool.

Acloye, v. may perhaps mean—To cloy; to embarrass with superfluity.

Acoie, v. Fr. To make quiet.

Acomberd, part. pa. Fr. Encumbered.

Acroke, adj. Fr. Crooked, awkward.

Aduwe, v. Sax. To awake.

Ado, v. Sax. To do. It is used to express the Fr. à faire. To have *ado*: To have to do. And don all that they han *ado*: Et facent ce qu'ils doivent *faire*.

Adon (corruption of *Of-don*) part. pa. Sax. Done away.

Adon, pr. n. Adonis.
Adoun, adv. Sax. Downward, below.
Adrad, Adradde, part. pa. of *Adrede*, v. Sax. Afraid.
Adriane for Ariadne, pr. n.
Advertence, n. Fr. Attention.
Advocacies, n. pl. Fr. Law-suits.
Advocas, n. pl. Fr. Lawyers, advocates.
Afered, Aferde, part. pa. Sax. Afraid, frightened.
Affecte, n. Lat. Affection.
Affermed, part. pa. Fr. Confirmed.
Affie, v. Fr. To trust.
Affray, v. Fr. To affright.
——, n. Fr. Disturbance, fear.
Affrikan, pr. n. The elder Scipio Africanus.
Afile, v. Fr. To file, polish.
Aforen, Aforne, Afore, adv. et prep. Sax. Æt-foran. Before.
Again, prep. Sax. On-gean. Against, toward.
Agaste, v. Sax. To terrifie.
Agast, for *Agasted*, part. pa. Terrified.
Agathon, pr. n. I have nothing to say concerning this writer, except that one of the same name is quoted in the prologue to the tragedie of Cambises, by Thomas Preston. There is no ground for supposing, with Gloss. Ur. that a philosopher of Samos is meant, or any of the Agathoes of antiquity.
Ageins, prep. as *again*.
Agen, adv. as *again*.
Agilt, v. Sax. To offend, to sin against.
Agilte, for *agilted*, pa. t. Sinned.
Ago, Agon, for *ygon*, part. pa. Sax. Gone, past.
Agree, Fr. à grè. In good part.
Agrefe, (A'grefe). In grief.
Agrege, v. Fr. To aggravate.
Agreved. part. pa. Fr. Injured, agrieved.
Agrise, v. Sax. To shudder.
Agrose, pa. t. Shuddered, trembled.
Agroted, part. pa. Cloyed, surfeited. *Agrotone with mete or drinke.*
Aguiler, n. Fr. A needle-case.
Ajust, v. Fr. To applie.
Akehorns, n. pl. Sax. Acorns.
Aknowe, part. pa. Sax. To ben aknowe: To confess. I am aknowe: I acknowledge.
Al, Alle, adj. Sax. All. Al and som: The whole thing. At al: In the whole. Over all: Through the whole. In alle manere wise: By every kind of means. At alle rightes: With every thing requisite.
Alain, pr. n. A poet and divine of the twelfth century. Beside his Planctus Naturæ, or Plaint of Kinde, which is here quoted, he wrote another poem in Latin verse, called Anticlaudianus, to which our author alludes. For the rest of his works see Fabric. Bibl. Med. Æt. in v. *Alanus de Insulis*.
Alder, Aller, gen. ca. pl. Of all. It is frequently joined in composition with adjectives of the superl. deg. *Alderfirst, Alderlast, Alderlevest.* First, last, dearest of all.
Al, All, adv. Sax. generally answers to the Lat. Omnino. Al alone: Quite alone. Al hol: Entire. Al holly: Entirely. All in one: At the same time. All newe: Anew. Al only: Solely, singly. It is sometimes used elliptically for although, or all be it that. All tell I not as now his observances. *All* be ye not of o complexion.
Alarged, part. pa. Fr. Eslargi. Given largely.
Alauns, n. pl. A species of Dog. They were much esteemed in Italy in the fourteenth century. Gualv. de la flamma, (ap. Murator. Antiq. Med. Æ. t. ii. p. 394.) commends the governors of Milan, quod equos emissarios equabus magnis commiscuerunt, et procreati sunt in nostro territorio *Destrarii* nobiles, qui in magno pretio habentur. Item *Canes Alanos* altæ staturæ et mirabilis fortitudinis nutrire studuerunt.
Alaye, n. Fr. Allay; a mixture of base metal.
Albification, n. Lat. A chemical term for making white.
Alcaly, n. Arab. A chemical term for a species of salt.
Alchymistre, n. Fr. Alchymist.
Aldrian, pr. n. A star on the neck of the lion.
Ale and bred. This oath of sire Thopas on ale and bred was perhaps intended to ridicule the solemn vows, which were frequently made in the days of chivalrie, to a peacock, a pheasant, or some other noble bird. See M. de Sainte Palaye, Sur l'anc. cheval. Mem. IIIme. I will add here, from our own history, a most remarkable instance of this strange practice. When Edward I. was setting out upon his last expedition to Scotland in 1306, he knighted his eldest son and several other young noblemen with great solemnity. At the close of the whole (says Matthew of Westminster, p. 454.) allati sunt in pompaticâ gloria duo *cygni* vel *olores* ante regem, phalerati retibus aureis vel fistulis deauratis, desiderabile spectaculum intuentibus. Quibus visis, Rex *votum vovit Deo cæli et cygnis* se proficisci in Scotiam, mortem Johannis Comyn et fidem læsam Scotorum vivus sive mortuus vindicaturus, &c. This practice is alluded to in "*Dunbar's wish*, that the king were Johne Thomsonnis man." MS. Maitland, St. 5.

I wold gif all that ever I have
To that condition, so God me saif,
That ye had *vowit to the swan*
Ane yeir to be Johne Thomsonnis man.

And so in the Prol. to the Contin. of the Canterb. T. ver. 452. the Hosteler says—*I make a vowe to the pecock*, ther shall wake a foule mist.
Alege, v. Fr. To alleviate.
Alegeance, n. Fr. Alleviation.
Aleis, n. Fr. Alise. The lote-tree.
Alembikes, n. pl. Fr. Vessels for distilling; stills.
Ale-stake, n. Sax. A stake set up before an alehouse, by way of sign.
Aleye, n. Fr. An alley.
Algates, Algate, adv. Sax. Always. Toutesfois, Fr.
Algezir, pr. n. A city of Spain.
Alight, v. Sax. To descend.
Alight, pa. t. for alighted.
Alisandre, pr. n. Alexandria, a city in Egypt.
Allege, v. Fr. To alledge.
Almagest, pr. n. The Arabs called the Μεγαλη Συνταξις of Ptolemy Almagesthi, or Almegisthi, a corruption of Μεγιστη. See D'Herbelot, in v.
Almandres, n. pl. Fr. Almond-trees.
Almesse, n. Sax. from the Lat. Gr. Elcemosyna. Alms. *Almesses*, pl.
Alnath, pr. n. The first star in the horns of Aries, whence the first mansion of the moon takes its name.
Alonde, (A'londe). On land.
Along, prep. Sax. On-long. Whereon it was along:

By what it was occasioned. On me is nought along thine evil fare: Thy ill fare is not occasioned by me.

Alosed, part. pa. Fr. Praised.

Aloue, v. Fr. To allow, to approve. His dedes are to *alowe* for his hardynesse. Therefore lords *alow* him litle, or lysten to his reason.

Alowe, adv. Sax. Low.

Alpes, n. pl. Bulfinches.

Als, conj. Sax. Also, as.

Amalgaming. A chemical term for mixing of quicksilver with any metal.

Ambassatrie, n. Fr. Embassy.

Ambes as. Two aces, at dice, Fr.

Ambling, part. pr. Fr.

Amende, v. Fr. To mend.

Amenuse, v. Fr. To lessen.

Ameved, part. pa. Fr. Moved.

Amias, pr. n. The city of Amiens.

Amiddes, prep. Sax. At, or, in the middle.

Amis, adv. Sax. Ill, badly.

Amoneste, v. Fr. To admonish, to advise.

Among, adv. Sax. Together, at the same time, at the same place. Ever among: Ever at the same time.

Amonges, prep. Sax. Among.

Amorette, n. Fr. An amorous woman. And eke as well by (r. be.) *amorettes*.—Car aussi bien sont *amourettes*.

Amorily, is perhaps put by mistake for merily.

Amortised, part. pa. Fr. Killed.

Amorwe. On the morrow.

Amphibologies, n. pl. Fr. Gr. Ambiguous expressions.

An, for on, prep.

Ancille, n. Lat. A maid servant.

Ancre, n. Fr. Anchor.

And, conj. Sax. If.

Anelace, n. A falchion, or wood-knife.

Anes, adv. for ones. Once.

Anhang, v. Sax. To hang up.

Anientissed, part. pa. Fr. Reduced to nothing.

Anight. In the night.

Anker, n. Sax. An anchorite, or hermite.

Annueller, n. Secular.

Annunciat, part. pa. Lat. Foretold.

Anoie, n. Fr. Hurt, trouble.

Anoie, v. To hurt, to trouble.

Anoiful, adj. Hurtful, unpleasant.

Antem, n. Sax. Antefn. An anthem.

Anticlaudian. The title of a Latin poem by Alanus de Insulis. See *Alain*.

Antilegius, pr. n. Antilochus.

Antiphonere, n. Lat. Gr. A book of Antiphones, or Anthems.

Anvelt, n. Sax. An anvil.

Any, adj. Sax. Either, one of two.—It usually signifies one of many.

Apaide, part. pa. Fr. Paid, satisfied.

Apaire, v. Fr. See *Apeire*.

Ape, n. Sax. Metaphorically, a fool. The monke put in the mannes hode an ape, And in his wife's eke: The monk made a fool of the man, and of his wife too.

Apeire, v. Fr. To impair, to detract from. Our state it *apeires*: To be impaired, to go to ruin.

Apert, adj. Fr. Open. Prive and apert: In private and in public.

Apies for *Opies*, n. pl. Fr. Opiates.

Appulled, part, pa. Fr. Made pale.

Apparaile, v. Fr. To prepare.

Apparence, n. Fr. An appearance.

Apperceive, v. Fr. To perceive.

Apperceivings, n. pl. Perceptions.

Appetite, v. Fr. To desire, to covet.

Appose, v. Fr. To object to, to question.—It seems to be a corruption of oppose.

Approver, n. Fr. An informer.

Apprentise, n. pl. Fr. Apprentices, novices.

Aqueintable, adj. Fr. Easy to be acquainted with.

Aquite, v. Fr. To pay for.

Arace, v. Fr. To draw away by force.

Arande, n. Sax. A message.

Araye, n. Fr. Order, situation, clothing, equipage.

——, v. Fr. To dress, to dispose.

Arblasters, n. pl. Fr. Arbalestres. Engines to cast darts, &c.

Archangel, n. The herb so called; a dead nettle. Gloss. Ur.—In the original it is Mesange, the bird which we call a titmouse.

Archebishop, n. Sax. Lat. An archbishop.

Archedeken, n. Sax. Lat. An archdeacon.

Archediacre, n. Fr. Arch-deacon.

Archewives. Wives of a superior order.

Ardure, n. Fr. Burning.

Arede, v. Sax. To interpret. See *Rede*.

Arerage, n. Fr. Arrear.

Areise, v. Sax. To raise.

Aresone, v. Fr. Arraisoner. To reason with.

Arezte, n. Fr. Arrest, constraint, delay.

Areste, v. Fr. To stop.

Arette, v. Fr. To impute to.

Argoil, n. Fr. Potter's clay.

Ariete, pr. n. Aries, one of the signs in the zodiac.

Aristotle, pr. n. A treatise on Perspective, under his name, is mentioned by Vincent of Beauvais, in the thirteenth century. Spec. Histor. L. iii. c. 84. Extat etiam liber, qui dicitur Perspectiva Aristotelis.

Arivage, n. Fr. as Arivaile.

Arivaile, n. Fr. Arrival.

Ark, n. Lat. A part of the circumference of a circle.

Arme, n. may perhaps be put for defence, security.

Armles, adj. Sax. Without an arm.

Arm-grete, adj. Sax. As thick as a man's arm.

Armipotent, adj. Lat. Mighty in arms.

Armorike, pr. n. Basse Bretagne, in France, called antiently Britannia Armorica.

Armure, n. Fr. Armour.

Arn, pl. n. of am. v. Sax. Are.

Arnolde of the newe town, pr. n. of a physician and chemist of the thirteenth century. See Fabric. Bibl. Med. Æt. in. v. *Arnaldus Villanovanus*.

Aroume, seems to signify At large.

A'rowe, in a row; probably from the Fr. Rue. Successively.

Arsmetrike, n. Lat. Arithmetic.

Arte, v. Lat. To constrain.

Artelries, n. pl. Fr. Artillerie.

As, adv. Sax. Alf. All so. Omnino sic. As fast: Very fast. As swith: Very quickly, immediately.

Ascaunce, as though.

Ashen, n. pl. Sax. Ashes.

Aslake, v. Sax. To slacken, to abate.

Aspe, n. Sax. A sort of poplar.

Aspen, adj. Of an asp.

Aspie, v. Fr. To espie.

Aspre, adj. Fr. Rough, sharp.
Asprenesse, n. Sharpness.
Assaut, n. Fr. Assault.
Assege, n. Fr. Siege.
Asseth. Sufficient, enough. Assez. Orig.
Assise, n. Fr. Situation.
Assoile, v. Fr. To absolve, to answer. Assoileth, imp. m. 2d pers. pl.
Assomoned, part. pa. Summoned.
Assure, v. Fr. To confide.
Asterte, v. Sax. To escape, to release. Asterte for Asterted, part. pa.
Astoned, Astonied, part. pa. Fr. Confounded, astonished.
Astrelabre, n. Fr. Astrolabe.
Astrologien, n. Fr. Astrologer.
Asweved, part. pa. Sax. Stupified, as in a dream.
Aswoune. In a swoon. Adoun he fell all sodenly *in swoune*.
At, Atte, prep. Sax. At after souper: As soon as supper was finished. At day: At break of day. At on: Of one mind.
Atake, v. Sax. To overtake.
——, for *Ataken*, part. pa.
A'thre. In three parts.
Attamed, part. pa. Fr. Entamé. Opened, begun, tasted, felt, disgraced.
Attempre, adj. Fr. Temperate.
Attemprely, adv. Fr. Temperately.
Attour, n. Fr. Head-dress.
Attry, Atterly, adj. Sax. Poisonous, pernicious.
A'twinne, A'two. In two, asunder.
Atyzar. Atizar, Span. and Attiser, Fr. signify to light a fire, to inflame, but the meaning of the word here is doubtful.
Avale, v. Fr. To lower, to let down, to fall down.
Avance, v. Fr. To advance, to profit.
Avant, n. Fr. Boast.
Avantage, n. Fr. Advantage.
Avante, v. Fr. To boast.
Avaunt, adv. Fr. Forward.
Auctoritee, n. Lat. A text of Scripture, or of some respectable writer.
Auctour, n. Lat. A writer of credit.
Avenaunt, adj. Fr. Becoming.
Aventaile, n. Fr.
Aventure, n. Fr. Adventure.
Averrois, pr. n. Ebn Roschd, an Arabian physician of the twelfth century. See D'Herbelot, in v. *Roschd*.
Aught, n. Sax. Αριθ. Any thing. It is sometimes used as an adverb. If that the childes mother were *aught* she. Can he *ought* tell a merry tale or twein?
Aught, pa. t. of *Owe*, as *Ought*.
Aught-where, adv. Sax. Any where.
Augrim, a corruption of Algorithm, the Arabian term for numeration. Augrim stones were the pebbles or counters which were anciently used in numeration.
Avicen, pr. n. Ebn Sina, an Arabian physician of the tenth century. See D'Herbelot, in v. *Sina*.
Avis, n. Fr. Advice. The king at his *avys* sent messengers thre.
Aviuand, part. pr. Observing.
Avise, v. Fr. To observe. Aviseth you: imp. m. 2d pers. pl. Look to yourselves; take care of yourselves.
Avision, n. Fr. Vision.
Aumble, n. Fr. An ambling pace.

Aumener, n. Fr. Aumoniere. A purse.
Aumere, n. Aumere of silke. Bourse de soy. Orig. It seems to be a corruption of *Aumener*.
Auntre, v. Fr. Corruption of *Aventure*. To adventure.
Auntrous, adj. Adventurous.
Avouterer, Avoutrer, n. Fr. An adulterer.
Avouterie, Avoutrie, n. Adulterie.
Avow, n. Fr. Vow.
Aurora. The title of a Latin metrical version of several parts of the Bible by Petrus de Riga, canon of Rheims, in the twelfth century. Leyser, in his Hist. Poet. Med. Ævi, p. 692—736, has given large extracts from this work, and among others the passage which Chaucer seems to have had in his eye.

Aure Jubal varios ferramenti notat ictus.
Pondera librat in his. Consona quæque facit.
Hoc inventa modo prius est ars musica, quamvis
Pythagoram dicant hanc docuisse prius.

Auter, n. Fr. Altar.
Awaite, n. Fr. Watch.
Awaiting, part. pr. Keeping watch.
Awaped, part. pa. Sax. Confounded, stupified.
Awayward, adv. Sax. Away.
Awreke, v. Sax. To revenge.
Axe, v. Sax. To ask.
Axing, n. Request.
Ay, adv. Sax. Ever.
Ayel, n. Fr. Grandfather.
Ayen, adv. and prep. as *again*.
Ayenst, prep. as *again*.
Ayenward, adv. Sax. Back.

B

Ba, seems to be formed from *Basse*, v. Fr. To kiss.
Bacheler, n. Fr. An unmarried man; a knight; one who has taken his first degree in an university.
Bachelerie, n. Fr. Knighthood. The bachelerie: The knights.
Bade, pa. t. of *Bede*.
Badder, comp. d. of *Bad*, adj. Sax. Worse.
Bagge, v. To swell, to disdain. *Sk.* Rather, perhaps, to squint.
Baggingly, adv. seems to be the translation of en lorgnoyant, squintingly.
Baillie, n. Fr. Custody, government.
Baite, v. Sax. To feed, to stop to feed.
Balance, n. Fr. Doubt, suspense. I dare *lay in balance* all that I have. I dare wager all t. I. h.
Bale, n. Sax. Mischief, sorrow.
Bales, r. *Balais*, pr. n. Fr. A sort of bastard ruby.
Balkes, n. pl. Sax. The timbers of the roof.
Balled, adj. Smooth as a ball, bald.
Bandon, n. Fr. See Du Cange, in v. *Abandons*. To her bandon: To her disposal. A son bandon. Orig.
Bane, n. Sax. Destruction.
Barbe, n. A hood, or muffler, which covered the lower part of the face, and the shoulders. See Du Cange, in v. *Barbuta*.
Baren, pa. t. pl. of *Bere*. v. Sax. Bore.
Bargaine, n. Fr. Contention.
Bargaret, n. Fr. Bergerette. A sort of song.
Barme, n. Sax. The lap.
Barme-cloth. An apron.
Barre, n. Fr. A bar of a door, a stripe.
Barreine, adj. Sax. Barren.

Basilicok, n. A basilisk.
Basse, n. Fr. A kiss.
Basting, part. pr. Sewing slightly.
Bataiied, part. pr. Fr. Embattled.
Bathe for *bothe*.
Bathe, v. Sax. We should rather say to bask.
Baude, adj. Fr. Joyous.
Baudérie, Baudrie, n. Pimping, keeping a bawdy-house.
Baudy, adj. Dirty. With *baudy* cote.
Bayard, pr. n. Fr. Originally, a bay-horse; a horse in general.
Bay-window. A large window; probably so called, because it occupied a whole bay, i. e. the space between two cross-beams.
Be, prep. Sax. By.
Be for *Been*, part. pa. Sax.
Beau semblant, Fr. Fair appearance.
Beau sire, Fr. Fair sir; a mode of address.
Bebledde, part. pa. Sax. Covered with blood.
Beblotte, v. Sax. To stain.
Becke, v. Fr. To nod.
Beclappe, v. Sax. To catch.
Bedaffed, part. pa. Sax. Made a fool of. See *Daffe*.
Bede, v. Sax. To order, to bid; to offer; to pray. To bede his necke: To offer his neck for execution.
Bedote, v. Sax. To make to dote; to deceive. See *Dote*.
Bedrede, adj. Sax. Confined to bed.
Bedreinte, part. pa. Drenched, thoroughly wetted.
Been, n. pl. Sax. Bees.
Befill for *befell*, pa. t. of *befall*, v. Sax.
Biforen, beforne, adv. et prep. Sax. Before.
Begiled, part. pa. Fr. Beguiled.
Begon, part. pa. of *Bego*, v. Sax. Gone. Wel begon: In a good-way. Wo begon: Far gone in woe. Worse begon: In a worse way. With gold begon: Painted over with gold; à or paintes. Orig.
Begonne, part. pa. of *beginne*, v. Sax. Begun.
Behalve, n. Sax. Half; side, or part.
Beheste, n. Sax. Promise.
Behete, v. Sax. To promise.
Behewe, part. pa. Sax. Coloured. See *Hewe*.
Behighte, v. Sax. To promise.
Behighte, part. pa. Promised.
Behighten, pa. t. pl. Promised.
Behove, n. Sax. Behoof, advantage.
Bejaped, part. pa. Sax. Tricked, laughed at.
Beknowe, v. Sax. To confess.
Bel amy, Fr. Good friend.
Beleve, n. Sax. Belief. His beleve: His creed.
Belle, adj. fem. Fr. Fair.
Belle chere, Fr. Good cheer.
Belle chose, Fr.
Belle Isaude, The fair Isaude; the mistress of Tristan. She is called Isoude.
Belle, v. Sax. To roar.
Belmarie, pr. n. There is no country of this name in any geographical writer.
Belous, n. Sax. Bellows.
Bemes, n. pl. Sax. Trumpets.
Ben, inf. m. Sax. To be.
——— pr. t. pl. Are.
——— part. pa. Been.
Benched, part. pa. Furnished with benches.
Bende, n. Fr. A band; or horizontal stripe.
Bending, n. Striping; making of bands, or stripes.
Bene, n. Sax. A bean. And al n'as wurth a *bene*.
Benedicite! Lat. An exclamation, answering to our Bless us! It was often pronounced as a trisyllable, *Bencite!*
Benigne, adj. Fr. Kind.
Benime, v. Sax. To take away.
Benison, n. Fr. Benediction.
Benomen, part. pa. of *benime*. Taken away.
Bent, n. Sax. The bending, or declivity of a hill.
Beramed, part. pa. Sax. Rained upon.
Brede, n. Sax. Beard. To make any one's *berde*; to cheat him.
Bere, n. Sax. A bear.
Bere, v. Sax. To bear; to carry. To bere in, or on hand: To accuse falsely. To persuade falsely. To bere the belle: To carry the prize.
Bere, n. Sax. A bier, a pillow-bear.
Bering, n. Sax. Behaviour.
Berne, n. Sax. Yest.
Bernard, pr. n. a physician of Mountpelier in the XIIIth century.
Bernard, pr. n. St. Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux in the XIIth century. Our author alludes to a proverbial saying concerning him. Bernardus ipse non vidit omnia. See Hoffman, in v.
Berne, n. Sax. A barn.
Besant, n. Fr. A piece of gold, so called because first coined at Bysantium, now Constantinople. Sk.
Beseke, v. Sax. To beseech.
Beset, besette, part. pa. Sax. Placed, employed.
Besey, part. pa. of *besee*, v. Sax. Beseen. Evil besey: Ill-beseen; of a bad appearance. Richely besey: Of a rich appearance.
Beshet, part. pa. Sax. Shut up.
Beshrewe, v. Sax. To curse.
Beside, prep. Sax. By the side of.
Besmotred, part. pa. Sax. Smutted.
Bespet, part. pa. Sax. Spit upon.
Bestadde, bestad, part. pa. Sax. Situated. It is sometimes used in an ill sense, for distressed.
Beste, n. Fr. A beast.
Beste, adj. sup. Sax. Best.
Besy, adj. Sax. Busy.
Bet, Bette, adv. comp. for *better*.
Betake, v. Sax. To give, to recommend to.
Betaught, pa. t. Recommended to.
Bete, v. Sax. To prepare, make ready. To bete fires: To make fires.—To mend; to heal. To bete nettes: To mend nets. To bete sorwe: To heal sorrow.
Bete, v. Fr. To beat.
Beteche, v. as *Betake*.
Beth, imp. m. 2 pers. pl. Sax. Be ye.
Betid, betidde, pa. t. et part. of *betide*, v. Sax. Happened
Betoke, pa. t. of *betake*. Recommended.
Betraised, part. pa. Fr. Betrayed. Thei have *betraised* thee.
Betwix, betwixen, prep. Sax. Between.
Bewepe, v. Sax. To wepe over.
Bewrey, bewrie, v. Sax. To discover.
Beye, v. Sax. To buy.
Beyete, part. pa. Sax. Begotten.
Bialacoll, pr. n. Fr. *Bel-accueil*. Courteous reception. The same person is afterwards called Faire welcoming.
Bibbed, part. pa. Lat. Drunk.
Bible, n. Fr. Any great book.

Bicchel bones, or dice.
Biddle, v. as *Bede*.
Bie, v. Sax. To suffer. See *Abeye*.
Begine, pr. n. Fr. *Beguine*. A nun, of a certain order. See Du Cange, in v. *Beghinæ*.
Biker, n. Sax. A quarrel.
Bilder, n. Sax. A builder. The bilder oke: The oak used in building.
Bill, n. A letter.
Bimene, v. Sax. To bemoan.
Bint, for *Bindeth*.
Birde, for *Bride*, n. Sax.

Hire chere was simple, as *birde* in bour. i. e. as bride in chamber.
Simple fut comme une *espouser*. Orig.

Bismare, n. Sax. Abusive speech.

And bold, and biding, *bismares* to suffer.

Bit, for *Biddeth*.
Bitore, n. Fr. A bittern.
Bitrent, part. pa. Twisted; carried round. Perhaps from the Sax. Betrymian: *circumdare*.
Biwopen, part. pa. of *Bewepe*. Drowned in tears.
Blancmanger, n. Fr. 389. seems to have been a very different dish in the time of Chaucer, from that which is now called by the same name. There is a receipt for making it in Ms. Harl. n. 4016. One of the ingredients is, "the brawne of a capon, tesed small."
Blandise, v. Fr. To flatter.
Blanche fevere, See Cotgrave, in v. "Fievers blanches. The agues wherewith maidens that have the greene-sickness are troubled; and hence, Il a les fievres blanches: Either he is in love or sick of wantonness." I am so shaken with the fevers white.
Ble, n. Sax. Colour.
Blee, pr. n. A forest in Kent, Ur.
Bleine, n. Sax. A pustule.
Blend, v. Sax. To blind, to deceive.
Blent, pa. t. of *Blend*.
Blent, pa. t. of *Blench*, v. Sax. Shrinked, started aside.
Blered, part pa. Sax. In its literal sense is used to describe a particular disorder of the eye, attended with soreness and dimness of sight: but more commonly, in Chaucer, a man's eye is said to be blered metaphorically, when he is any way imposed upon.
Bleve, v. Sax. To stay.
Blin, v. Sax. To cease.
Blive, *Belive*, adv. Sax. Quickly.
Blosme, n. Sax. Blossom.
——— v. To blossom.
Blosmy, adj. Full of blossoms.
Bob up and down, pr. n. of a town in the road to Canterbury. It is not marked in the common maps.
Bobance, n. Fr. Boasting.
Boche, n. Fr. *Bosse*. A swelling; a wen or boil.
Bode, *Boden*, part. pa. of *Bede*, v. Sax, Bidden, commanded.
Bode, pa. t. of *Bide*, v. Sax. Remained.
Bode, n. Sax. A stay, or delay.
——— An omen.
Bodekin, n. Sax. A dagger.
Boece, pr. n. Boethius. His most popular work De consolatione Philosophiæ was translated by Chaucer certainly before 1381, and probably much earlier. The reflections on predestination in Troilus and Creseide iv. of which there is no trace in the Filostrato, are almost entirely taken from Bo. v. pr. 3.
Boiste, n Fr. A box.
Boistous, adj. Sax. Boisterous, rough.
Boistously, adv. Roughly.
Bokeler, n. Fr. A buckler.
Bokeling, part. pr. Fr. Buckling.
Boket, n. Sax. A bucket.
Bolas, n. Bullace, a sort of plumb, or sloe.
Bole armoniac. Armenian earth. Fr. Gr.
Bollen, part. pa. of *Bolge*, v. Sax. Swollen.
Bolt, n. Sax. An arrow. Bolt-up-right: Strait as an arrow.
Bone, n. Sax. A boon, petition. He bade hem all a bone: He made a request to them all.
Boras, n. Fr. Borax.
Bord, n. Fr. A border, the side of a ship. Over bord.
Borde, n. Sax. A table.
Bordel, n. Fr. A brothel. Bordel women: Whores.
Bordellers, n. pl. Keepers of bawdy-houses.
Borel, n. Fr. *Bureau*. Coarse cloth of a brown colour. See Du Cange, in v. *Burellus*. It seems sometimes to signifie clothing in general.
Borel, adj. made of plain coarse stuff. Borel folk; Borel men: Laymen. Burel clerks is probably put for lay clerks.
Borwe, n. Sax. A pledge. Hath laid to borwe: Hath pledged. Have here my feith to borwe: Have here my feith for a pledge. Seint John to borwe: St. John being my security.
Bosard, n. Fr. A buzzard, a species of hawk, unfit for sporting.
Bosse, n. Fr. A portuberance.
Bost, n. Sax. Pride, boasting.
Bost, adv. Aloud. He cracked *bost*. He spake thise wordes *bost*.
Bote, n. Sax. Remedy, help, profit.
Bote, v. Sax. To help.
Bote, pa. t. of *Bite*, v. Sax. Bit. His swerd best *bote*.
Boteles, adj. Sax. Bootless, remediless.
Botel, *Botelle*, n. Fr. Bottle.
Boterflie, n. Sax. A butterflie.
Bothe, adj. Sax. Two together. Our bothe labour: The labour of us two together. Nostrum amborum labor.
Bothe, conj. is generally used to copulate two members of a sentence; but sometimes more.

And rent adoun *bothe* wall, and sparre, and rafter.—

To whom *both* heven, and erthe, and see is sene.

So the Greeks sometimes used Αμφοτερον.

Od. ὁ. 78. Αμφοτερον κυδος τε, και αγλαϊη, και οπιζω.

Bothum, n. Fr. *Bouton*. A bud, particularly of a rose.
Bougeron, n. Fr. A sodomite.
Boughton under blee, pr. n. of a town in Kent.
Bouke, n. Sax. The body.
Boulte, v. Sax. To sift, to separate the flour of wheat from the bran.
Boun, adj. Sax. Ready. And bade hem all to be *bowne*.
Bountee, n. Fr. Goodness.

Bourde, n. Fr. A jest.
Bourde, v. Fr. To jest.
Bourdon, n. Fr. A staff.
Boure, n. Sax. A house, a chamber.
Bowe, n. Sax. A bow. A dogge for the bowe: A dog used in shooting.
Boxe, n. A blow.
Bracer, n. Fr. Armour for the arm.
Bradwardin, pr. n. Thomas Bradwardine, archbishop of Canterbury in 1349. His book De causa Dei, to which our author alludes, is in print. See Tanner, in v. *Bradowardinus*.
Braide, n. Sax. A start. At a *braide*. Tantost. Orig.
Braide, v. Sax. To awake, to start. See *Abraide*. Out of his wit he braide: He ran out of his senses. Sometimes it signifies to take off.
Brakat, n. *Brit. Bragod*. A sweet drink made of the wort of ale, honey, and spice. It is still in use in Wales. Richards, in v. *Bragod*.
Brasil, n. A wood used in dying, to give a red colour.—This passage of Chaucer is a decisive proof, that the Brazil-wood was long known by that name before the discovery of the country so called in America. See Huetiana, p. 268. In the inventory of the effects of Henry V. Rot. Parl. 2 H. VI. m. 20. is the following article, "II Graundes peces du Bracile, pris VI s. VIII d."
Bratt, n. Sax. A coarse mantle.
Brech, n. Sax. Breeches.
Brede, n. Sax. Breadth. In brede: Abroad. Sometimes it seems to be put for bride.
Breme, adj. Sax. Furious. Full scharply and full *brim*.
Brenne, v. Sax. To burn.
Brent, pa. t. and part. Burnt.
Brenningly, adv. Sax. Hotly.
Breres, n. pl. Fr. Briars.
Breste, v. Sax. To burst.
Bret-ful, adj. Top-full. The sense is much more clear than the etymology.
Bribe, n. Fr. Properly, what is given to a beggar, or what is given to an extortioner, or cheat.
Briben, inf. m. Fr. To beg, or perhaps to steal. See Rot. Parl. 22 E. IV. n. 30. Have stolen and *bribed* signetts (cygnets). A bribour seems to signifie a thief; as bribors, pilors, and pikeharneis, are classed together;

Who saveth *a thefe*, whan the rope is knet,—
With some false turne *the bribour* will him quite.

See also antient Scottish poems, p. 171. st. 7. l. 3.
Briboures, for briberies.
Bridale, n. Sax. A marriage-feast.
Briddes, n. pl. Sax. Birds.
Brige, n. Fr. Contention.
Brike, n. Sax. Breach, ruin.
Brimme, adj. as *Breme*.
Brocage, n. A treaty by a broker or agent.
Broche, n. Fr. Seems to have signified originally the tongue of a buckle or clasp, and from thence the buckle or clasp itself. It probably came by degrees to signifie any sort of jewel. *Broche, jiuell.* Monile. armilla. Prompt. Parv. See *Nouche*.
Broided, part pa. Fr. Braided, woven.
Brokking, part. pr. Throbbing, quavering.
Bromeholme, pr. n. A priory in Norfolk.
Bronde, n. Fr. A torch.
Brosten, part. pa. of *Breste*.
Brotel, adj. Sax. Brittle.
Brotelnesse, n. Brittleness.
Brotherhed, n. Sax. Brotherly affection.
Brouded, part. pa. Fr. *Brodé*. Embroidered.
Brouken, inf. m. Sax. To brook, to enjoy, use.
Buckes horne. A buck's horn. To blow the bucke horne is put for any useless employment.
Buffette, n. Fr. A blow.
Bugle-horn, n. A drinking-vessel made of horn. Gloss. Ur. derives it from Buculæ cornu. The Gloss. to Anc. Scott. Po. explains Bowgle to mean a buffalo. I have been told that in some parts of the north a bull is now called a boogle.
Bumble, v. Sax. To make a humming noise. In one place it is used to describe the noise made by a bittern.
Burdoun, n. Fr. *Bourdon*. A humming noise, the bass in musick.
Buriels, n. pl. Sax. Burying-places.
Burned, part. pa. Fr. Burnished.
Burnel the asse. The story supposes, that the priest's son, when he was to be ordained, directed his servant to call him at cock-crowing, and that the cock, whose leg he had formerly broken, having overheard this, purposely refrained from crowing at his usual time; by which artifice the young man was suffered to sleep till the ordination was over.
Burnette, n. Fr. *Brunette*. Cloth died of a brown colour. See Du Cange in v. *Burnetum*.
Busk, n. Fr. A bush.
Butte, *But*, adv. and conj. Sax. But, sed; unless, nisi. I n'ere *but* lost. Non essem *nisi* perdita. —Only, which that am *but* lorne.
But, prep. Sax. Without. Gloss. Ur. I cannot say that I have myself observed this preposition in Chaucer, but I may have overlooked it. The Saxons used it very frequently; and how long the Scottish writers have laid it aside, I am doubtful. It occurs repeatedly in Bp. Douglas. *But* spot or falt. p. 3. l. 53. Poete *but* pere. p. 9. l. 19. *But* and *ben*. p. 123. l. 40. Without and within; Butan and binnan; originally, I suppose, Bi utan and bi muan. By and with are often synonymous.
Buxome, adj. Sax. Obedient, civil.
Buxumly, adv. Sax. Obediently.
By, prep. Sax. has sometimes the signification of *in*. By the morwe: In the morning, or day-time. By his life: In his life-time.—It is sometimes used adverbially. By and by: Near, hard by. *By and by*. Sigillatim. Prompt. Parv. These were his wordes by and by, i.e. Severally, distinctly. And so perhaps this phrase should be understood in the passage above quoted.
Byforne. See *Beforne*.
Byleve, v. Sax. To stay.
Byraft, part. pa. of *Byreve*, v. Sax. Bereved, taken away.
Byword, n. Sax. A proverb.

C.

Cacche, v. To catch.
Cadence, n. Fr. A species of poetical composition distinct from riming verses.

Bokes, songes, ditees,
In *rime*, or elles in *cadence*.

Cairrud, pr. n. of a city in Bretagne.

Caitif, n. and adj. Fr. *Chetif*. A wretch, wretched.
Calcination, n. Fr. A chemical process, by which bodies are reduced to a calx.
Calculed, pa. t. Fr. Calculated.
Caleweis, is probably mis-written. The Orig. has La poire du *caillouel*. Cotgrave says, that Caillouët is the name of a very sweet pear.
Calidone, pr. n. It should be *Lacedomie*.
Caliophia, pr. n. We should rather read *Calypsa*, with the two Bodl. Mss. for *Calypso*.
Calle, n. Fr. A species of cap.
Camaille, n. Fr. A camel.
Cameline, n. Fr. A stuff made of camel's hair.
Camuse, adj. Fr. Flat.
Can, v. Sax. To know. See *Conne*,
Cananee, adj. Fr. Cananean.
Cane, pr. n. Cana in Galilee.
Canel, n. Fr. Canal. Channel.
Canelle, n. Fr. Cinnamon.
Canevas, n. Fr. Canvas.
Canon. The title of Avicenne's great work. See D'Herbelot, in v. *Cunun*.
Cantel, n. Sax. A fragment.
Capel, n. Lat. A horse. And gave him *caples*, to his carte.
Capitaine, n. Fr. A captain.
Capitolie, n. Lat. The Capitol at Rome.
Cappe, n. Lat. A cap, or hood. To set a man's cap: To make a fool of him.
Captif, adj. Fr. Captive.
Cardiacle, n. Fr. Gr. A pain about the heart.
Carectes, n. pl. Lat. Gr. Characters.
Carfe, pa. t. of *Carve*, v. Sax.
Carle, n. Sax. A churl, a hardy country fellow.
Carmes, n. pl. Fr. Carmelite friars.
Carole, n. Fr. A sort of dance.
Carole, v. Fr. To dance. In caroling: In dancing.
Carpe, v. To talk. By carping of tonge: By speech.
Carraine, n. Fr. A carrion, dead or putrified flesh.
Carrike, n. Fr. A large ship.
Carte, n. Sax. A chariot.
Carter, n. Sax. A charioteer.
Cas, n. Fr. *Cas*. Chance. Upon cas: By chance.
Cas, n. Fr. *Casse*. A case, quiver.
Cassiodore, pr. n. Cassiodorus, a Roman Senator and Consul. A. C. 513. Several of his works are extant. See Fabric. Bibl. Lat. and Bibl. Med. Æt.
Cast, n. Sax. A contrivance.
Caste, v. To throw, to contrive.
Casteloigne, pr. n. Catalonia, in Spain.
Casuel, adj. Fr. Accidental.
Catapuce, n. Fr. A species of spurge.
Catel, n. Fr. Goods, valuable things of all sorts.
Caterwawed. To gon a caterwawed seems to signify the same as to go a caterwawing, or caterwawling, as it has been called by later writers.
Caton, pr. n. Cato, but not the famous censor of Rome. Who he was is uncertain.
Caught, pa. t. et. part. of *Catch*.
Cavilatioune, n. Fr. Cavil.
Cecile, Cecilie, pr. n. Cecilia.
Ceise, Cese, are misprinted for *Seise*, v. Fr. To seize, to lay hold of.
Celerer, n. Lat. *Celerarius*. The officer in a monastery who had the care of the provisions.
Celle, n. Lat. A religious house. It seems sometimes to be put for a man's head.
Celesitude, n. Fr. Highness.
Censer, n. Fr. An incense-pot.
Censing, part. pr. Fr. Fumigating with incense.
Centaurie, pr. n. of an herb.
Cercle, v. Fr. To surround.
Cercles, n. pl. Fr. Circles.
Cerial, adj. Fr. Belonging to the species of oak called Cerrus, Lat. Cerro, Ital. Cerre. Fr.
Certain, adj. Fr. is used sometimes as a substantive. Of unces a certain: a certain of gold: i. e. A certain number of ounces; a certain quantity of gold.
Certain, Certes, adv. Certainly.
Ceruse, n. Fr. White lead.
Cesed, part. pa. for *Seised*. It is used in a legal sense. To that he be cesed therwith: Till that he be possessed thereof; till he have seisen thereof.
Cesse, v. Fr. To cease.
Chace, v. Fr. To chase, to pursue.
Chafe, v. Fr. To grow warm or angry.
Chaffare, n. Sax. Merchandize.
Chaffare, v. Sax. To merchandize.
Chaiere, n. Fr. A chair. The chair, or pulpit, of a professor or preacher.
Chalons. Blankets, or coverlets, made at Chalons.
Chamberere, n. Fr. A chamber-maid.
Champartie, n. Fr. A share of land, a partnership in power.
Chantepleure, n. Fr. A sort of proverbial expression for singing and weeping successively. In Ms. Harl. 4333. is a ballad which turns upon this expression. It begins; Moult vaut mieux pleure chante que ne fait chante pleure.
Chanterie, n. Fr. An endowment for the payment of a priest, to sing mass agreeably to the appointment of the founder. There were thirty-five of these chanteries established at St. Paul's, which were served by fifty-four priests. Dugd. Hist. pref. p. 41.
Chapman, n. Sax. A merchant, or trader.
Chapmanhede, n. Sax. The condition of a chapman, or tradesman.
Char, n. Fr. A chariot.
Charboucle, n. Fr. A carbuncle.
Charge, n. Fr. A load, burthen, business of weight. It n'ere no charge: It were no harm. Of which there is no charge: From which there is no consequence to be expected. Of that no charge: No matter for that.
Charge, v. Fr. To weigh, to incline on account of weight. Which chargeth not to say: Which it is of no importance to say.
Chargeant, particip. pr. Burthensome.
Charmeresse, n. Fr. An enchantress.
Chastelaine, n. Fr. The wife of a chastelain, or lord of a castle.
Chastie, v. Fr. To chastise.
Chaunteclere, pr. n. of a cock.
Chekere, n. Fr. A chess-board.
Chees, pa. t. of *Chese*, v. Sax. Chose.
Cheffis. We should read cheses. The orig. has fromages.
Cheke. A term at chess, to give notice to the opposite party, that his king, if not removed, or guarded by the interposition of some other piece, will be made prisoner. It is derived originally from the Persian Shâh, i. e. king; and means, take care of your king. See Hyde, Hist. Shahilud. p. 3, 4.
Chekelatioun. A corruption of the Fr. Ciclaton,

which originally signified a circular robe of state, and afterwards the cloth of gold of which such robes were generally made.

Chekemate, or simply *mate*, is a term used at chess, when the king is actually made prisoner, and the game consequently finished. The Persian phrase is Shâh mât, i. e. The king is conquered. See Hyde, Hist. Shahilud, p. 152.

Chelaundre, n. Fr. A goldfinch.

Chepe, v. Sax. To cheapen, to buy.

Chepe, n. Cheapness. 6105.

Chepe, pr. n. Cheap-side in London.

Cherche, n. Sax. A church.

Chere, n. Fr. Countenance, appearance, entertainment, good cheer.

Cherice, v. Fr. To cherish.

Cherisance, n. Fr. Comfort.

Cherl, n. Sax. A man of mean birth and condition.

Cherlish, adj. Illiberal.

Ches, n. Fr. The game of chess.

Chese, v. Sax. To choose.

Chese, for *Cheseth*.

Cheste, n. Lat. A coffin.

Cheste, n. Debate.

Chesteine, n. Fr. The chesnut tree, the chesnut fruit.

Chevachie, n. Fr. An expedition.

Chevalrie, n. Fr. Knighthood, the manners, exercises, and valiant exploits of a knight.

Chevalrous, adj. Valiant.

Cheve, v. Fr. To come to an agreement, or conclusion. Yvel mote he *cheve*: Ill may he end. Ye, they shal have the flour of yvel ending.

Chevesaile, n. Fr. A neclace.

Chevetain, n. Fr. Chieftain.

Chevisance, n. Fr. An agreement for borrowing of money.

Chiche, adj. Fr. Niggardly, sparing. R.

Chichevache. An allusion to the subject of an old ballad, preserved in the Harleian collection, in which two beasts are introduced, called *Bycorne*, and *Chichevache*. The first is supposed to feed upon obedient husbands, and the other upon patient wives, and the humour of the piece consists in representing Bycorne as pampered with a superfluity of food, and Chichevache as half starved.

Chideresse, n. Sax. A female scold.

Chidester, n. Sax. A female scold.

Chiertee, n. Fr. Tenderness, affection.

Chike, n. Sax. A chicken.

Chimbe, n. Sax. The prominent part of the staves beyond the head of a barrel.

Chimbe, v. To sound in consonance, like bells.

Chimoney, n. Fr. A chimney.

Chinche, adj. as *Chiche*.

Chincherie, n. Niggardliness.

Chirche, n. Sax. A church.

Chirchereve, n. Sax. A chirch-warden.

Chirchhawe, n. Sax. A church-yard.

Chirk, v. Sax. To chirp, as a sparrow.

Chirking, n. A disagreeable sound.

Chit, for *Chideth*.

Chivachee, n. as *Chevachie*.

Chiver, v. Sax. To shiver.

Cierges, n. pl. Fr. Wax-tapers.

Cipioun, pr. n. Scipio.

Cipris pr. n. Venus.

Circes, pr. n. for *Circe*.

Citee, n. Fr. A city.

Citole, n. Fr. A musical instrument. Sir John Hawkins, in his very curious History of Musick, v. 2. p. 106. n. supposes it to have been a sort of dulcimer, and that the name is a corruption of the Lat. cistella. Besides the passage which he has quoted from Gower. Conf. Am. 178. it is mentioned again in fol. 189, among the instruments which sowned lowe. See also Du Cange, in v. *Citola*, and M. de la Ravâliere, Poësies du Roy de Navarre.

Citrin, adj. Fr. Of a pale yellow, or citron-colour.

Citrination, n. A chemical term. Arnoldus in Rosario Ms. l. 1. c. 5. Citrinacio nihil aliud est quam completa albedinis digestio, nec albedo est aliud quam nigredinis ablatio. Gloss. Carpent. in v.

Clamben, pa. t. pl. of *Climb*, v. Sax.

Clapers, n. pl. Fr. Rabbet-burrows.

Clappe, v. Sax. To knock repeatedly, to talk fast.

Clappeth, imp. m. 2 pers pl.

Clapping, n. Noisy talking.

Clapsed. Clasped.

Clarre, n. Fr. Wine mixed with honey and spices, and afterwards strained till it is clear. It was otherwise call Piment; as appears from the title of the following receipt, in the Medulla Cirurgiæ Rolandi. Ms. Bod. 761. fol. 86. "Claretum bonum, sive pigmentum.—Accipe nucem moschatam, cariofilos, gingebas, macis, cinamomum, galangum; quæ omnia in pulverem redacta distempera cum bono vino cum tertiâ parte mellis: post cola per sacculum, et da ad bibendum. Et nota, quod illud idem potest fieri de cerevisiâ."

Clatterеden, pa. t. pl. of *Clatter*.

Clause, n. Fr. An end, or conclusion.

Claw, v. Sax. To stroke. He clawed him on the back: He stroked him on the back, to encourage him. To claw on the gall, signifies the same as to rub on a sore place.

Cled for *Clad*.

Clenenesse n. Sax. Purity.

Clepe, v. Sax. To call, to name.

Clergie, n. Fr. The clerical profession.

Clergical, adj. Learned.

Clergion. n. A young clerk.

Clerk, n. Fr. A person in holy orders, a man of learning, a student at the university.

Cleves, n. pl. Sax. Rocks. See *Cliffe*.

Cliffe, n. Sax. A rock.

Clifte, n. Sax. A cleft.

Cliket, n. Fr. A key.

Clinke, v. Fr. To ring.

——, v. neut. To tinkle.

Clippe, v. Sax. To cut hair, to embrace.

Clipsy, adj. As if eclipsed.

Clobbed, adj. Sax. Like a club.

Cloistre, n. Fr. A cloister, an enclosure.

Clomben, pa. t. pl. of *Climb*; v. Sax.

Closer, n. Fr. An inclosure.

Clote-lefe. A leaf of the bur-dock, or clote-burr.

Clotered, part. pa. Sax. Clotted.

Cloue-gilofre. A clove tree, or fruit of it.

Cloutes, n. pl. Sax. Small pieces.

Clum. This word seems to be formed from the Sax. v. Clumian, Mussitare, murmurare; to express the mumbling noise, which is made by a congregation in accompanying prayers, which they cannot perfectly repeat.

Coagulat, part. pa. Lat. Curdled.
Cackes bones. A corruption of a familiar oath.
Cod, n. Sax. A bag.
Cofre, n. Fr. A chest.
Cogge, n. Sax. A cock-boat. See Du Cange, in v. *Cogo.*
Coilons, n. pl. Fr. Testicles.
Coine, n. Fr. A piece of money.
——, A quince.
Coint, adj. Fr. Neat, trim.
Coke, n. Lat. A cook.
Cokeney. The modern term of contempt, *cockney*, which was probably derived from the kitchen, a cook, in the base Latinity being called *coquinator* or *coquinarius*, from either of which Cokeney might easily be derived.
Cokewold, n. A cuckold. How this word has been formed is difficult to say, but probably it has some relation to the Fr. Cocu. In the best MSS. of the Canterbury Tales it is constantly spelled as above; and is always, I believe, to be pronounced as a trisyllable. The author of the Remedie of Love, pretends, that the true orthographie of this word is cokcold, according to a most absurd etymologie, which he has there given of it; an additional proof, if any were wanted, that the Remedie of Love, was not written by Chaucer.
Col. Somestimes a name for a dog, but doubtful.
Cold, v. Sax. To grow cold.
Coler, n. Fr. A collar.
Colered, part. pa. Collared, wearing collars.
Collation, n. Fr. A conference.
Collinges. n. pl. Fr. Embraces round the neck.
Coltish, adj. Sax. Playful as a colt.
Columbine, adj. Lat. Belonging to a dove, dove-like.
Combre-world, n. An incumbrance to the world.
Combust, ad. Lat. Burnt. A term in astrology, when a planet is not more than 8° 30′ distant from the Sun.
Come for *Cometh.*
Commensal, n. Fr. A companion at table.
Commune, n. Fr. Commonalty.
Communes, n. pl. Commoners, common people.
Compaignable, adj. Fr. Sociable.
Compame for *Compagne.* Put for the sake of the rhyme.
Compas, n. Fr. A compass, a circle. The trine compas: The Trinity; an appellation borrowed, as it seems, from the common emblem of that mystery, a circle circumscribing a triangle.—Contrivance.
Compasment, n. L. W. } Contrivance.
Compassing, n. }
Compass, v. To contrive. He *compassed* his thought: He contrived in his thought.
Compenable, adj. Fr. as *Compaignable.*
Compere, n. Fr. A gossip, a near friend.
Complin, n. Fr. Complie. Even-song, the last service of the day, singing in general.
Compowned, part. pa. Composed, put together.
Compte, n Fr. Account.
Concete, n. Fr. Conception, apprehension.
Condescende, v. Fr. To yield.
Condite, n. pl. Fr. Conduits.
Confecture, n. Fr. Composition.
Confuse, adj. Fr. Confounded. He became so *confuse*, he cometh not loke.
Conjecte, v. Fr. To project.
Conisaunce, n. Fr. Understanding.
Conjure, v. Fr. To adjure.
Conne, v. Sax. To know, to be able. I shal not *conne* answere: I shall not know how, or be able, to answer. Thou shalt never—*Con* knowen: Thou shalt never be able to know. To conne thank: To be pleased, or obliged; Sçavoir gré. To conne maugré: To be displeased; Sçavoir mal grè. Orig.
Conseil, n. Fr. Counsel.
Consentant, part. pr. Fr. Consentant of this cursednesse. Consenting to.
Conserve, v. Fr. To preserve.
Consistory, n. Fr. Signifies usually an ecclesiastical court, but sometimes, any court of justice.
Constablerie, n. Fr. A ward or division of a castle, under the care of a constable. See Du Cange, in v. *Constabularius castri.*
Conteke, n. Sax. Contention.
Contenance, n. Fr. Appearance, pretence.
Contract, part. pa. Lat. Contracted.
Contrariauntes, part. pr. is used in the plural number, according to the French custom. Opposing, contradicting.
Contrarie, v. Fr. To contradict.
Contrarious, adj. Fr. Opposite, perverse.
Contrary, n. Fr. Adversary.
Contrefete, v. Fr. To counterfeit, imitate.
Controve, v. Fr. To invent.
Contubernial, adj. Lat. Familiar.
Contune for *Continue.*
Cope, n. Fr. Cape. A cloak.
Coppe, n. Sax. The top of any thing.
Corage, n. Fr. Heart, inclination, spirit, courage.
Corbeites, n. pl. Fr. Niches for statues.
Cordeth for *Accordeth.*
Cordewane, n. Fr. Cordouan. Spanish leather, so called from Corduba.
Cordileres, n. pl. Fr. Cordeliers. An order of friars, so called from their wearing a cord for a girdle.
Cormne, pr. n. What author is meant, I cannot say. One can hardly suppose that Chaucer had met with that poem of the ancient Corinna, the contemporary of Pindar, which was entitled Ἐπτὰ ἐπὶ Θήβαις (Fragm. ex Apollonio Dyscolo, ap. Maittair. de Dialect. p. 429. l. 4.) nor do I know that any fictitious work upon the war of Thebes has ever been set forth under her name. She is mentioned by Propertius (2d. El. 3. v. 21.) and by Statius (Sylv. V. Carm. 3. v. 158.) but neither of them takes notice of her having written on the affairs of Thebes.
Cornewaile, pr. n. Cornouaille, in Bretagne.
Corniculere, n. Lat. An officer in the Roman government. See Pitisc. Lex. Ant. Rom. in v. *Cornicularius.*
Cornmuse, n. Fr. A bag-pipe.
Corny, adj. Sax. Strong of the corn, or malt.
Coroune, n. Fr. A crown, or garland.
Corps, n. Fr. Body.
Corpus, n. Lat. Body. Corpus Domini: God's body. Corpus Madrian.
Corrige, v. Fr. To correct.
Corrumpable, adj. Fr. Corruptible.
Corrumpe, v. Fr. To corrupt.
Corse, v. Sax. To curse.
Corseint, n. Fr. A holy body, a saint. The *corsaynt* and the kirke.

Corven, part. pa. of *Carve*, v. Sax.

Cosin, v. Fr. A cousin, or kinsman. It is sometimes used adjectively. Allied, related.

Cosinage, n. Fr. Kindred.

Costage, n. Fr. Cost, expence.

Costeie, v. Fr. To go by the coast.

Costlewe, adj. Costly.

Costrell, n. A drinking-vessel. See Du Cange, in v. *Costrellus*.

Cote, n. Sax. A cottage.

Cote, n. Fr. A coat. *Cote-armure*: A coat worn over armour, upon which the armorial ensigns of the wearer were usually embroidered.

Cotidien, adj. Fr. Daily. It is used as a substantive for a quotidien ague.

Couche, v. Fr. To lay.

Couched, part. pa. Laid. *Couched* with perles: Laid, or trimmed with pearls.

Coud, *Coude*, pa. t. of *Conne*. Knew, was able. It is used as a participle pa.

Coveite, v. Fr. To covet.

Covenable, adj. Fr. Convenient, suitable.

Coverchiefs, n. pl. Fr. Head-cloths.

Covercle, n. Fr. A pot-lid

Covert, adj. Fr. Secret, covered.

Covine, n. Fr. Secret contrivances.

Coulpe, n. Fr. A fault.

Count, v. Fr. To account, to esteem.

Counterpeise, n. Fr. A counterpoise, a weight which balances another.

Counterpeise, v. Fr. To counterpoise.

Counterplete, v. Fr. To plead against.

Counterwaite, v. Fr. To watch against.

Countour, n. Fr. Comptoir. A compting-house. Compteur: An arithmetician.

Countour. This word is changed in Urry's edition to Coroner, but upon what authority I know not. The MSS. all read Countour, or Comptour. At the same time it is not easy to say what office is meant.

Countretaille, n. Fr. A tally answering exactly to another. Hence echo is said to answer at the *countretaille*.

Coure, v. Fr. To sit crouching, like a brooding hen.

Courtepy. A short cloke of coarse cloth. It is a Teutonic word from Kort *curtus*, and Pige, penula coactilis, ex villis crassioribus.

Court-man. A courtier. Homme de Cour, Fr.

Couth, *Couthe*, pa. t. of *Conne*. Knew, was able.

——, part. pa. Known.

Cowardise, n. Fr. Want of courage. *Cowardie*. As to the etymology of the adj. from which this word has been formed, I think the opinion of Twysden and Somner, Gloss. ad X. Script. v. Fridwite, much the most probable, who derive it from the Barb. Lat. Culum vertere; to turn tail, or run away. See Du Cange, in v. *Culverta*, and *Culvertagium*, who rejects the opinion above mentioned, but without suggesting any thing so plausible. Culvert, as it is written in the oldest and best French MSS. that I have seen, might easily be corrupted, according to the French mode of pronunciation, into Couart and Couard.

I have somewhere seen the French language seriously charged with indelicacy for its frequent and wanton use of the word *cul* in composition; nor can the charge be said to be groundless. Beside the numerous instances which will occur to every body, I suspect that this monosyllable makes part of a common and solemn term in our law, imported originally from France. Culprit seems to me to have been a vulgar name for a prisoner; a person taken by that part which is most exposed in running away. Holinshed has expressed the same idea more delicately. Vol. iii. p. 842. The prentises were *caught by the backs* and had to prison. And so it is expressed in Ancient Scottish Poems. p. 182. ver. 15.

Yet deid [death] sal *tak him be the bak*.

Coye, v. Fr. To quiet, to sooth.

Craftesman, n. Sax. A man of skill.

Crake, v. Fr. To crack.

Crake, *Crakel*, v. Sax. To quaver hoarsely in singing.

Crampish, v. Fr. To contract violently, as the cramp does.

Cratching, n. Sax. Scratching.

Crased, part. pa. Fr. Ecrasé. Broken.

Creance, n. Fr. Faith, belief.

Creance, v. Fr. To borrow money.

Create, part. pa. Lat. Created.

Crencled, part. pa. Crincled, circularly formed. Perhaps from the Island. *Kringe*: Circino, gyro.

Crepil, n. Sax. A cripple.

Crevasse, n. Fr. A chink or crevice.

Criande, part. pr. of *Cric*, v. Fr. Crying.

Crips, as *Crispe*.

Crisippus, pr. n. I find the title of a work in Montfaucon, Bibl. p. 513. to which Chaucer may possibly allude. Chrysippi, discipuli Euthymii, in Joannem encomium—and again p. 1314. Chrysippi Presbyteri laudatio S. Joannis Baptistæ. It is not unlikely that a panegyrist on the Baptist might be led by his rage against Herodias to say some harsh things of women in general.

Crispe, adj. Lat. Curled.

Croce, n. Sax. A cross.

Crois, n. Fr. A cross.

Cromes, n. pl. Sax. Crumbs.

Crömmed, part. pa. Sax. Stuffed, crammed.

Crone, n. Sax. An old woman. Kronic: Ovis vetula. Kilian.

Crope, *Cropen*, part. pa. of *Crepe*, v. Sax. Crept.

Croppes, n. pl. Sax. The extremities of the shoots of vegetables. Now in the crop: Now at the top. Croppe and rote: Root and branch: the whole of a thing.

Crosselet, n. Fr. A crucible.

Crouche, v. Sax. To sign with the cross.

Croude, v. Sax. To shove together.

Crouke, n. Sax. An earthen pitcher.

Croun, n. Fr. signifies head.

Croupe, n. Fr. The ridge of the back.

Crowes feet. The wrinkles which spread from the outer corners of the eyes. Spenser describes this mark of old age in the same manner, Ecl. 12.

And by mine eie the crowe his claw doth wright.

Crowned, part. pa. Wearing a crown. Crowned malice: Sovereign malice.

Crull, adj. Sax. Curled.

Cucurbite, n. Lat. A gourd, a vessel shaped like a gourd, used in distillation.

Culpons, n. pl. Fr. Shreds, logs.

Culver, n. Sax. A dove,

Cuppe, n. Fr. A cup. Withouten cuppe he drank all his penance: He took large draughts of grief; he made no use of a cup, but drank out of the pot.
Curation, n. Fr. Cure, healing.
Cure, n. Fr. Care. *I* do no cure: I take no care.
Curfew-time, according to the Conqueror's edict, is said to have been 8 *h.* P. M. Walsingham, speaking of an event on the 2d of September, 1311, mentions 9 *h.* as the hora ignitegii. It probably varied with the seasons of the year.
Curious, adj. Fr. Careful.
Curteis, adj. Fr. Courteous.
Customer, adj. Fr. Accustomed.
Cutte. Cut.

D

Daffe, n. Sax. A fool. Thou dotest, *daffe*, quod she, dull are thy wittes.
Dagge, n. A slip, or shred.
Dagged, part. pa. Cut into slips.
Dagging, n. Slitting, cutting into slips.
Dagon, n. A slip, or piece.
Damascene, pr. n. The country about Damascus.
Damascene, pr. n. Joannes Mesue Damascenus, an Arabian physician, in the eighth and ninth century. See Fabric. Bibl. Gr. t. xiii. p. 256.
Dame, s. Fr. Lat. Domina. Mistress, lady, mother.
Damme, v. Fr. To condemn.
Dan, n. Fr. Lat. Dominus. Lord was a title commonly given to Monks. It is also prefixed by Chaucer to the names of other persons of all sorts. Dan Arcite, Dan Bunnell, Dan Caton.
Dance, n. Fr. The olde dance: The old game. The French have the same phrase: Elle sçait assez de la vieille danse. Cotgrave.
Danger, n. Fr. A dangerous situation. In danger: Coyness, sparingness. With danger: Sparingly.
Dangerous, adj. Difficult, sparing.
Dapple-Gray. The colour which is called in Fr. pommelé.
Dare, v. Sax. To stare.
Dares, pr. n. of a supposed historian of the Trojan war.
Darreine, v. Fr. Desrener. Lat. Derationare. To contest.
Dart, n. Sax. A spear or javelin. The dart is sette up for virginitee. There is an allusion to the same custom in Lydg. Trag. 26.

> And oft it happeneth, he, that hath best ron,
> Doth not *the spere* like his desert possede.

Dasen, pr. t. pl. of *Dase*, v. Sax. Grow dim-sighted.
Daunt, v. Fr. To conquer. That ne with love may *daunted* be. Orig. Qui par amours ne soit *domptez*.
Daxe, v. Sax. To dawn.
Dawening, n. Sax. Day-break.
Dawes, n. pl. for *Dayes*. The Saxon ȝ is frequently expressed by *w* as well as by *y*.
Daye, n. Sax. Day, time. At my day: At the day appointed to me. To graunt him dayes of the remenant: To permit him to pay the remainder at certain days, by instalments.
Deaurat, part. pa. Lat. Gilded.
Debate, v. Fr. To fight.

Debonaire, adj. Fr. Courteous, gentle.
Decoped, part. pa. Fr. Cut down.
Decorate, pr. n. Decoratus.
Dede, v. Sax. To grow dead.
——, part. pa. Dead.
Dedly, adj. Sax. Devoted to death.
Deduit, n. Fr. Pleasure.
Defait, *Defaited*, part. pa. Fr. Wasted.
Defame, n. Fr. Infamy.
Defame, v. Fr. To make infamous.
Defaute, n. Fr. Want.
Defautes, pl. Defects.
Defende, v. Fr. To forbid, to ransom.
Defence, n. Fr. Prohibition.
Definishe, v. Fr. To define, to make a definition of.
Degree, n. Fr. A stair, or set of steps; rank in life.
Deiden, pa. t. pl. of *Deye*, v. Sax. Died.
Deine for *Deien*, inf. m. of *Deye*, v. Sax. To die.
Deinous, adj. Fr. Disdainful.
Deintee, n. Fr. Value, a thing of value. Hath deintee: Values highly. Told no deintee of: Set no value upon. It was deintee: It was a valuable thing.
Deinteous, adj. Choice, valuable.
Deis, n. Fr. This word occurs so frequently in old authors, that it may be worth the while to endeavour to give a more satisfactory explanation of it than is to be found in the glossaries. I apprehend that it originally signified the *wooden floor* (D'ais, Fr. De assibus, Lat.) which was laid at the upper end of the hall, as we see it still in college halls, &c. That part of the room therefore, which was floored with planks, was called the Dais, the rest being either the bare ground or at best paved with stone; and being raised above the level of the other parts it was often called the high Dais. In royal halls there were more Dais than one, each of them probably raised above the other by one or more steps; and that where the king sate was called the highest Dais. At a dinner which Charles V. of France gave to the emperour Charles IV. in 1377, Christine de Pisan says, Hist. de Ch. V. P. iii. c. 33, cinq. dois [dais] avoit en la sale plains de princes et de barons, et autres tables par-tout.—et estoient les deux grans dois et les dreçouers fais de barrieres a l'environ.

As the principal table was always placed upon a Dais, it began very soon, by a natural abuse of words, to be called itself a Dais, and people were said to sit at the Dais, instead of at the table upon the Dais. It was so in the time of M. Paris, Vit. Abb. p. 1070. Priore prandente ad magnam mensam, quam Deis vocamus.

Menage, whose authority seems to have led later antiquaries to interpret Dais, a Canopy, has evidently confounded Deis with Ders. Ders and Derselet, from Dorsum, as he observes, meant properly the hangings at the back of the company, Du Cange, v. Dorsale; but as the same hangings were often drawn over so as to form a kind of canopy over their heads, the whole was called a Ders. Christine, P. iii. c. 41. Sus chascun des trois (the emperour and the kings of France and Bohemia) avoit un ciel, distincte l'un de l'autre, de drap d'or à fleurs de lis; et pardessus ces trois en avoit un grant, *qui couvroit tout au long de la table, et tout derriere eux pendoit*, et estoit de drap d'or. This last ciel, or canopy, "which covered the whole

length of the table, and hung down behind the company," was a Ders. That it was quite a different thing from a Deis, appears from what follows: A l'autre dois [dais] auplus près (she says) seoit—le Daulphin and others. Et sus le chief du Daulphin avoit un ciel, et puis un autre pardessus qui toute la table couvroit. Dais here plainly means a table. The dauphin sate at the second table, and had a canopy over his own head, and another which covered the whole table. In short, one of Ménage's own citations, if properly corrected, will fully establish the distinct senses of these two words. Ceremon. de Godefroy, p. 335. Le Roy se vint mettre à table sur un haut Ders (read Deis) fait et préparé en la grande sallé du logis archiepiscopal, sous un grand Ders, le fond du quel estoit tout d'or. He has another citation from Martene, de Mon. Rit. l. i. c. xi. p. 109. in which he himself allows, that Dasium, the same as Dais, must signify un estrade, a raised floor. It appears from the same citation, that the ascent to the Dasium was by more steps than one.

Del, n. Sax. A part. Never a del: Not a bit. Every del: Every part.

Dele, v. Sax. To divide.

Delibere, v. Fr. To deliberate.

Delicacie, n. Fr. Pleasure.

Delices, n. pl. Fr. Delights.

Delie, adj. Fr. Dellé. Thin, slender.

Delit, n. Fr. Delight.

Delitable, adj. Fr. Delectable.

Deliver, adj. Fr. Nimble.

Deliverly, adv. Quickly.

Deliverness, n. Fr. Agility.

Delve, v. Sax. To dig.

Deluvy, n. Lat. Deluge.

Demaine, v. Fr. To manage.

Demaine, n. Fr. Management.

Deme, v. Sax. To judge.

Demoniak, n. Fr. One possessed by a devil.

Dent, n. Sax. A stroke. See *Dint*.

Denwere, n. Doubt. *St.* This interpretation suits well enough with the only passage in which I have found this word; but I should be glad to see some other instance of the use of it.

De par dieux jeo assente. In God's name I agree.

Depart, v. Fr. To part, to distribute.

Depeint, part. pa. Fr. Painted.

Dequace, v. To shake down. q?

Dere, v. Sax. To hurt.

Dere, adj. Sax. Dear.

Dereling, n. Sax. Darling.

Dereworth, adj. Sax. Precious, valued at a high rate.

Derne, adj. Sax. Secret.

Derre, comp. of *Dere*. Dearer.

Des. As *Deis*.

Descensorie, n. Fr. A vessel used in chemistry for the extraction of oils per descensum.

Descriven, inf. m. Fr. To describe.

Desirous, adj. Fr. Eager.

Desolat, part. pa. Lat. Abandoned, distressed.

Despite, n. Fr. Malicious anger.

Despitous, adj. Angry to excess.

Despitously, adv. Angrily.

Despoilé, v. Fr. To undress.

Destreine, v. Fr. To vex, to constrain.

Destrer, n. Fr. A war-horse. Lat. Dextrarius.

Destrie, *Destrue*, v. Fr. To destroy. Descried should be Destried.

Determinat, part. pa. Lat. Fixed, determined.

Detterles, adj. Free from debt.

Deve, adj. Sax. Deaf.

Devining, n. Fr. Divination.

Devise, n. Fr. Direction.

Devise, v. Fr. To direct, to order, to relate. At point devise: A point devisé. Fr. With the greatest exactness.

Devoir, n. Fr. Duty. Wele thei stode and did ther *devere*.

Dey, n. A species of labourer, perhaps a day-labourer.

Deye, v. Sax. To die.

Deyer, n. Sax. A dyer.

Diapred, part. pa. Fr. Diversified with flourishes, &c.

Diche, v. Sax. To dig; to surround with a ditch.

Dide for *Died*.

Dide, pa. t. of *Do*. v. Sax. *Diden*, pa. t. pl.

Die, v. Sax. To tinge.

Diete, n. Fr. Daily food.

Diffame, n. Fr. Bad reputation. See *Defame*.

Digestible, adj. Lat. Easy to be digested.

Digestives, n. pl. Fr. Things to help digestion.

Dight, v. Sax. To dispose, to dress.

Digne, adj. Fr. Worthy, proud, disdainful.

Dike, v. Sax. To dig, to make ditches.

Dilatation, n. Fr. Enlargement.

Dint, n. Sax. as *Dent*. Thonder-dint. A stroke of thunder.

Dioscorides, pr. n. of a Greek writer on plants, whose work is extant.

Dissarray, n. Fr. Disorder.

Disavaunce, v. Fr. To drive back.

Disaventure, n. Fr. Misfortune.

Disblame, v. Fr. To clear from blame.

Discomfiture, n. Fr. Defeat.

Discomfort, n. Fr. Displeasure.

Discomforten, v. Fr. To discourage.

Discoverte, adj. Fr. At discoverte: Uncovered. A descouvert.

Disdeinous, adj. Fr. Disdainful.

Disencrese, n. Fr. Diminution.

Disencrese, v. neut. Fr. To decrease.

Disfigure, n. Fr. Deformity.

Disherited, part. pa. Fr. Disinherited, stripped of possessions.

Dishevele, part. pa. Fr. With hair hanging loose. Deschevelé.

Disjoint, n. Fr. A difficult situation.

Disobeisant, part. pa. Fr. Disobedient.

Disordeined, part. pa. Fr. Disorderly.

Disordinate, adj. Lat. Disorderly.

Disordinaunce, n. Fr. Irregularity.

Disparage, n. Fr. A disparagement.

Dispence, n. Fr. Expence.

Disperance, n. Fr. Despair.

Dipitous, adj. Angry to excess. See *Despitous*.

Displesaunce, n. Fr. Displeasure.

Dispone, v. Lat. To dispose.

Disport, n. Fr. Deport. Sport, diversion.

Disport, v. To divert.

Dispreising, part. pa. Fr. Undervaluing.

Disputison, n. Fr. Dispute. The clergie of the south made a *disputesoun*.

Disrulily, adv. Irregularly.

Dissimule, v. Fr. To dissemble.

Dissimulings, n. pl. Fr. Dissemblings.

Dissoned, part. pa. Fr. Dissonant.
Distaine, v. Fr. To discolour, to take away the colour.
Distinct, v. Lat. To distinguish.
Distingued, part. pa. Fr. Distinguished.
Distourbled, pa. t. Fr. Disturbed.
Distreyne, n. Fr. To constrain. See *Destreine*.
Distrouble, v. Fr. To disturb.
Disturne, v. Fr. To turn aside.
Dite, v. Fr. To dictate, to write.
Dites, n. pl. Fr. Sayings, dittiesr
Ditus, pr. n. Dictys Cretensis.
Diverse, adj. Fr. Different.
Diverse, v. To diversify.
Divine, n. for Divinity.
Divinistre, n. Fr. A divine.
Do, v. Sax. *Do* for *Don*, part. pa. *Dound*, part. pr. Doing.
Dogerel, adj. derived, I suppose, from Dog; so that Rime-dogerel may be understood to mean what in French might be called Rime de chien. See Cotgrave, in v. *Chien*. "Chose de chien: A paultrie thing, a trifle, trash, trumperie."
Dogge for the Bowe. A dog used in shooting.
Doke, n. Sax. A duck.
Dole, n. Sax. as *Del*.
Dole, n. Fr. Grief, mourning.
Dolven, part. pa. of *Delve*, v. Sax. Buried.
Dombe, adj. Sax. Dumb.
Dome, n. Sax. Judgment, opinion.
Domesman, n. Sax. A judge.
Donet, n. A grammar; the elements of any art; from Ælius Donatus, a Roman grammarian, whose introduction to the Latin language (inter Gramm. Vet. Putsch. p. 1735.) was commonly read in schools. Then drave I me among drapers, my *donet* to leme.
Donmow, pr. n. The flitch of bacon at Dunmow, which was not peculiar to that place. There was the same in Bretagne.
Donne, *Don*, adj. Sax. Of a brown or dun colour.
Dormant, part. pr. Fr. Fixed, ready. Les vaisseaux qui là dormoient à l'anere. Froissart, v. iii. c. 52.
Dortour, n. Fr. A dormitory, or common sleeping room.
Dosein, n. Fr. A dozen.
Dosser, n. Fr. A basket to be carried on the back.
Dote, v. Sax. To be foolish, through age or otherwise.
Doth, imp. m. 2 per. pl. of Do. Do ye.
Douced, may perhaps be a corruption of Doucete, which is the name of a musical instrument, in a poem of Lydgate's. Ms. Bodl. Fairf. 16.

"Ther were trumpes and trumpetes,
Lowde shallys and *doucettes*."

Doughtren, n. pl. Sax. Daughters.
Doutance, n. Fr. Doubt.
Doute, v. Fr. To fear.
Doutelees, *Douteles*, adv. Without doubt.
Doutous, adj. Doubtful.
D'outre mere, Fr. From beyond sea.
Dowaire, n. Fr. Dower.
Dradde, *Drad*, pa. t. and part. of *Drede*, v. Sax. Feared.
Draf, n. Sax. Things thrown away, as unfit for man's food.
Draf-sak. A sack full of draffe.
Drafty, adj. Sax. Of no more value than draffe.
Dragges, n. pl. Fr. Drugs.
Drede, n. Sax. Fear, doubt. Withouten drede: Without doubt. Out of drede: Out of doubt.
Drede, v. Sax. To fear. *Dred*, pa. t. for *Drad*.
Dredeful, adj. Timorous.
Dredeles, adv. Without doubt.
Dreint, pa. t. and part. of *Drenche*. Drowned.
Drenche, v. Sax. To drown.
Drenche, v. neut. Sax. To be drowned.
Drerinesse, n. Sax. Sorrow.
Drery, adj. Sax. Sorrowful.
Dresse, v. Fr. To address, apply.
Dretche, v. act. Sax. To vex, to trouble.
Dretched, part. pa. Oppressed, troubled.
Dretche, v. neut. Sax. To delay.
Dretching, n. Delay.
Drie, v. Sax. To suffer.
Drife, v. Sax. To drive.
Drinkeles, adj. Sax. Without drink.
Dronkelew, adj. Sax. Given to drink.
Dronken, part. pa. of *Drink*; v. Sax. Drunk.
Drough, pa. t. of *Draw*, v. Sax. Drew.
Drovy, adj. Sax. Dirty.
Druerie, n. Fr. Courtship, gallantry. A mistress. See Du Cange, in v. *Drudaria*.

The reader may perhaps be not displeased to see the following description of a drut, or lover, by Guillem Aesmar, a Provencal poet. MS. Crofts. fol. 219.

Ben paoc ama *drut*, qi non es gelos,
Et paoc ama, qi non est airos,
Et paoc ama, qi non es folettis,
Et paoc ama, qi non fa tracios;
Mais vaut d amor qi ben est enveios
Un dolz plorar non fait qaterze ris.

Qant eu li quier merce en genoillos,
E la mi colpa et mi met oehaisos,
Et l aigua m eur aval per mer lo vis,
Et ela m fai un regard amoros,
Et eu li bais la bucha els ols amdos,
Adonc mi par un ioi de paradis.

Drugge, v. Sax. To drag.
Dubbed, part. pa. Sax. Created a knight. The phrase is derived from the stroke, with a sword or otherwise, which was always a principal ceremony at the creation of a knight. At dubban, Island. signifies to strike. This stroke in French was called La colée. See L'Ordene de Chevalerie, par Hue de Tabarie, ver. 244. seq. published by Mr. Barbazan, 1759, and Du Cange, in v. *Alapa Militaris*.
Duetee, n. Fr. Duty; what is due to any one.
Dulle, v. act. Sax. To make dull.
Dulle, v. neut. Sax. To grow dull. R.
Dun is in the mire. See Ray's Proverbial Similies, p. 219. As dull as *dun* in the mire. I suppose dun was a nick-name given to the ass, from his colour, as well as burnell.
Dure, v. Fr. To endure.
Duresse, n. Fr. Hardship, severity.
Dusked, pa. t. Sax. Grew dark, or dim.
Dutee, as *Duetee*.
Dwale, n. Sax. A sleeping-potion.
Dwellings, n. pl. Sax. Delays.
Dwined, part. pa. Sax. Wasted.

E

Eared, part. pa. Ploughed. See *Ere*.
Ebraike, adj. Hebrew.

Ecclesiast, n. An ecclesiastical person; the Book of Ecclesiastes, or Ecclesiasticus.
*Ech*e, adj. Sax. Ælce. Each one, every one, of any number.
Eche, v. Sax. To add, to add to, to encrease.
Edippe, pr. n. Œdipus.
Effect, n. Fr. Substance.
Eft, adv. Sax. Again.
Eftsone, *Eftsones*, adv. Sax. Soon after, presently.
Egalitee, n. Fr. Equality.
Eger, *Egre*, adj Fr. Sharp.
Egge, v. Sax. To incite.
Eggement, n. Sax. Incitement.
Egging, n. as *Eggement*.
Egremoine, n. Fr. Agrimony.
Eire for *Air*.
Eisel, n. Sax. Vinegar.
Elat, part. pa. Lat. Elated.
Elde, n. Sax. Old age.
Elde, v. Sax. To make old.
——, v. neut. To grow old.
Elenge, adj. Strange. Sometimes it seems to signify dull, chearless, as, Hevy-chered I yede, and *elenge* in herte. And so perhaps it should be understood in other passages.
Elengenesse, n. in the Orig. Soucy. Care, trouble.
Elfe, n. Sax. A witch, a faery.
Elf-quene, n. Queen of elves or faeries.
Eli, pr. n. seems to be put for Elie. See 1 Kings c. 19.
Elie, pr. n. Elijah. The Carmelites pretend that Elijah was the founder of their order.
Elisee, pr. n. Elisha, the disciple of Elijah.
Elles, adv. Sax. Else. Elles what: Any thing else. Elleswher: Elsewhere.
Elvish, adj. Sax. Faery-like, fantastick. Sometimes it seems to signifie shy, reserved.
Embelise, v. Fr. To beautifie.
Emboldе, v. Fr. To make bold.
Emboyssement, n. Fr. Ambush.
Embrouded, part. pa. Fr. Embroidered.
Eme, n. Sax. Uncle.
Emforth, prep. Sax. Even with. *Emforth* my might: Even with my might, with all my power. *Emforth* my wit: To the utmost of my understanding. It is a corruption of *evenforth*, which occurs at length in Pierce Ploughman, 66, b. *evenforth* with thyselfe, and 108. b. He did equitie for all, *evenforth* his power.
Empeire, v. Fr. To impair, hurt.
Emperice, n. Fr. Empress.
Emplastre, v. Fr. To plaister over.
Emplie, v. To infold, to involve. Implicat. Orig.
Empoisoner, n. Fr. A poisoner.
Empresse, v. neut. Fr. To crowd.
Emprise, n. Fr. Undertaking.
Empte, v. Sax. To empty.
Enbattelled, part. pa. Fr. Indented, like a battlement.
Enbibing, part. pr. Lat. Imbibing.
Enbosed, part. pa. Fr. Embosqué. Sheltered in a wood.
Enbossed, part. pa. Fr. Embossé. Raised.
Enbrace, v. Fr. To take hold of.
Enbraude, v. Fr. To embroider.
Encense, n. Fr. Incense.
Encense, v. Fr. To burn incense. To burn incense to.
Enchaufing, n. Fr. Heat.
Encheson, n. Fr. Cause, occasion.
Encorporing, part. pr. Fr. Incorporating.
Endelong, prep. Sax. Along. —— adv. Length-ways.
Endetted, part. pa. Fr. Indebted.
Endite, v. Fr. To dictate, relate.
Endoute, v. Fr. To doubt, to fear.
Endrie, v. Sax. To suffer.
Enee, pr. n. Æneas.
Eneidos, pr. n. Virgil's Æneis.
Enfamined, part. pa. Fr. Hungry.
Enfecte, v. Fr. To infect.
——, part. pa. Infected.
Enforce, v. Fr. To strengthen.
Enforced, part. pa. Constrained by force.
Enfortune, v. Fr. To endow with a certain fortune.
Engendrure, n. Fr. Generation.
Engined, part. pa. Fr. Racked, tortured.
Engluting, rather *Enluting*. Stopping with clay.
Engregge, v. Fr. To aggravate.
Engreve, v. Fr. To hurt.
Enhaunse, v. Fr. To raise.
Enhaunsed, part. pa. Raised.
Enhort, v. Fr. To exhort.
Enlaced, part. pa. Fr. Entangled.
Enlangoured, part. pa. Fr. Faded with langtor.
Enleven, num. Sax. Eleven.
Enlumine, v. Fr. To illuminate.
Enoint, part. pa. Fr. Anointed.
Enseled, part. pa. Fr. Sealed up; kept secret.
Enspire, v. Fr. To inspire.
Ensure, v. Fr. To assure.
Entaile, n. Fr. Shape.
Entailed, part. pa. Fr. Carved.
Entalente, v. Fr. To excite.
Entend, v. Fr. To attend.
Entendement, n. Fr. Understanding.
Entente, n. Fr. Intention.
Ententif, adj. Fr. Attentive.
Enterchangeden, pa. t. pl. Fr. Exchanged.
Entermedled, part. pa. Fr. Intermixed.
Entermete, v. Fr. To interpose.
Enterpart, v. Fr. To share.
Entetcheel, part. pa. Fr. Entaché. It is applied indifferently to things and persons marked, or endowed, with good or bad qualities. Entetched and defauled with yvel: Stained and defiled with evil. The best entetched: Endowed with the best qualities.
Entree, n. Fr. Entry.
Entremees, n. pl. Fr. "Choice dishes served in between the courses at a feast. Cotg."
Entrike, v. Fr. To deceive.
——, To intangle.
Entuned, part. pa. Fr. Tuned.
Entunes, n. pl. Fr. Songs, tunes.
Envenime, v. Fr. To poison.
Envenoming, n. Poisoning.
Envie, v. Fr. To vie, to contend.
Environ, adv. Fr. About.
Environ, v. Fr. To surround.
Envoluped, part. pa. Fr. Wrapt up.
Envyned. Stored with wine.
Epistolis, Lat. Epistles.
Equipolences, n. pl. Fr. Equivalents.
Er, adv. Sax. Before, before that.
Erande, n. Sax. A message, an errand.
Ere, v. Fr. To plough.
Ereos for *Eros*, pr. n. Gr. Love.
Erke, adj. Sax. Weary, sick.
Erly, adv. Sax. Early.

Erme, v. Sax. To grieve.
Ermeful. Pitiful.
Ermin, adj. Armenian.
Ernest, n. Sax. Zeal; studious pursuit of any thing.
Ernestful, adj. Serious.
Erratike, adj. Fr. Wandering, applied to the planets.
Erraunt, part. pr. Fr. Strolling, applied to a thief.
Ers, Erse, n. Sax. The fundament.
Erst, adv. superl. of *Er*. First. At erst: At first; for the first time.—It is sometimes redundant. Long erst or: Long before.
Ertheles, adj. Sax. Without earth.
Eschaunge, n. Fr. Exchange.
Escheve Eschue, v. Fr. To shun, to decline.
Esculapius, pr. n. A book of medicine, under his name, is mentioned by Fabric. Bibl. Gr. t. i. p. 56. n. *.
Ese, n. Fr. Pleasure.
Ese, v. To accommodate.
Esed, part. pa. Eased.
Esement, n. Relief.
Esie, adj. Gentle, light. *Esie sighes:* which passage lord Surry has copied. Songes, &c. "And easy sighes, such as folks draw in love."
Esier, comp. d. Lighter. Of esier avail: Of lighter, or less value.
Esilich, adv. Gently.
Esperus, pr. n. Hesperus, a name of the planet Venus.
Espiaille, n. Fr. Spying, private watching.
Espirituell, adj. Fr. Spiritual, heavenly.
Essoine, n. Fr. A legal excuse.
Estat, Estate, n. Fr. State, condition, administration of government.
Estatelich, adj. Stately.
Estres, n. pl. Fr. The inward parts of a building.
Eterne, adj. Lat. Everlasting.
Ethe, adj. Sax. Easy.
Evangiles, n. pl. Fr. Gospels.
Even, adj. Sax. Equal. An even-cristen: a fellow-christian.
Evenlike, adj. Sax. Equal.
——— adv. Equally.
Ever, adv. Sax. Always. Ever in on: Continually in the same manner. Ever lenger the more.
Everich, adj. Sax. Every one of many, or,
——— Each of two.
Ew, n. Sax. Yew.
Exaltat, part. pa. Lat. Exalted.
Exametron, is explained by the context to signifie a verse of six feet. It usually signifies the heroic verse, but here, I suppose, must be understood to mean the Iambic, in which the antient tragedies were "commonly versified."
Executour, n. Fr. Executioner.
Executrice, n. Fr. A female executioner.
Exorcisations, n. pl. Fr. Exorcisms, conjurations.
Expans yeres. "In this and the following verses, the poet describes the Alphonsine Astronomical tables by the several parts of them, wherein some technical terms occur, which were used by the old astronomers, and continued by the compilers of those tables. Collect years are certain sums of years, with the motions of the heavenly bodies corresponding to them, as of 20, 40, 60, &c. disposed into tables; and Expans years are the single years, with the motions of the heavenly bodies answering to them, beginning at 1, and continued on to the smallest collect sum, as 20, &c. A root or radix, is any certain time taken at pleasure, from which, as an era, the celestial motions are to be computed. By proporcionel convenientes are meant the tables of proportional parts." Gloss. Ur. "Argument in astronomy is an arch whereby we seek another unknown arch proportional to the first." Chambers.
Expectaunt, part. pr. Fr. Waiting.
Espleite, v. Fr. To perform.
Ey, n. Sax. An egg. But as it were a grypes eye.
Ey, interj.
Eyen, n. pl. Sax. Eyes.
Eyre, for *Air*.
Eyrish, adj. Aerial, belonging to the air.

F.

Fable, n. Fr. Idle discourse.
Faconde, n. Fr. Eloquence.
Faconde, adj. Eloquent.
Faerie, n. Fr. The nation of faeries, enchantment, the work of faeries.
Fain, adj. Sax. Glad.
Fain, adv. Gladly.
Faine, v. Fr. To feign, to dissemble. To swinke and travail he not faineth: He does not feign, or pretend, only to labour; i. e. he labours seriously.
Fairehede, n. Sax. Beauty.
Faitour, n. Fr. A lazy, idle fellow. *Faitard, Faieteor*, un paresseux, piger. Lacombe.
Falding, n. "A kind of coarse cloth. Sk." He derives it from the A. S. Fealb, plica. However that may be, Helmolus (Chron. Slav. l. 1. c. 1.) speaks of indumenta lanea, probably coarse enough, quæ nos appellamus Faldones; and Fallin in Irish, according to Lhuyd, signifies a mantle. Giraldus Cambr. (Topog. Hibern. dist. 3. c. 10.) describes the Irish as clothed in phalingis lancis. vice palliorum. "Faldying cloth. Amphibalus. Birrus." Prompt. Parv. "Row cloth, as Faldyng and other lyke. Endromis. Amphibalus." *Ibid. See Du Cange, in v. Amphibalus.*
Fall, for *Fallen*, part. pa.
Falsen, v. Fr. To falsifie, to deceive.
Falwe, adj. Sax. Yellow.
Falwes, n. pl. Sax. Harrowed lands.
Famuler, adj. Lat. Domestick.
Fan, n. or *van*, that is the quintaine, which is called a fan, or van, from its turning round like a weathercock. See Du Cange in v. *vana*.
Fande, pa. t. of *Finde*, v. Sax. Found.
Fane, n. A weathercock.
Fantasie, n. Fr. Fancy.
Fantome, n. Fr. Any false imagination. Et dirent plusieurs qu'ils avoient été en fantosme. Froissart, v. i. c. 63.
Farce, v. Fr. Farder. To paint.
Fardel, n. Fr. A burthen.
Fare, v. Sax. To go. To fare wel: To speed, to be happy.
Faren, Fare, part pa.
Fares for *Fareth*.
Faring, part. pr.
Fare, n. seems to have been derived from the French v. faire; whenever it can be interpreted by the word ado. This hote *fare*. For which the wardein chidde and made *fare*. What

amounteth all this, *fare*. Betwixt us two nedeth no strange *fare*. And leve this nice *fare*. In other instances it follows the sense of the Saxon v. fare, as in the compound words welfare, thoroughfare, &c.

Farme, n. Sax. Food, a meal. See Spelman, in v. *Firma*.

Farse, v. Fr. Farcir. To stuff.

Fathe, n. See *Lathe*.

Faute, n. Fr. Want.

Fawe, adj. Sax. Glad, as *Fain*.

Fay, n. Fr. Faith.

Fayre, adj. Sax. Fair.

——— adv. Fairly, gracefully.

Feblesse, n. Fr. Weakness.

Fecche, v. Sax. To fetch.

Fee, n. Sax. Money, sometimes it seems to signifie inheritable possessions in contradistinction to money, or moveables.

Feffe, v. Fr. To infeoff, to present.

Feine, v. Fr. To feign.

Fel, adj. Sax. Cruel, destructive.

Felaw, n. Sax. Fellow, companion.

Felawship, n. Sax. Company.

Felawshipe, v. To accompany.

Felde, n. Sax. A field.

Felden, pa. t. pl. of *Felle*, v. Sax. Felled made to fall.

Fele, adj. Sax. Many.

Fele, v. Sax. To feel, to have sense, to perceive.

Fell, n. Sax. Skin.

Felonie, n. Fr. All sorts of criminal violence.

Feloun, adj. Fr. Cruel.

Femmie, pr. n. The country of Amazons.

Femininitee, n. Fr. Womanhood.

Fend, n. Sax. An enemy, the devil.

Fendliche, adj. Devilish.

Fenne, n. The name of the Sections of Avicenne's great work, entitled Canun. See *Canon*.

Feoffed, part. pr. Fr. Infeoffed.

Fer, adv. Sax. Far.

Ferre. Further.

Ferrest, superl. Furthest.

Ferd, *Fered*, part pa. of *Fere*. Terrified.

Ferd, *Ferde*, pa. t. of *Fare*.

Ferden, pa. t. pl.

Fere, n. Sax. A companion, a wife. In fere: Together, in company.

Fere, for *Fire*.

——— n. Sax. Fear.

——— v. Sax. To terrifie.

Ferforth, *Ferforthly*, adv. Sax. Fär forth.

Ferly, adj. Sax. Strange.

Fermacie, for *Pharmacie*, n. Fr. A medicine.

Ferme, n. Fr. A farm.

Fermerere, n. Lat. Infirmarius. The officer, in a religious house, who had the care of the infirmary. Du Cange, in v.

Ferne, adv. Sax. Before.

Fers, adj. Fr. Fierce.

Fers, n. The piece at chess next to the king, which we and other European nations call the queen; though very improperly, as Hyde has observed. Phez, or Pherzan, which is the Persian name for the same piece, signifies the king's chief counsellor, or general. Hist. Shahilud. p. 88, 9.

Ferthing, n. Sax. A farthing; any very small thing. No ferthin,—of grese: Not the smallest spot of grease.

Fest, n. Sax. Fist.

Feste, n. Fr. Feast.

Festeying, part. pr. Fr. Feasting.

Festlich, adj. Used to feasts.

Fecche, n. Sax. A vetch.

Fete, n. Fr. Work.

Fetise, adj. Well made, neat.

Fetisely, adv. Neatly, properly.

Fette, *Fet*, part. pa. of *Fecche*.

Fey, n. Fr. Faith.

Feyre, n. Fr. A fair, or market.

Fiaunce, n. Fr. Trust.

Fidel, n. Sax. A fiddle.

Fill for *Fell*, pa. t. of *Fall*.

Finch, n. Sax. A small bird. To pull a finch was a proverbial expression, signifying, to strip a man, by fraud, of his money. &c.

> If I may gripe a riche man,
> I shall so pulle him, if I can,
> That he shall in a fewe stoundes
> Lese all his markes and his poundes.—
> Our maidens shall eke plucke him so,
> That him shall neden fethers mo.—

Find, v. Sax. To find, to supply.

Fint for *Findeth*.

Fine, *Fin*, n. Fr. End.

Fine, v. Fr. To cease.

Fine, adj. Fr. Of fine force: Of very necessity.

Fit, n. Sax. A division, or short portion of a poem.

Fittingest, adj. sup. Sax. Most fitting.

Fixe, adj. Fr. Fixed.

Flaie for *Fley*, pa. t. of *Flee*. Flew.

Flaine, part. pa. of *Flaie*, v. Sax. Flaied, or flead.

Flambe, n. Fr. Flame.

Flatour, n. Fr. A flatterer.

Flawe, adj. Yellow, from the Lat. flavus.

Flecked, adj. Spotted.

Fleckering part. p. See *Flicker*.

Flee, v. neut. Sax. To fly.

Fleen, n. pl. Sax. Fleas.

Fleme, v. Sax. To banish.

Flemed, part. pa.

Flemer, n. Banisher.

Flete, v. Sax. To float, to swim.

Flete for *Fleteth*.

Fleting, part. pr.

Flicker, v. neut. Sax. To flutter.

Flit, v. neut. Sax. To fly. Elle fuit. Orig.

Flit, v. act. To remove.

Flitted, part. pa. Removed, shifted.

Flitering, part. pr. Floating. Fluitantis. Orig.

Flo, n. Sax. An arrow. *Flone*, pl.

Flockmel, adv. Sax. In a flock.

Florein, pr. n. A species of gold coin.

Flotery, adj. Sax. Floating.

Flotte, v. as *Flete*.

Flotte, v. Fr. To float.

Floureles, adj. Without flower.

Flourette, n. Fr. A small flower.

Flouting, Playing on the flute.

Foine, v. Fr. To make a pass in fencing; to push.

Foison, n. Fr. Abundance.

Foled, part. pa. Sax. Foaled.

Folehardiness, n. Fr. Rashness.

Fole-large; adj. Foolishly liberal.

Folie, n. Fr. Folly.

Folily, adv. Foolishly.

Folwe, v. Sax. To follow.

Foly, adj. Foolish.

Fond, adj. Sax. Foolish.
Fond, pa. t. of *Find*.
Fonde, v. Sax. To try.
Fong, v. Sax. To take.
Fonne, n. Sax. A fool.
Fonne, v. To be foolish.
Font-stone, n. Sax. A font for baptizing.
For, prep. Sax. Pro. Lat. Pour. Fr. It is frequently prefixed to verbs in the infinitive mode, in the French manner. For to tellen. For to don. Pour dire. Pour faire. For to han ben. Pour avoir été.—It sometimes signifies—Against. For percing of his hert: Against, or to prevent, pieroing. For steling of the rose: Against stealing. Some shall sow the sacke for sheding of the wheate: i. e. to prevent shedding.
For, conj. Sax. Quia. Lat. Pour ce que. Fr. Because that. For him lust to ride so. For she wolde virtue plese. For I teche.
For, in composition has various powers. It is most commonly intensive of the signification of the word with which it is joined; as in fordronken, fordry, forfered, &c. sometimes privative, as in forboden, foryete; and sometimes only communicative of an ill sense, as in forfaite, forfare, forjuged, &c.
For, Fr. and *Ver*, Belg. have similar powers in composition.
Forbere, v. Sax. To abstain.
Forboden, part. pa. of *Forbede*, v. Sax. Forbidden.
Forbrake, pa. t. Broke off. Abrupi. Orig.
Forbrused, part. pa. Fr. Sorely bruised.
Force, n. Fr. No force: No matter. I do no force: I care not. I do no force of your divinitee: I care not for your divinity. No force of deth: No matter for death. They yeve no force: They care not. "De fruit avoir ne fait force." Orig.
Forcutte, v. Sax. To cut through.
Fordo, v. Sax. To do away, to ruin.
Fordon, *Fordo*, part. pa. Undone.
Fordrive, *(Fordriven)*, part. pa. Sax. Driven away.
Fordronken, part. pa. Sax. Very drunken.
Fordry, adj. Sax. Very dry.
Fordwined, part. pa. Sax. Wasted away.
Fore (Foren), part. pa. of *Fare*, v. Sax. Gone.
Fore, prep. Sax. is seldom used by itself. In composition it has the power of before.
Forein, n. A jakes. Gloss. Ur. from Sk. The context seems rather to require that it should signifie an outward court, or garden.
Foreweting, n. Sax. Foreknowledge.
Forewote, *Forewete*, v. Sax. To foreknow.
Forfaite, v. Fr. To misdo.
Forefare, v. Sax. To fare ill.
Forfered, part. pa. Sax. Much afraid.
Forgifte, n. Sax. Forgiveness.
Forgon, inf. v. Sax. To omit, to lose.
Forgrowen, part. pa. Sax. Overgrown.
Forjuged, part. pa. Fr. Wrongfully judged.
Forkerve, v. Sax. To carve, or cut through.
Forlaft, part. pa. Sax. Left off entirely.
Forlese, v. Sax. To lose entirely.
Forlete, v. Sax. To give over, to quit.
Forlore, *(Forlaren)*, part. pa. Sax. Utterly lost.
Forloyne, n. Fr. Forlonge. A term of the chase, which signifies that the game is far off.
Forme, adj. Sax. First. Adam oure *forme* father.
Formest, adj. sup. Sax. First.
Formell, is sometimes put for the female of any fowl; more frequently for a female eagle.
Forpined, part pa. Sax. Wasted away, tormented.
Forsake, v. Sax. To denie.
Forshapen, part. pa. Sax. Transformed.
Forshronke, *(Forshronken)*, part. pa. Sax. Shrunk up.
Forsleuthe, *Forslouthe*, *Forslugge*, v. Sax. To lose through sloth.
Forsongen, part. pa. Sax. Tired with singing.
Forster, n. Fr. A forester.
Forstraught, part. pa. Sax. Distracted.
Forthby, adv. Sax. Forward by.
Forther, v. Sax. To further, to advance.
Forthinke, v. Sax. To grieve, to vex.
Forthought, pa. t. of *Forthinke*,
Forthren, inf. m. of *Forther*.
Forthy, conj. Sax. Therefore.
Fortroden, part. pa. of *Fortread*, v. Sax. Troden down.
Fortuit, adj. Fr. Accidental.
Fortune, v. Fr. To make fortunate, to give good or bad fortune.
Fortunous, adj. Proceeding from fortune.
Forwaked, part. pa. Sax. Having waked long.
Forwandred, part. pa. Sax. Having wandred long.
Forwelked, part. pa. Sax. Much wrinkled.
Forwept, part. pa. Sax. Having much wept.
Forwered, part. pa. Sax. Worn out.
Forwerie, adj. Sax. Very weary.
Forword (Foreward), n. Sax. A promise, or covenant.
Forwounded, part. pa. Sax. Much wounded.
Forwrapped, part. pa. Wrapped up.
Foryelde, v. Sax. To repay.
Foryete, v. Sax. To forget.
Foryetten, part. pa.
Foster, n. Fr. as *Forster*.
Fostred, part. pa. of *Foster*, v. Sax. Nourished.
Fostring, n. Nutriment.
Fote-hote. Immediately.
Fote-mantel, means, I suppose, a sort of riding-petticoat, such as is now used by market-women.
Fother, n. Sax. A carriage-load, an indefinite large quantity.
Foudre, n. Fr. Lightning.
Foule, n. Sax. A bird.
Found, pa. t. of *Find*. Supplied.
Founde, v. as *Fonde*.
Foundred, pa. t. of *Founder*, v. Fr. Fell down.
Fowertie, num. Sax. Forty.
Foxerie, n. Foxish manners.
Fra for *Fro*, prep. Sax. From. It is sometimes used adverbially. Til and fra: To and fro.
Fraine, v. Sax. To ask.
Fraknes, n. pl. Sax. Spots, freckles.
Franchise, n. Fr. Frankness, generosity.
Frank, n. A denomination of French money; answering at present to the livre tournois.
Frankelein, n. Fr. Fortescue, de L. L. Ang. c. 29. describes a franklain to be a Pater familias—magnis ditatus possessionibus. He is classed with, but after the Miles and Armiger; and is distinguished from the Libere tenentes and Valecti: though, as it should seem, the only real distinction between him and other freeholders consisted in the largeness of his estate.
Fraught, v. Sax. To freight, load a ship.

Fre, adj. Sax. Willing, unconstrained, at liberty, liberal, bountiful.
Fredom, n. Sax. as *Franchise*,
Freeltee n. Fr. Frailty.
Fregius, for *Phrygius*.
Fremde, *Fremed*, adj. Sax. Strange.
Frenetike, adj. Fr. Frantick.
Frenseie, n. Fr. A frenzy.
Frere, n. Fr. A frier.
Freshe, v. Fr. To refresh.
Fret, n. Fr. A band.
Fret, *Freele*, part. pa. Fr. Fraught, filled, or perhaps, wrought in a kind of fret-work. A sort of blazon is called fretté.
Frete, v. Sax. To eat, devour.
Freting, part. pr.
Frette (*Frated*), part. pa.
Freyne, v. Sax. as *Fraine*.
Frise, pr. n. Friezland.
Fro ye. From you. Ye is put for you, that fro ye may rime, in appearance at least, with joye and Troye.
Frote, v. Fr. To rub.
Frounceles, adj. Fr. Without wrinkle.
Froward, adj. Sax. Averse.
Fructuous adj. Fr. Fruitful.
Fruitestere, n. Sax. A female seller of fruit.
Ful-drive, part. pa. Fully driven, completed.
Fulke (f. *Folk-*), n. Sax. People.
Fulsomnesse, n. Sax. Satiety.
Fumetere, pr. n. of a plant; Fumitory. Fumaria—purgat bilem et humores adustos. Ray's Synopsis.
Fumositee, n. Fr. Fumes arising from excessive drinking.
Fundament, n. Fr. Foundation.
Furial, adj. Fr. Raging.
Fusible, adj. Fr. Capable of being melted.
Fy, interj. Fr. I say fy: I erie shame.

G.

Gabbe, v. Fr. To talk idly, to lye. Gabbe I of this? Num id mentior?
Gacides, is probably a misprint for *Æacides*; though I do not know that Chiron had any right to that title.
Gadling, n. Sax. An idle vagabond.
Gadred, part. pa. Sax. Gathered.
Gailer, n. Fr. Gaoler.
Gaillar, adj. Fr. Brisk, gay.
Guitre-beries. Berries of the dog-wood tree; Cornus fœmina.
Galaxie, pr. n. The milky way; a tract in the heaven so called.
Gale, v. Sax. Crie, or exclaime, used metaphorically.
Galfride, pr. n. Geoffrey of Monmouth, or Geoffrey Vinsauf.
Galice, pr. n. A province of Spain. The famous shrine of St. James at Compostella was in Galicia.
Galingale, pr. n. Sweet cyperus.
Gallien, *Galian*, pr. n. Galen.
Galoche, n. Fr. A shoe.
Galpe, v. Sax. To gape, to yawn.
Galping, part. pr. Gaping, yawning.
Galwes, n. pl. Sax. The gallows.
Gan, pa. t. of *Ginne*, v. Sax. Began. *Gannen*, pl.
Gar, v. Sax. To make.
Gardebrace, n. Fr. Armour for the arm.
Gargate, n. Fr. The throat.
Garisoun, seems to be used as a v. To heal. The Orig. has *Garison*, a n. Healing, recovery.
Garnement, n. Fr. A garment.
Garner, n. Fr. A granary, or store-room.
Garnison, n. Fr. A guard, or garrison.
Gastness, n. Sax. Gastliness.
Gate, *Gatte*, pa. t. of *Get*, v. Sax. Gate, begate.
Gate, n. Sax. A way. Went her gate: Went her way.
Gatisden, pr. n. John Gatesden, author of a medical work, entitled Rosa Anglicana, in the xrith century. See Tanner, in v.
Gat-tothed. See the note.
Gaude, n. Fr. Jest.
Gaudes, pl. Ridiculous tricks.
Gaufride, pr. n. same as *Galfride*.
Gaure, v. To stare.
Gawin, pr. n. nephew to king Arthur, by his sister, married to king Lot. So says the British History, which goes under the name of Geoffrey of Monmouth; and I believe it will be in vain to look for any more authentic genealogist of all that family. He is there called Walganus. The French romancers, who have built upon Geoffrey's foundations, agree in describing Gawin as a model of knightly courtesy.
Gayler, n. Fr. as *Gailer*.
Geant, n. Fr. Giant. The crane the geant.
Gear, n. See *Gere*.
Gende, for *Gent*.
Genelon, pr. n. one of Charlemaigne's officers, who, by his trechery, was the cause of the defeat at Roncevaue, the death of Roland, &c. for which he was torn to pieces by horses. This at least is the account of the author who calls *himself* Archbishop Turpin, and of the romancers who followed *him*; upon *whose* credit the name of Genelon, or Ganelon, was for several *centuries* a synonymous expression for the worst of traitors.
Gent, adj. Fr. Neat, pretty.
Genterie, n. Fr. Gentility.
Gentil, adj. Fr. in its original sense means well-born; of a noble family. Il y avoit un chevalier, capitaine de la ville;—point gentilhomme n'estoit:—et l'avoit fait, pour sa vaillance, le Roy Edouard Chevalier. Froissart, v. ii. c. 77. —It is commonly put for civil, liberal, gentlemanlike.
Gentillnesse, n. Fr. follows the significations of *Gentil*.
Geomancie, n. Fr. Divination by figures made on the earth.
Gere, n. Sax. All sorts of instruments, of cookery, of war, of apparel, of chemistry. In hir quainte geres: In their strange fashions.
Geri, *Gerful*. Changeable. Probably from the Fr. Girer. To turn round. Gierful.
Gerlond, n. Fr. A garland; the name of a dog.
Gesse, v. Sax. To guess.
Gest, n. Sax. A guest.
Geste, v. To relate gestes.
Gestes, n. pl. Lat. Actions, adventures.
Gestour, n. A relater of gestes.
Get, n. Fr. Geste. Fashion, behaviour. With that false get: With that cheating contrivance.
Gethe, for *Goeth*.
Gie, v. Sax. To guide.
Gigges, n. pl. Irregular sounds, produced by the wind, &c. Gigue, Fr. signified a musical instru-

ment, like a fiddle; and from thence a sort of light tune. Menage, in v. It is probably a word of Teutonic original. See Junius.

Gilbertin, pr. n. An English physician of the xiiith century. See Fabricus Bibl. Med. Æt. in v. Gilbertus de Aquila.

Gil-ur, n. Fr. A deceiver.

Gilt, part. pa. Sax. Gilded, of the colour of gold.

Gilt, n. Sax. Guilt.

Gilte-les, adj. Sax. Free from guilt.

Giltif, adj. Sax. Guilty.

Gin, n. Fr. Engine, contrivance.

Gingiber, n. Fr. Ginger.

Ginne, v. Sax. To begin.

Gipciere, n. Fr. A pouch or purse.

Gipe, n. Fr. An upper frock, or cassock.

Gipon, n. Fr. A short cassock.

Girde, v. Sax. To strike, to smite. This word is perhaps the original of *gride*, in Spenser.

Girdelstede, n. Sax. The waist, the place of the girdle.

Girles, n. pl. Sax. Young persons, either male or female.

Girt, part. pa. of *Girde*. Thurgh girt: Smitten through.

Gisarme, n. Fr. A battle-ax. See Du Cange, in v. Gisarma.

Gise, n. Fr. Guise, fashion. At his owen gise: In his own manner; as he would wish.

Gite, n. Fr. A gown.

Giterne, n. Fr. A guitar.

Giterning, n. Playing on a giterne.

Glade, v. Sax. To make glad.

Glader, n. One that maketh glad.

Gladsom, adj. Sax. Pleasant.

Glase for *Glose*, v.

Glase, v. Sax. To put glass into windows.

Glasinge, n. Glass-work.

Gle, n. Sax. Mirth, musick. *Glees*, pl. Musical instruments.

Glede, n. Sax. A burning coal.

Gledes, pl. Sparks of fire.

Gleire, n. Fr. The white of an egg.

Glent, pa. t. Glanced.

Gleve, n. Fr. *Glaive*. A lance.

Glimsing, n. Glimmering.

Gliteren, pr. t. pl. of *Gliter*, v. Sax.

Glode, pa. t. of *Glide*, v. Sax. She *glode* forth, as an adder doth.

Glombe, v. Sax. To look gloomy.

Gloze, n. Fr. A comment or interpretation.

Glose, v. To comment, or interpret, to speak tenderly, to flatter.

Gloton, n. Fr. A glutton.

Gloxeden, pa. t. pl. of *Glow*, v. Sax.

Gnarre, n. Sax. A hard knot in a tree.

Gnat, n. Sax. is put for any little, worthless thing.

Gniding, part. pr. Sax. Rubbing.

Gnoffe, n. "An old cuff, a miser." Gloss. Ur. I know not upon what authority.

Gnowe, pa. t. of *Gnawe*, v. Sax.

Go, v. Sax. means sometimes to walk, in contradistinction to riding.

Go (Gon), part. pa.

Gobbet, n. Fr. A morsel, a bit.

God, n. Sax. God toforne: God going before. Deo favente.—Goddes armes two. Goddes bones. Vulgar oaths—A Goddes kichel. See the note. A'Goddes half. See *Half*.

Gode, Good, n. Sax. Wealth, goods.

Gode-les, adj. Without money or goods.

Godelyh-de, n. Sax. Goodness.

Godeness, n. Sax. At godeness: At advantage. And so we should read where the editt. have At gode mes. The Orig. has en bon point.

Godsib, n. Sax. A gossip, a godfather.

Gofish, adj. Foolish, from the Fr. *Goffe*; dull, stupid.

Gold, n. A flower, commonly called a turnsol. Gower says, that Leucothea was changed

> Into a floure was named *golde*,
> Which stont governed of the sonne.
>
> Conf. Am. 121. b.

Gold-hewen, adj. Sax. Of a golden hewe, or colour.

Goldsmithrie, n. Sax. Goldsmith's work.

Golet, n. Fr. The throat, or gullet.

Goliardeis, Un Goliardois, Fr. This jovial sect seems to have been so called from Golias, the real or assumed name of a man of wit, toward the end of the xiith century, who wrote the Apocalypsis Goliæ, and other pieces in burlesque Latin rhimes, some of which have been falsely attributed to Walter Map. See Tanner's Bibl. Brit. in v. Golias, and Du Cange in v. Goliardus.

Gomme, n. Fr. Gum.

Gon, inf. m. Sax. To go. So mote I gon: So may I fare well. So mote I ride or go: So may I fare well, riding or walking, i. e. in all my proceedings. See *Go*.

Gon, pr. t. pl.

—— part, pa. Gone.

Gonfanon, n. Fr. A banner, or standard.

Gong, n. Sax. A little house, a jakes.

Gonne, n. A gun.

Gonnen, Gonne, pa. t. pl. of *Ginne*.

Gore, n. It has been suggested to me by a learned person, whom I have not the honour to know, that Gore is a common name for a slip of cloth or linen, which is inserted in order to widen a garment in any particular place. See the Glossary to Kennet's Paroch. Antiq. in v. Gore.

Gose for *Goes*. Goeth.

Gospellere, n. Sax. Evangelist.

Gossomer, n. A thin cobweb-like substance which flies about in the air.

Gost, n. Sax. Spirit, mind.

Goth, imp. m. 2 pers. pl. Go ye.

Governaille, n. Fr. Government, steerage.

Goune-cloth. Cloth enough to make a gown.

Gourd, n. A vessel to carry liquor; perhaps so call from its shape.

Gower, pr. n. An eminent English poet, to whom Chaucer directs his Troilus and Creside.

Grace, n. Fr. Favour. Sory grace; harde grace: Misfortune.

> So full of sorowe am I, sothe to sayne,
> That certainly no more *harde grace*
> May sit on me, for why? there is no space.

Gracious, adj. Fr. Agreeable, graceful.

Grame, n. Sax. Grief, anger.

Grammere, n. Fr. Grammar.

Grand mercie, Fr. Great thanks.

Grane, n. Fr. A grain, a single seed.

Grange, n. Fr. A farm-house.

Grapinel, n. Fr. A grappling-iron.

Gratche, "is perhaps the same with Graithe, if not mistaken for it." Gloss. Ur. See Greithe. The Orig. has—*s'aourne* comme beguyne.

Grave, v. Sax. To carve, to engrave.

Graw (Graven) part. pa. Buried.

Gre, n. Fr. Pleasure, satisfaction, from Gratus, Lat. To receive in gre: To take kindly. The gre: The prize.—From Gradus, Lat. it signifies a step, or degree.

Grede, n. Sax. A greedy person.

Grede, v. Barb. Lat. To cry.

Grein, n. Fr. Grein de Paris; de Paradis. Orig. Grains of paradise, a sort of spice. Grain of Portingale: A sort of scarlet-dye, called kermes or vermillion.

Greithe, v. Sax. To prepare, make ready.

Grenehed, n. Sax. Childishness.

Grese, n. Fr. Grease.

Grete for *Grede*, v.

Grette, pa. t. of *Grete*, v. Sax. Greeted, saluted.

Greves, n. pl. Sax. Groves.

Grille, adj. Horrible.

Grint for *Grindeth*.

Grinte, pa. t. of *Grind*, v. Sax. Ground. Grint with his teeth: Gnashed with h. t.

Grinting, n. Grinding, gnashing.

Gris, n. Fr. A species of furr, of the better sort.

Grisly, adj. Sax. Dreadful.

Groche, v. Sax. To grutch, to murmur.

Groff, adj. Sax. Flat on the ground.

Groine, n. Fr. The snowt of a swine, a hanging lip.

Groine, v. To hang the lip, in discontent.

Grone, v. Fr. To groan, to grunt.

Gront, pa. t. Groaned.

Grope, v. Sax. To search, to examine by feeling.

Grot, n. A coin, worth four-pence.

Grounden, part. pa. of *Grind*.

Groyning, n. Discontent. See *Groine*.

Guerdon, n. Fr. Reward, recompense.

Guerdon, v. To reward.

Guerdonles, adj. Without reward.

Guido, pr. n. *Guido de Columpnis*. Guido dalle Colonne, of Messina in Sicily, a lawyer and poet, died about 1290. Quadrio, Vol. ii. p. 160. His History of the Trojan War, to which our author refers, was written in Latin, and finished in 1287. I suspect that he translated it, for the most part, from a French romance of Benoit de Sainte More. However that may have been, Guido's work is certainly the original, from which the later writers of the middle ages have generally taken their accounts of Trojan affairs. It was translated into Italian in 1324 by Filippo Ceffi, a Florentine. Quadrio, Vol. vi. p. 475. A French translation is also extant, in which it is said to be "translatée en François premierement du commandement du Maire de la cité de Beauvais, en nom et en honneur de Karles le roy de France, l'an mil ccc. quatre vingtz. Ms. Reg. 16 F. ix." This is probably the French translation mentioned by Lydgate in the prologue to his Boke of Troye, which is a mere paraphrase in verse of Guido's history, with some digressions and additions of his own. Lydgate's work was finished, as he tells us himself at the end, in 1420.

H.

Habergeon, n. Fr. A diminutive of hauberg, a coat of mail.

Habilitee, n. Fr. Ability.

Habitacles, n. pl. Fr. Places of habitation.

Habite, v. Fr. To dwell.

Habundant, part. pr. Fr. Abundant.

Hackenaie, n. Fr. An ambling horse, or pad.

Hacking, n. Fr. Cutting in pieces.

Hadden, pa. t. pl. of *Have*.

Haf, pa. t. of *Heve*, v. Sax. Heaved, raised.

Haie, *Hay*, n. Fr. A hedge.

Haile, n. Sax. Health, welfare.

Hailes, pr. n. of an Abbey in Gloucester-shire.

Haire, n. Fr. A hair-cloth.

Hakeney, n. Fr. as *Hackenaie*.

Haketon, n. Fr. A short cassock, without sleeves.

Halden for *Holden*, part. pa. of *Hold*.

Halfe, n. Sax. A side, a part. A' Goddes half: On God's part, with God's favour. A' this halfe God: On this side of God. Four halves: Four sides.

Hali, pr. n. An Arabian physician. Fabric. Bibl. Gr. t. xiii. p. 77.

Halke, n. Sax. A corner.

Halpe, pa. t. of *Help*, v. Sax.

Hals, n. Sax. The neck.

Halse, v. Sax. To embrace round the neck, to salute.

Halt, pa. t. of *Hold*, v. Sax. Held, or kept.

Halt for *Holt*, i. e. holdeth.

Halte, v. Fr. To go lamely.

Hame for *Home*, n. Sax.

Hamele, v. Sax. To hamstring, to cut off.

Hamers, n. pl. Sax. Hammers.

Han, inf. m. of *Have*, v. Sax.

Hanselines, appears from the context to mean a sort of breeches.

Happe, n. Sax. Chance.

Happe, v. To happen.

Hard, adj. Sax. Hard. Harde grace: Misfortune. See *Grace*. It is used adverbially.

Harde, v. Sax. To make hard.

Hardely (Hardily), adv. Fr. Boldly; adv. Sax. Certainly.

Harding, n. Sax. Hardening.

Harie, v. Fr. To hurry. To harie and drawe.

Haried, part. pa. Hurried. Ils seroient hariez en grand manere. Froissart, v. i. c. 225.

Harlot, n. The name of Harlot was anciently given to men as well as women.

Harlotries, n. pl. Ribaldries.

Harneis, n. Fr. Armour, furniture.

Harneise, v. Fr. To dress.

Harow, interj. Fr. Away! fie!

Harpour, n. Fr. A harper. In the Act of Resumption, 28 Hen. vi. there is a proviso in favour of John Turges, harpour with the queen, for the reversion of an annuity of 10 marks, after the death of William Langton, minstrell.

Harwed, p. t. of *Harwe*, v. Sax. Harried, harassed, subdued.

Hasardour, n. Fr. A player at hazard, a gamester.

Hasardrie, n. Fr. Gaming in general.

Haselwode. An allusion to some proverbial saying, which appears to have been used in scorn or derision of any improbable hope or expectation. Why it was so used, is beyond my reach to discover.

Hastif, adj. Fr. Hasty.

Hastifly, adv. Hastily.

Hate, v. Sax. To be named.

Hauberk, n. Fr. A coat of mail.
Haven, inf. m. of *Have*, v. Sax. It is more commonly abbreviated into *Han*.
Haunce, v. Fr. To raise, to enhance.
Haunt, n. Fr. Custom, practice.
Haunte, v. Fr. To practise.
Hauntеden, pa. t. pl. Practised, frequented.
Hautein, adj. Fr. Haughty, loud. A hautein faucon: A high-flying hawk; faulcon haultain, Fr.
Havoir for *Avoir*, n. Fr. Wealth.
Hawe, n. Sax. A hawthorn-berry, a farm-yard, a church-yard.
Hawebake, according to Urry, for *Hauberk*.
He, pron. Sax. is often prefixed in all its cases to proper names emphatically, according to the Saxon usage. He Moises. He Tityus. *He* is also frequently used for *it* in all cases.
Hed, n. Sax. Head. On his hed: On pain of losing his head.
Hedde for *Hidde* (Hidden.)
Hegges, n. pl. Sax. Hedges.
Heisugge. Curruca, a little bird, which is supposed to hatch the cuckow's egg, and to be destroyed by the young cuckows, Sp.
Hele, v. Sax. Helan. To hide.
Hele, v. Sax. Hælan. To heal, to help.
Hele, n. Sax. Health.
Heleles, adj. Helpless.
Helisse, pr. n. Elysium.
Helmed, part. pa. Fr. Armed with an helmet.
Helowis, pr. n. Eloisa, the mistress of Abelard.
Hem, obl. c. pl. of *he*. Them. See *Him*.
Hemself, *Hemselve*, *Hemselven*. See *Self*.
Henchmen, n. pl. Pages.
Hende, *Hendy*, adj. Sax. Civil, courteous.
Henen, *Henne*, *Hennes*, *Hens*, adv. Sax. Hence.
Heng, pa. t. and part. of *Hang*, v. Sax.
Hennesforth, adv. Sax. Henceforth.
Henle, v. Sax. To take hold of, to catch.
Hent, pa. t. and part.
Hepe, n. Sax. A heap. To hepe: Together in a heap, the fruit of the dog-rose.
Heraud, n. Fr. A herald.
Herbergage, n. Fr. Lodging.
Herbergeours, n. pl. Fr. Providers of lodgings, harbingers.
Herberwe, n. Sax. An inn, a lodging, the place of the Sun. Herber: An arbour.
Herberwe, v. Sax. To lodge.
Herd, *Hierde*, n. Sax. A keeper. Herdegromes: Shepherd-boys.
Herdes, n. pl. Coarse flax. Herde, fibra lini. Kilian.

That not of hempe ne *heerdis* was.

So this verse is written in Ms. Hunter. The Orig. has only —elle ne fut de bourras.
Here for *Hire*, pron. and in other places, for the sake of the rime.
Here, adv. Sax. In this place.
Here, in composition, signifies this, without including any idea of place. Hereagaines: Against this. Herebefore: Before this.
Here, v. Sax. To hear.
Herd, *Herde*, pa. t. and part.
Herden, pa. t. pl.
Here, n. Sax. Hair.
Heren, adj. Made of hair.
Herking, part. pr. of *Herke*, v. Sax. Hearkening.
Hermes, pr. n. A chemical treatise under his name is extant in the Theat. Chemic. t. iv. See Fabric. Bibl. Gr. L. i. c. 10. *Hermes Ballenus*. Whether a different person from him just mentioned, I cannot tell.
Herne, n. Sax. A corner.
Heronere, n. Fr. A hawk made to flie only at the heron.
Heronsewes, n. pl. Fr. Young herons.
Herte for *Hurt*, v. Sax.
Herte, n. Sax. Heart. Herte-blood: Heart's blood. Herte-spone: This part of the body is not mentioned in any dictionary. From a passage in Johnson's Sad Shepherd, Mr. Tyrwhit suspects it may mean the concave part of the breast, where the lower ribs unite with the cartilago ensiformis. The glossary supposes *spone* to be a participle, signifying thrust, driven, pushed.
Herteles, adj. Without courage.
Hertly, adj. Hearty.
Hery, v. Sax. To praise.
Herying, n. Praise.
Heste, n. Sax. Command, promise.
Het, *Hette*, pa. t. of *Hete*, v. Sax. Heated.
Hete, v. Sax. To promise, to be called. See *Highte*.
Hethenesse, n. Sax. Country of Heathens.
Hething, n. Sax. Contempt. All is thy *hething* fallen upon thee.
Heve, v. Sax. To heave, to raise. v. neut. To labour.
Heved, n. Sax. Head. Every virtue in my heved. So I apprehend this line should be read, instead of *in* me *heved*.
Heven-quene, n. Sax. The queen of heaven, the Virgin Mary.
Hew of Lincoln, pr. n.
Hewe, v. Sax. To cut.
——, v. neut. He that *heweth* to hie, with chippes he may lese his sight. So Gower's Conf. Am. 18. b.

Full ofte he heweth up so hye,
That chyppes fallen in his eye.

Hewe, n. Sax. Colour, appearance.
Hewed, part. pa. Coloured.
Hext, adj. superl. Sax. Highest. Hegh, heghest, heghst, hext: in the same manner *next* is formed from *negh*.
Hidous, adj. Fr. Dreadful.
Hidously, adv. Terribly.
Hie, v. Sax. To hasten.
Hie, n. Haste, diligence. In, or On hie: In haste.
Hie, *Highe*, adj. Sax. High. In high and low.
Hierdesse, n. Sax. A shepherdess. See *Herde*.
Highen, is perhaps miswritten for Highe.
Hight, n. Sax. Highth. On hight, seems to signify aloud, in a high voice. En haut. Fr.
Highte, v. Sax. Called.
Him, obl. c. of *He*, is often used alone in that reciprocal sense, which is generally expressed by the addition of the adj. self. Than hath he don his frend, ne him, no shame, i. e. nor himself. As he him laid. And clad him. And bare him.
It is also frequently put without the usual preposition. Him to grete shame: To great shame of him. She falleth him to fete: She falleth at the feet of him. She swore him: She swore to him. Hem and Hire are used in the same manner.
Himself, *Himselve*, *Himselven*. See *Self*.

Hinderest, superl. d. of *Hind*, adv. Sax. Hindmost.
Hine, n. Sax. A servant in husbandry, a hind.
Hine, n. should probably be Hiene. The gall of an hyena was used to cure a certain disorder of the eye. Plin. N. H. l. 29. c. 38.
Hippocras, pr. n. Hippocrates.
Hir. pron. poss. Sax. Their.
Hire, obl. c. of She. pron. Sax. is often put for Herself, and without the usual preposition. See *Him*.
Hire, pron. poss. Sax. Her.
Hireself, Hirselve, Hireselven. See *Self*.
Hirs, pron. poss. Sax. Theirs.
Historial. adj. Fr. Historical.
Ho, interj. Fr. commanding a cessation of any action.
Hochepot, n. Fr. A mixture of various things shaken together in the same pot. Hutspot. Belg.
Hoker, n. Sax. Frowardness.
Hokerly, adv. Frowardly.
Hold, n. Sax. A fort or castle.
Hold, v. Sax. To keep. To hold in honde: To keep in suspence; to amuse in order to deceive.
Hold, Holden, part. pa. Obliged.
Hole, Hol, adj. Sax. Entire, whole, sound.
Holly, adv. Entirely, wholly.
Holour, n. Sax. A whoremonger.
Holt, n. Sax. A grove, or forest.
Holt for *Holdeth*.
Homly, adj. Sax. Domestic, plain, simple.
Homlinesse, n. Sax. Domestic management, familiarity.
Honde, n. Sax. A hand. An honde-brede: An hand's breadth. Withouten honde: Without being pulled by any hand.—*Honden*, pl.
Honest, adj. Fr. means generally, according to the French usage, Creditable, honourable; becoming a person of rank.
Honestetee, Honestee, n. Fr. Virtue, decency, good manners.
Hong, v. Sax. To hang.
Hont, n. Sax. as *Hunt*.
Hony-swete, adj. Sax. Sweet as honey.
Hope, v. Sax. To expect.
Hoppesterres, n. pl. Sax. Female dancers.
Hord, n. Sax. Treasure; a private place, fit for the keeping of treasure.
Hore, Hoor, adj. Sax. Hoary, grey.
Horowe, adj. Sax. Foul.
Horribleth, n. Fr. Horribleness.
Hors, n. pl. Sax. Horses.
Horse, adj. Sax. Hoarse.
Horsly, adj. is applied to a horse, as manly is to a man.
Hospitalers, n. pl. Lat. Religious persons, of both sexes, who attended the sick in hospitals. Knights hospitalers, of different orders. See Du Cange, in v. Hospitalarius.
Host, n. Fr. An army.
Hostelere, n. Fr. An inn-keeper.
Hostelrie, n. Fr. An inn, or lodging-house.
Hostilements, n. pl. Household furniture.
Hote, adj. Sax. Hot.
Hote, Hoten, part. pa. of *Hete*. Called.
Hove, v. Sax. To hover.
Hound-fish, n. Sax. The dog-fish.
Houne, n. for *Hound*. Thus said both here and houne, i. e. hare and hound; all sorts of people
Houped, pa. t. Fr. Hooped, or hollowed.
Housel, n. Sax. The eucharist.
Housel, v. To administer the sacrament. To ben houseled: To receive the sacrament.
Howve, n. Sax. A cap, or hood.
Hulfere, n. Sax. Holly.
Hulstred, part. pa. Sax. Hidden.
Humblehede, n. Sax. Humble state.
Humblesse, n. Fr. Humility.
Humbling, n. A humming. Hommelen; Bombilari, bombum edere; Kilian. Hence our Humble-bee.
Hunt, n. Sax. A huntsman.
Hurtle, v. Fr. To push.
Husbandrie, n. Sax. Thrift, œconomical management.
Husbond-man, n. Sax. The master of the family.
Hust, adj. Sax. Silent, whist.
Hylde, v. Sax. To pour.
Hylled, part. pa. Sax. Hidden. See *Hele*.

I.

I, at the beginning of a word, in the common editt. and even the MSS. of Chaucer, is often used to express a corruption of the Saxon prepositive particle Ge; which, in this edit. of the Canterbury Tales, is always expressed by *y*. All such words therefore, occurring in the works of Chaucer not contained in this edition, should be looked for either under *y*, or under their second letters.
Jack of Dover. The particular meaning is unknown.
Jack fool. I know not how it has happened, that in the principal modern languages, John, or its equivalent, is a name of contempt, or at least of slight. So the Italians use *Gianni*, from whence *Zani*; the Spaniards *Juan*, as *Bobo Juan*, a foolish John; the French *Jean*, with various additions; and in English, when we call a man *John*, we do not mean it as a title of honour. Jacke fool is here used, as the Spaniards do Bobo Juan, and I suppose Jack-ass has the same etymology.
Jacobin, pr. n. A grey frier.
Jakke Straw, pr. n. The noise made by the followers of this rebel, to which our author alludes, he had probably heard himself. It is called by Walsingham, p. 251. clamor horrendissimus, non similis clamoribus quos edere solent homines, sed qui ultra omnem æstimationem superaret omnes clamores humanos, et maxime posset assimulari ululatibus infernalium incolarum. Many Flemings (Flandrenses) were beheaded by the rebels cum clamore consueto. Walsingham, ibid.
Jambeux, n. pl. Fr. Boots, armour for the legs.
Jane, n. A coin of (Janua) Genoa. It is put for any small coin.
Jangle, v. Fr. To prate, to talk much or fast.
Jangle, n. Prate, babble.
Jangler, Janglour, n. A prater.
Jangleresse, n. A female prater.
Jape, n. Sax. A trick, a jest.
Jape, v. To jest, to cheat, to laugh at.
Jape-worthy, adj. Ridiculous.
Japer, n. A common jester or buffoon.
Japerie, n. Buffoonerie.
Ich, Iche, pron. Sax. I. So the ich. So the iche: So may I prosper.
Idel, adj. Sax. Idle, fruitless. In idel: In vain:
Idolastre, n. Fr. An idolater.
Jeopard, v. To hazard, to put in danger.
Jeopardie, n. Danger. *Jeoperdise*.

Jeremie, pr. n. Jeremiah.
Jerome, pr. n. Our author has made much use of a treatise of St. Jerome, contra Jovinianum.
Jestes, n. pl. as *Gestes*.
Jewerie, n. Fr. A district, inhabited by Jews.
Jewise, n. Judgement, punishment. It may have been formed by corruption either of the Lat. *Judicium*, or the Fr. *Justice*.
Ik, pron. Sax. I. See *Ich*.
Ilion, pr. n. The citadel of Troy.
Ilke, adj. Sax. Same.
Imaginatif, adj. Fr. Suspicious.
Imped, part. pa. Sax. Planted.
Impetren, pr. t. pl. Fr. Obtain by prayer.
Impes, n. pl. Sax. Shoots of trees.
Importable, adj. Fr. Intolerable, impossible.
Importune, adj. Fr. Troublesome.
Impossible, adj. Fr. used as a substantive.
In, prep. Sax. Upon. In with: Within.
Incombrous, adj. Fr. Cumbersome.
Inconstance, n. Fr. Inconstancy.
Incubus. A faery who caused the night-mare. Chaucer insinuates that he exerted his powers for love as well as for hate.
Inde, adj. Fr. Azure-coloured.
Indigne, adj. Fr. Unworthy.
Inecked, part. pa. Sax. Inserted.
Inequal, adj. Fr. Unequal.
Infortunat, adj. Lat. Unfortunate.
Infortune, n. Fr. Misfortune.
Ingot, n. A mould for casting ingots.
Inhabit, part. pa. Fr. Inhabited.
Inhilde, v. Sax. To pour in. See *Hylde*.
Injure, n. Fr. Injury.
Inly, adv. Sax. Inwardly, deeply, thoroughly.
Inne, prep. Sax. In.
Inne, *In*, n. Sax. A house, habitation, lodging.
Inned, part. pa. Sax. Lodged.
Innereste, adj. sup. Sax. Inmost.
Innocent, adj. Fr. Ignorant.
Inseled, part. pa. Fr. Attested under seal.
Inset, part. pa. Sax. Implanted.
Interminable, adj. Fr. Infinite.
Inwitte, n. Sax. Understanding.
Joce, pr. n. or *Josse*. Sanctus Iudocus was a saint of Ponthieu.
Joconde, adj. Fr. Joyous, pleasant.
Jogelour, n. Fr. A juggler.
Joinant, part. pr. Fr. Joining.
Joine, v. Fr. To enjoin.
Jolie Robin. The name of a dance. R. De la danse le beau Robin. Orig.
Jolif, adj. Fr. Jolly, joyful.
Jombre, v. To jumble.
Jonglerie, n. should rather be *Janglerie*. Idle talk. See *Janglé*.
Jordanes, n. pl. or Jorden pots, tied round the neck of a pretended astrologer, as a punishment.
Josa, interj. seems to be partly formed from the Fr. *ça!* Come hither!
Jovis, pr. n. Jupiter.
Journee, n. Fr. A day's journey.
——, A day's work.
Joustes, n. pl. Fr. Justs.
Joweles, n. pl. Fr. Jewels.
Joye, v. Fr. To enjoy.
Ipocras, n. Fr. Wine mixed with spices and other ingredients; so named, because it is strained through a woollen cloth, called the sleeve of Hippocrates. See *Clarre*.
Ire, n. Fr. Anger.
Irous, adj. Passionate.
Isaude, pr. n. See *Belle Isaude*. She is called *Ysent* by Bernard da Ventador. MS. Crofts. fol. 67.

Tant trag pena d'amor,
Q'anc Tristan l'amador
Non sofret maior dolor
Per Ysent la blonda.

And so in Fabliaux, &c. T. i. p. 242. *Ysout la* blonde. Petrarch calls her Isotta. Trionfo d'Amore. iii. 82. A late French writer, in what he has been pleased to style, "Histoire literaire des Troubadours," (T. ii. p. 323.) having quoted a passage celebrating the love of "Tristan à Isault," adds very coolly—C'est une allusion à quelque Roman; which is just as if a commentator upon Ovid should say of the epistle from Paris to Helen, that it alludes to some Greek story.
It, pron. 3 pers. neut. gend. Sax. is used instead of *he* and *she*.
Itaille, pr. n. Italy.
Jubultare, pr. n. Gibraltar.
Jubbe, n. A vessel for holding ale, or wine.
Judicum. The book of Judges. So Metamorphoseos is put for the Metamorphosis of Ovid,' and Eneidos for the Æneis of Virgil.
Juge, n. Fr. A judge.
Jul, pr. n. The month of July.
Julian, pr. n. eminent for providing his votaries with good lodgings, and accommodations of all sorts.
Jupardie, n. as *Jeopardie*.
Jupartie, n. Fr. Jeopardie.
Justice, n. Fr. A judge.
Justinian, pr. n. The law referred to is in the Code, L. 11. tit. 25. De mendicantibus validis.
Juvenal, pr. n. The Roman satirist.

K.

Kalender, n. Lat. A calendar; a guide, or director.
Kalendes, n. pl. Lat. The first day of the month, the beginning of any thing.
Kaynard. Caynard or Caignard was a French term of reproach, which seems to have been originally derived from *Canis*.
Kele, v. Sax. To cool.
Kembed, *Kemped*, part. pa. Sax. Combed.
Kemelin, n. Sax. A tub.
Kenelm, pr. n. King of the Mercians, and martyr.
Kepe, n. Sax. Care, attention.
——, v. To take care.
Kerchef, n. a corruption of *Coverchief*.
Kernels, n. pl. Fr. Battlements.
Kers, n. Sax. Water-cresses. Of paramours ne raught he not a kers: He cared not a rush for love. Cresse is sometimes used, in the same sense.
Kerver, n. Sax. A carver.
Kesse, v. Sax. To kiss.
Keste, pa. t. Kissed.
Ketche, v. as *Cacche*.
Keveve, v. Fr. To cover, or recover.
Kichel, n. Sax. A little cake.
Kid, *Kidde*, pa. t. and part. of *Kithe*. Made known, discovered.
Kite, v. Sax. To kick.

Kin, n. Sax. Kindred. By my fader kin: By my father's kindred.
Kin, adj. Of the same nature.
Kind, n. Sax. Nature.
Kindly, adv. Naturally.
Kinrede, n. Kindred.
Kirtel, n. Sax. A tunic, or waisteoat.
Kithe, v. Sax. To shew, to make known. Ne kithe hire jalousie: Nor shew to her any jealousie.
Kithed, part. pa. See *Kid*.
Kitte, pa. t. Sax. Cut.
Knakkes, n. pl. Sax. Trifling tricks. The word seems to have been formed from the knacking, or snapping, of the fingers, used by jugglers. See Cotgrave, in v. Matassiner des mains, and niquet.
Knappe, n. A short sleep, a nap.
Knarry, adj. Sax. Full of gnarres, or knots.
Knave, n. Sax. A servant, properly a boy-servant. A knave-child: A male child. This boie knave: Ce garçon. Orig.
Knedde, part. pa. of *Knede*, v. Sax. Kneaded.
Kneen, *Knene*, n. pl. Sax. Knees.
Knet, part. pa. as *Knit*.
Knight, n. Sax. A servant, generally a servant in war, a soldier, a dubbed knight.
Knighthode, n. Valour.
Knit, part. pa. Sax. Joined, bound, agreed.
Knobbes, n. pl. Sax. Exerescencies, in the shade of buds, or buttons. See *Knoppe*.
Knoppe, n. Sax. A button, a rose-bud.
Knopped, part. pa. Buttoned, fastened.
Knotte, n. Sax. A knot. Sometimes it is used, in in the sense of Nœud, Fr. for the chief point, or head of a matter.
Knotteles, adj. Sax. Without a knot, without any thing to obstruct or retard the passage.
Knowe for *Knee*.
Knowleche, v. Sax. To acknowledge.
Knowleching, n. Knowledge.
Konning, n. as *Conning*. Cunning.
Kyke, v. Sax. To look stedfastly. Kijcken, Teut. Spectare. Kilian.

L.

Labbe, n. A blab, a great talker.
Labbing, part. pr. Blabbing.
Laced, part. pa. Fr. Tied, bound.
Lacert, n. Fr. "A fleshy muscle, so termed from its having a tail like a lizard. Cotg."
Lache, adj. Fr. Sluggish.
Lachesse, n. Fr. Slackness, negligence.
Lad, *Ladde*, pa. t. of *Lede*, v. Sax. Led, carried.
Laft, pa. t. and part. of *Leve*, v. Sax. Left.
Laie, n. as *Lay*.
Laied, part. pa. of *Lay*, v. Sax. With orfreys *laied*, i. e. trimmed. So this word is frequently used by Hollinshed. *Laid* with gold lace.—*Laid on* with red silke and gold lace.—*Laid about* with silver lace. See *Couched*.
Laine, inf. v. Sax. To lay.
Lainers, n. pl. Fr. Straps, or thongs.
Lake, n. It is difficult to say what sort of cloth is meant. Laecken, Belg. signifies both linen and woollen cloth. Kilian.
Lakke, n. Sax. A fault, a disgraceful action, want.
Lakke, v. To find fault, to blame.
Lamben, n. pl. Sax. Lambs.
Langure, v. Fr. To languish.
Lapidaire. A treatise on precious stones, so entitled; probably a French translation of the Latin poem of Marbodus de gemmis, which is frequently cited by the name of Lapidarius. Fabric. Bibl. Med. Æt. in v. Marbodus.
Lappe, n. Sax. A skirt, or lappet of a garment.
Large, adj. Fr. Spacious, free, prodigal. At large: At liberty. Till that it was prime large: Till prime was far spent.
Largely, adv. Fully.
Las, n. Fr. A lace, a snare.
Lasse, *Las*, adj. comp. Sax. Less.
Latche, n. as *Las*.
Latered, part. pa. Sax. Delayed.
Lathe, n. A barn. "It is still used in Lincolnshire. Sk."
Laton, n. Fr. A kind of mixed metal of the colour of brass.
Laude, n. Lat. Praise.
Laudes. The service performed in the fourth, or last, watch of the night. Dicuntur autem *Laudes*, quod illud officium laudem præcipue sonat divinam, &c. Du Cange in v. *Laus* 2. The same service was often called Matins. *Idem* in v. *Matutini*.
Laved, part. pa. Fr. Drawn, spoken of water taken out of a well.
Lavender, n. Fr. A washerwoman, or laundress. In the passage of Dante, which is here quoted, Envy is called,

> *La meretrice*, che mai dall' ospizio
> Di Cesare non torse gli occhi putti,
> Morte comune, e delle corte vizio.
>
> *Inf.* xiii. 64.

Laverock, n. Sax. A lark.
Launcegay, n. A sort of lance.
Launcelot du Lake. An eminent knight of the round-table, whose adventures were the subject of a romance begun by Chrestien de Troyes, one of the oldest of the romance-poets, and finished by Godefrois de Leigni. See Fauchet. L. ii. c. 10, 11. They have been repeatedly printed in French prose, and make a considerable part of the compilation called Mort d' Arthur. Signor Volpi, in his notes upon Dante, Inf. v. 128. has most unaccountably represented Lancilotto, as innamorato di Ginevra, moglie del Re *Marco*. If there be any faith in history, Ginevra was the wife of king Arthur. The story in Dante, which is the occasion of signor Volpi's note, is a curious one. It is alluded to by Petrarch, Trionfo d'Amore. iii. 82.

> Vedi Ginevra, Isotta, e l'altre amanti,
> E la coppia d'Arimino.—

Launde, n. Fr. A plain not ploughed.
Lavoures, n. pl. Fr. Lavers.
Laureat, adj. Lat. Crowned with laurel.
Laureole, n. Fr. Spurge-laurel.
Laurer, n. Fr. Laurel.
Laus, adj. Sax. Loose. Laus: Island. Solutus. This is the true original of that termination of adjectives, so frequent in our language, in *les* or *less*. Consuetud. de Beverley. MS. Harl. 560. Hujus sacrilegii emenda non erat determinata, sed dicebatur ab Anglis Botalaus, i. e. sine emendâ. So Chaucer uses Boteles, and other words of the same form; as Detteles, Drinkeles, Gilteles, &c.
Lawe, adj. for *Low*.

Laxatif, n. Fr. A purging medicine.
Lay, n. Sax. Law, religious profession.
Lay, n. Fr. A species of poem.
Lay, pa. t. of *Lie*, or *Ligge*. *Layen*, pl.
Lazar, n. Fr. A leper.
Leche, n. Sax. A physician. Lechecraft: The skill of a physician.
Leche, v. To heal.
Lecherous, adj. Provoking lecherie.
Lechour, n. Fr. A leacher.
Lectorne, n. Lat. A reading-desk.
Leden, n. Sax. Language, a corruption of Latin.
Ledge, v. as *Allege*.
Lees, n. Fr. A leash, by which dogs are held.
Lees, adj. Sax. False. Withouten lees: Without lying; truly.
Lefe, adj. Sax. Pleasing, agreeable. Al be him lothe or lefe: Though it be unpleasing to him, or pleasing.—For lefe ne lothe: For friend nor enemy. He turned not—for leve ne for lothe. —It sometimes signifies, Pleased. I n'am not lefe to gabbe: I am not pleased to prate; I take no pleasure in prating.
Lefull, adj. Lawful.
Legge, v. Sax. To lay.
——, v. Fr. To ease. As *Alege*.
Leie, v. Sax. To lay.
Leiser, n. Fr. Leisure, opportunity.
Leite, n. Sax. Light. Thonder-leite: Lightning.
Leke, n. Sax. A leek. It is put for any thing of very small value.
Lemes, n. pl. Sax. Flames.
Lemman, n. Sax. A lover, or gallant, a mistress.
Lendes, n. pl. Sax. The loins.
Lene, adj. Sax. Lean.
——, v. Sax. To lend, to grant.
Lenger, adv. comp. Sax. Longer.
Lente, pa. t. of *Lene*.
Lenton, n. Sax. The season of Lent.
L'envoy, Fr. was a sort of postscript, sent with poetical compositions, and serving either to recommend them to the attention of some particular person, or to enforce what we call the moral of them. The six last stanzas of the Clerkes Tale are in many Mss. entitled, L'envoy de Chaucer á les mariz de notre temps. See also the stanzas at the end of the complaint of the Black Knight, and of Chaucer's Dreme.
Leon, n. Lat. A lion.
Leonine, adj. Belonging to a lion.
Leopart, *Lepard*, n. Fr. A leopard.
Leos, n. Gr. People.
Lepande, part. pr. of *Lepe*, v. Sax. Leaping.
Lepe, *Lep*, for *Lepeth*, 3 pers. sing.
——— for *Leped*, pa. t.
Lepe, pr. n. A town in Spain.
Lere, *Lerne*, v. Sax. To learn, to teach.
Lered, pa. t. and part.
Lere, n. Sax. The skin.
Lese, n. Fr. as *Lees*. In lustie lese: In love's leash.
Lese, adj. Sax. as *Lees*.
Lese, v. Sax. To lose.
Leseth, 2 pers. pl. imp. m. Lose ye.
Lesing, n. Sax. A lie, a falsity. *Lesinges*, pl.
Lest, *List*, *Lust*, n. Sax. Pleasure.
Leste, *Liste*, *Luste*, v. To please. It is generally used, as an impersonal in the third person only, for It pleaseth, or It pleased. Him luste to ride so: It pleased him t. r. s. Wel to drinke us leste: It pleased us well t. d. If you lest: If it please you. Me list not play: It pleaseth me not to play.
Leste, adj. Sax. superl. d. Least. At the leste way: At the least.
Leste for *Last*.
Let, v. Sax. To leave, to omit, to leave, to permit. Let thy japes be. Let the sompnour be. To cause, to hinder.
Lete, pr. n. The river Lethe.
Letgame, n. Sax. A hinderer of pleasure.
Lette, n. Delay, hindrance.
Lettowe, pr. n. Lithuania.
Lettred, adj. Fr. Learned.
Lettrure, *Letterure*, n. Fr. Literature.
Lettuarie, n. Fr. An electuary.
Leve, v. for *Live*.
——, n. Sax. Desire, inclination.
——, adj. Dear. See *Lefe*.
——, v. Sax. To believe.
Leveth, imp. m. 2. pers. pl. Leveth me: Believe me.
Leveles, adj. Sax. Without leave.
Leven, n. Sax. Lightning.
Lever, comp. d. of *Lefe*. More agreeable. It were me lever. I hadde lever. Hire hadde lever.
Levesell. A leafy seat or arbour, but I am by no means satisfied with this explanation. The interpretation of it in the Prompt. Parv. will not help us much. "Levecel beforn a wyndowe or other place. Umbraculum." My conjecture with respect to the origin of the proverb, good wine needs no bush, is certainly wrong. That refers to a very old practice of hanging up a bush, or bough, where wine is to be sold. The Italians have the same proverb, Al buono vino non bisogna frasca.
Lewed, *Lewde*, adj. Sax. Ignorant, unlearned, lascivious.
Leye, v. Sax. as *Legge*. To lay, to lay a wager.
Leyes, pr. n. Layas, in Armenia.
Leyte, n. Sax. Flame. See *Leite*.
Liard, pr. n. belonging originally to a horse of a grey colour. A common appellative for a horse, from its grey colour, as *bayard* was from *bay*.
Licenciat, n. Lat. seems to signify, that he was licensed by the pope to hear confessions, &c. in all places, independently of the local ordinaries.
Liche-wake. The custom of watching with dead bodies.
Lide, pr. n. Lydia.
Lieges, n. pl. Fr. Subjects.
Lien, pr. t. pl. of *Lie*, or *Ligge*. Lain.
Lies, n. pl. Fr. Lees of wine, &c.
Lieth, is sometimes misprinted for *Leyeth*.
Lifly, adv. Sax. Like the life.
Ligeance, n. Fr. Allegiance.
Ligge, *Lie*, v. neut. Sax. To lye down.
Ligging, part. pr. Lying.
Light, v. Sax. To enlighten, to make light, or pleasant.
——, v. neut. To descend, to alight.
Ligne, n. Fr. Lineage, lineal descent. *Ligne*, should probably be lignee, to rime to compagnee.
Ligne, *aloes*. Lignum aloes, a very bitter drug.
Like, *Liken*, v. Sax. To compare.
Like, v. Sax. To please. If you liketh: If it pleaseth you. It liketh hem: It pleaseth them.
Likerous, adj. Sax. Gluttonous, lascivious.

Liking, part. pr. Pleasing.
Liking, n. Pleasure.
Limaile, n. Fr. Filings of any metal.
Lime, v. Sax. To smear, as with bird-lime.
Limed, part. pa. Caught as with bird-lime.
Limed, part. pa. Fr. Polished, as with a file.
Limer, n. Fr. Limier. A blood-hound.
Lime-rod. A twig with bird-lime.
Limitation, n. Lat. A certain precinct allowed to a limitour.
Limitour, n. A fryer licensed to beg within a certain district.
Limmes, n. pl. Sax. Limbs.
Linage, n. Fr. Family.
Linde, n. Sax. The lime-tree.
Lisse, n. Sax. Remission, abatement.
Lisse, v. neut. Sax. To grow easy.
Lissed, part. pa. of *Lisse*, v. Sax. Eased, relieved.
Liste, v. See *Leste*.
Listeneth, imp. m. 2 pers. pl. of *Listen*, v. Sax. Hearken ye.
Listes, n. pl. Fr. Lists, a place enclosed for combats, &c.
Litarge, n. Fr. White lead.
Lite, adj. Sax. Little.
Lith, n. Sax. A limb.
Lith for *Lieth*.
Lithe, adj. Sax. Soft, flexible.
Lithe, v. Sax. To soften.
Lither, adj. Sax. Wicked. In the editt. it is lithy. Luther and quede. See *Quade*.
Litherly, adv. Sax. Very ill.
Litling, adj. Sax. Very little.
Livand, part. pr. Sax. Living.
Live, n. Sax. Life. On live: In life; alive. Lives creature: Living creature. Lives body: Living body.
Lodemanage, *Lodesterre*. See the statute 3 Geo. I. c. 13. where load-manage is used repeatedly in the sense of Pilotage. Lode-mange seems to be formed, by adding a French termination to the Sax. ladman, a guide or pilot. It would have been more English to have said ledemanship, as seamanship, horsemanship, &c. From the same property of leading, the north star is called the lodesterre, and hence also our name of loadstone for the magnet.
Lodesmen, n. pl. Sax. Pilots.
Loft, adv. Sax. On loft: On high; a-loft.
Loge, n. Fr. A lodge, habitation.
Logged, part. pa. Fr. Lodged.
Logging, n. Lodging.
Loke, v. Sax. To see, to look upon.
Loken, *Loke*, part. pa. of *Loke*, v. Sax. Locked. Shut close. Conf. Am. 29. His one eye anon was loke.
Loller, n. A Lollard.
Lollius, pr. n. of a writer, from whom Chaucer professes to have translated his poem of Troilus and Creseide.
Londe, n. Sax. Land.
Londenoys. A Londoner, one born in London.
Lone, n. Sax. A loan, any thing lent.
Long, v. Sax. To belong. Longing for his art: Belonging to his art. To desire.
Long. See *Along*.
Loos. *Los*, n. Fr. Praise. *Loses*, pl.
Lord, n. Sax. A title of honour, given to monks, as well as to other persons of superior rank.
Lordings, n. pl. Sirs, masters, a diminutive of lords.
Lordship, n. Sax. Supreme power.
Lore, n. Sax. Knowledge, doctrine, advice.
Lorel, n. Sax. A good-for-nothing fellow. Skinner supposes it to be derived from the Lat. Lurco; and in the Promptorium Parvulorum, "losel, or lorel, or lurden," is rendered "lurco." But lurco, I apprehend, signifies only a glutton, which falls very short of our idea of a lorel; and besides I do not believe that the word was ever sufficiently common in Latin to give rise to a derivative in English. One of Skinner's friends deduces it with much more probability from the Belg. (rather Sax.) Loren: lost; perditus.
Lorne, part. pa. of *Lese*, v. Sax. Lost, undone.
Los, n. Sax. Loss.
Losed, part. pa. Sax. Loosed.
Losed, part. pa. Fr. Praised.
Losenge, n. Fr. A quadrilateral figure, of equal sides but unequal angles, in which the arms of women are usually painted. Losynges seems to signify small figures of the same form in the fret-work of a crown.
Losengeour, n. Fr. A flatterer.
Loteby, n. In the orig. Compaigne: A private companion, or bed-fellow. In Pierce Ploughman 14. the concubines of priests are called their lotebies. Perhaps it may be derived from the Sax. loute; to lurk.
Loth, adj. Sax. Disagreeable, odious.
Lother, comp. d. More hateful.
Lothest, superl. d. Most unwilling.
Lothly, adj. Loathsome.
Love-dayes. Days appointed for the amicable settlement of differences.
Love-drinke, n. Sax. A drinke to excite love.
Love-longing, n. Sax. Desire of love.
Lovesome, adj. Sax. Lovely.
Lough, pa. t. of *Laugh*, v. Sax. Laughed.
Louke. A receiver to a thief: in Pierce Ploughman 20, wrong is called a wicked luske; and I learn from Cotgrave, that luske is a synonymous word to lowt, lorel, &c. so that perhaps louke may be still another term for an idle, good-for-nothing fellow. See Cotg. in v. Luske, Eng. and in v. Loricard, Falourdin. Fr.
Loure, v. neut. Sax. To look discontented.
Louring, part. pa.
Loute, v. Sax. To bow, to lurk.
Low, n. for law.
Lowlyheide, n. Sax. Humility.
Lucan, pr. n. The Roman poet.
Luce, n. Lat. The fish, called a pike.
Lucina, pr. n. The Moon.
Lulled, pa. t. of *Lull*, v. Sax. Invited to sleep.
Lumbardes, n. pl. Bankers, remitters of money.
Lunarie, pr. n. of a herb, moon-wort.
Lure, n. Fr. A device used by falconers for calling their hawks.
Lure, v. Fr. To bring to the lure.
Lussheburghes. Base coins probably first imported from Luxemburg.
Lust, n. See *Lest*.
Luste, v. See *Leste*.
Lustyheide, n. Sax. Pleasure, mirth.
Luxurie, n. Fr. Leacherie.
Lynian, pr. n. Linian, an eminent lawyer, of whom there is some account in Panzrollus de Cl. Leg. Interpret. l. iii. c. xxv. He excelled also

in philosophy. A learned correspondent, to whom I am obliged for other useful hints, has suggested to me, that Fabricius, upon the authority of Gallini, has placed the death of Joannes Lignanus in 1383. Bibl. Med. Æt. in v. This furnishes an additional reason for believing that the Canterbury Tales were composed, or at least collected into a body, after that period.

M.

Mace, n. Fr. A club.

Machabe. p. n. The books of the Maccabees.

Macrobes, pr. n. Macrobius, the author of the commentary on the Somnium Scipionis of Cicero

Madde, v. Sax. To be mad.

Madrin. The French have a saint called Materne But Mr. Steevens, with much more probability, supposes, that the precious body, by which the host swears, was that of St. Mathurin. See his story in the Golden Legende, Ed t. 1527. by Winkin de worde, 151. b. "Than toke they the precious body and enoynted it with moche reverence; and when they had layd it in the erth, on the morowe they came to the sepulture and founde the holy body above the erth nygh unto the same sepulture, and then were they all abashed and wyst not what to do." It seems, the knightes, who had brought him out of France, had promised that, if he died on his journey, he should be sent back and buried "where as they had taken him;" and therefore his body would not stay in the ground, till it was deposited, according to promise, in France; where it afterwards worked many miracles.

Mafeie, Fr. Ma foy, by my faith.

Magicien, n. Fr. A magician.

Magike, n. Fr. Magick.

Mahownd, pr. n. Mahomet. See Du Cange, in v.

Maille, n. Fr. A coat of mail.

Mainte, part. pa. as *Meint*.

Maintenance, n. Fr. Behaviour.

Maisondewe, Fr. Maison-dieu; a hospital.

Maister, n. Fr. A skilful artist, a master. Maister-strete: The chief street. Maister-temple: The chief temple. Maister-tour: The principal tower.

Maisterful, adj. Imperious.

Maisterie, *Maistrie*, n. Fr. Skill, skilful management, power, superiority.

Love wol not be constreined by maistrie.
Whan maistrie cometh, the God of love anon
Beteth his winges, and, farewel! he is gon.

I cite these elegant lines, as I omitted to observe before, that Spenser has inserted them in his Faery Queen, B. 2. C. 1. St. 25. with very little alteration, and certainly without any improvement.

Ne may love be compel'd by mastery;
For, soon as mastery comes, sweet love anone
Taketh his nimble wings, and soon away is gone.

Amaistrie: A masterly operation; Un coup de maitre.

Maistresse, n. Fr. Mistress, governess.

Maistrise, n. Fr. Masterly workmanship.

Make, n. Sax. A fellow, a mate, a husband, a wife. Make or Metche. Compar. Prompt. Parv.

Make, v. Sax. To compose, or make verses. To solace him sometime, as I do when I make. To make a man's berde: To cheat him.

Maked, part. pa. Made.

Make. Why make ye your backes? We should read—nake, i. e. make naked. Cur inertes terga nudatis? Orig.

Makeles, adj. Sax. Peerless, without a fellow.

Making, n. Poetry. Makinges, pl. Poetical compositions. And thou medlest with makings. Pierce Ploughman 60.

Malaport, adj. Pert, forward. The word seems to be evidently of French original, though I do not recollect to have seen it used by any French writer. Appert. adj. Fr. signifies expert, &c. Cotgrave.

Male, n. Fr. A budget, or portmanteau.

Malefice, n. Fr. Enchantment.

Male-talent, n. Fr. Ill will.

Malison, n. Fr. Malediction, curse. I gyve it my malisoun.

Malt, pa. t. of *Melt*, v. Sax. Melted.

Malvesie, pr. n. Malmsey-wine.

Malure, n. Fr. Misfortune.

Manace, n. Fr. A threat.

———, v. To threaten.

Manacing, n. Threatening.

Manciple, n. An officer, who has the care of purchasing victuals for an Inn of Court. The name is probably derived from the Lat. Manceps, which signified particularly the superintendant of a public bake-house, and from thence a baker in general. See Du Cange, in v. Manceps, 2. The office still subsists in several colleges as well as inns of court.

Mandement n. Fr. Mandate.

Manere, n. Fr. Carriage, behaviour, kind, or sort. A manere Latin: A kind of Latin. Swiche a maner love-drinke: Such a sort of love-potion. Swiche maner rime.

Mangonel, n. Fr. An engine used to batter walls.

Manie, n. Fr. Gr. Madness.

Mannish, adj. Sax. Human, proper to the human species. Masculine, proper to man, as distinguished from woman. In this last sense, when applied to a woman, it is a strong term of reproach.

Manor, n. Fr. Dwelling.

Mansuete, adj. Fr. Gentle.

Mantelet, n. Fr. A short mantle.

Marcian, pr. n. Martianus Capella.

Marcian, adj. Martial, under the influence of Mars.

Mareis, n. Fr. A marsh.

Margarite, n. Fr. A pearl.

Marie Mary, n. Sax. Marrow. Mariebones: Marrow-bones.

Market-beter. One that makes quarrels in markets, says the Glossary. Mr. Upton calls him "one who raises the price of the market." But I am now more inclined to believe, that this word is to be understood in a sense similar to that in which the French phrases, Batre les rues—and Bateur de pavez are used. Batre les rues: To revell, jet, or swagger up and down the streets a'nights. Bateur de pavez: A jetter abroad in the streets; a pavement-beater. See Cotgrave, in v. Bateur. Batre. Pavé. So that "He was a market-beter atte full" may mean perhaps;—He was used to swagger up and down the market,

when it was fullest: a circumstance, which suits very well with the rest of his character.—Market daschar. Circumforaneus. Prompt. Parv.

Markis, n. Fr. A marquis.

Markis for *Markises*, gen. ca. sing. In the same manner Peneus is put for Peneuses: Theseus for Theseuses: Venus for Venuses: Ceres for Cereses: Melibeus for Melibeuses. Perhaps it might have been proper to add a mark of apocope to the words so abbreviated. As to the present method of expressing the genitive cases of nouns ending in s, by adding another s, with a mark of syncope, as Peneus's, Theseus's, Venus's, &c. it seems absurd, whether the addition be intended to be pronounced, or not. In the first case, the e should not be cut out; in the second, the s is quite superfluous. But the absurdity of this practice is most striking, when the genitives of monosyllable nouns are thus written; an ox's horns; an ass's ears; a fish's tail; St. James's park; notwithstanding that the e, which is thus directed to be cut out, is constantly and necessarily to be pronounced, as if the several words were written at length; oxes, asses, fishes, Jameses.

Markisesse, n. Fr. The wife of a marquis.

Marte, pr. n. Mars.

Martire, n. Fr. Martyrdom, torment.

Martire, v. Fr. To torment.

Mary, Marie, pr. n. A vulgar oath; by Mary.

Mase, n. A wild fancy.

Mase, v. neut. To doubt, to be confounded.

Masednesse, n. Astonishment, confusion.

Maselin, n. Rather Mazerin. A drinking cup. See Du Cange, in v. Mazer.

Mate, part. pa. of *Mate*, v. Fr. Dejected, struck dead. So feble and mate. Conf. Am.

Matire for *Matere*, n. Fr. Matter.

Maugre, Malgré Fr. In spite of. Maugre all thy might. Maugre thin eyen. Maugre hire hed. The original of this expression appears more plainly in the following passages. I drede thou canst me grete maugre:

> Car je cuide, que me scavez
> Mal gré. Orig. 4118.

Malgre his: With his ill will, against his will; Mal gré lui.

Mavis, n. Sax. A thrush.

——— is probably a mistake for Muis, n. pl. Fr. The Orig. has cent muys de froment. The Paris Muid contains something more than five quarters English.

Maumet, n. An idol.

Maumetrie, n. The religion of Mahomet, idolatrie.

Mawe, n. Sax. The stomach.

May, v. Sax. To be able, physically or morally. See *Mowe*.

May, n. Sax. A virgin. Of Mary moder and may. A young woman.

Maydenhed, n. Sax. Virginity.

Mavimian, pr. n. The author of vi elegies, which have been frequently printed under the name of Gallus. He is said by Fabricius (Bibl. Lat. T. i. p. 297. Ed. Patav.) to have lived under the emperour Anastasius, q. I. or II? A translation, or rather abridgement, of these elegies, in English verse, is in *Ms.* Harl. 2253.

Meaneliche, adj. Sax. Moderate.

Mebles, n. pl. Fr. Moveable goods.

Mede, n. Sax. Reward, a meadow.

Mede, Methe, Meth, n. Barb. Lat. Mead, a liquor made of honey.

Medle, v. Fr. To mix.

Medlee, adj. Of a mixed stuff, or colour.

Meinie, n. Fr. Household attendants, an army. Hurlewaynes meyne. Contin. of Canterb. Tale, l. 8. This obscure phrase, I think, may be understood to relate to a particular set of ghostly apparitions, which were used to run about the country at night and were called in French La mesgnie de Hellequin or Herlequin. The fullest account that I have seen of them is in "L'historie de Richard sans paour, Duc de Normandie, qui fut fils de Robert le Diable." In one of his rides he meets with three black knights, whom he engages. "Et quand les chevaliers veirent le jeu mal party pour eux ils monterent à cheval et s'enfuyrent;—et Richard—chevaucha apres eux; et ainsi qu'il chevauchoit il apperceut une dance de gens noirs qui s'entretenoyent. Adonc luy souvint de la mesgnie de Hellequin, dont il avoit autres foys ouy parler." The title of the next chapter (4.) is "Cy divise de la mesgnie de Hellequin et qui il estoit." He is there said to have been a knight, who, having spent all his substance in the wars of Charles Martel against the Saracens, lived afterwards by pillage. "Adonc il avint qu'il mourut et fut en danger d'estre damné, mais Dieu luy fit pardon, pource que il avoit bataille contre les Sarrazins et exaulce la foy. Si fut condamne de Dieu que pour un tems determine luy et ceux de son lignage feroient penitence et yroient toute la nuit parmy la terre, pour leurs penitences faire et endurer plusieurs maux et calamitez." The belief of such apparitions was certainly of great antiquity in Normandy, as they are mentioned by Ordericus Vitalis, under the title of familia Herlechini, in a most extraordinary story related by him, L. viii. p. 695. ann. 1091. And I suspect that in a passage quoted by Du Cange, in v. Herlinini, from Petr. Blesens Ep. 14. we should read Herlikini instead of Herlinini.

Gervase of Tilbery, who wrote in 1211, mentions another set of apparitions, which were called familia Arturi. Ot. Imper. Dec. ii. c. 12. "In sylvis Britanniæ majoris aut minoris consimilia contigisse referuntur, narrantibus nemorum custodibus, quos forestarios—vulgus nominat, se alternis diebus circa horam meridianam, et in primo noctium conticinio sub plenilunio lunâ lucente, sæpissime videre militum copiam venantium et canum et cornuum strepitum, qui sciscitantibus se de societate et familiâ Arturi esse affirmant." He had just said that Arthur, not long before, had been seen in a palace, "miro opere constructo," in a most delicious valley in the neighbourhood of Mount Ætna, where he had resided ever since the time of his supposed death, "vulneribus quotannis recrudescentibus."

Meint, part. pa. of *Menge*, v. Sax. Mixed, mingled.

Meke, adj. Sax. Meek, humble.

——— v. To become meek.

Meles, n. pl. Sax. Meals, dinners.

Mele-tide, n. Sax. Dinner-time.

Melle, v. Fr. To meddle.

Melle, n. for *Mille*.

Memorie, n. Fr. Remembrance, To be drawen to memorie: To be recorded.

And for to drawe in to memorye
Her names bothe and her historye.
Conf. Am. f. 76.

Memorie, v. To remember.
Mendiants, n. pl. Fr. Fryers of the begging orders.
Mene, v. Sax. To mean, to intend.
Mene, n. Fr. Moyen. A mean, or instrument. Where the orig. has mezzano; a procurer. Menes, pl.
Mene, adj. Middle.
Menivere, n. Fr. A sort of fur.
Mercenrike, pr. n. The kingdom of Mercia.
Mercia, pr. n. Marsyas is probably meant; but our poet, I know not upon what authority, has turned him into a female.
Mercinble, adj. Fr. Merciful.
Meritorie, adj. Fr. Meritorious.
Merke, n. Sax. A mark, an image. All the merke of Adam: All the images of Adam; all mankind.
Merk, adj. Sax. Dark.
Merlion, n. Fr. Emerillion. A merlin, a sort of hawk.
Merveille, n. Fr. Wonder, marvel.
Mery, adj. Sax. Merry, pleasant.
Mes. At gode mes should probably be At godeness. The orig. has en bon point. See *Godeness*.
Mese, n. for *Messe*.
Mesel, n. Fr. A leper.
Meselrie, n. Fr. Leprosie.
Message, n. Fr. A messenger.
Messagerie, pr. n. A fictitious attendant in the temple of Venus. Boccace calls her Ruffiania.
Messe, n. Fr. The service of the mass.
Meste, adj. Sax. superl. d. as *Moste*.
Mesurable, adj. Fr. Moderate.
Mesure, n. Fr. Moderation.
Metamorphoseos, *Metamorphose*. Ovid's Metamorphosis. See *Judicum*.
Mete, adj. Sax. Fitting, convenient.
——, n. Sax. Meat. During the metes space: During the time of eating.
Mete-borde, n. Sax. An eating-table.
Metely, adj. Proportionable.
Mete, v. Sax. To meet, to dream.
Metle, *Met*, pa. t. Dreamed. I metle; Me metle: I dreamed.
Metricians, n. pl. Writers in verse.
Meuable, adj. Fr. Moveable.
Mewe, n. Fr. A cage for hawks, while they mue, or change their feathers.—A cage, in general, or any sort of confinement. In mewe: In secret.
Mewet, adj. Fr. Mute. In mewet: Dumbly, speaking inwardly.
Micher, n. A thief. Lierres. Orig. Mychyn or pryvely stelyn smale thyngs. Surripio. Prompt. Parv.
Might, pa. t. of *May*, v. Sax. Was able. Mighten, pl.
Might, part. pa. If godely had he might: If he had been able with propriety.
Might, n. Sax. Power, strength.
Milksop, n. An effeminate fellow.
Milne-stones, n. pl. Sax. Mill-stones.
Minde, n. Sax. Remembrance, Conf. Am. 148. As the bokes maken minde.
Mine, v. Fr. To penetrate.
Ministralles, n. pl. Fr. Minstrels.
Ministres, n. pl. Fr. Officers of justice, ministers, minstrels.
Minoresse, n. A nun, under the rule of St. Clare. Du Cange, in v. Minorissa. It is not clear however why Chaucer has likened Hate to a sister of this order. His original gave him no authority.
Minour, n. Fr. A miner.
Minstralcie, n. Fr. Musick, musical instruments.
Mirrour, n. Fr. A looking-glass
Mirtheles, adj. Sax. Without mirth.
Mis, adv. Ill, amiss. It is often to be supplied to a second verb, having been expressed in composition with a former. If that I mis-speke or say. That hire mis-doth or saith. There is nothing mis-saide nor do.
Mis, n. A wrong.
Mis-accompted, part. pa. Misreckoned.
Mis-aventure, n. Misfortune.
Mis-avise, v. To advise wrongly.
Mis-boden, part. pa. of *Mis-bede*. Injured.
Misborne, part. pa. of *Mis-bere*. Mis-behaved.
Mischance, n. Fr. Misfortune. With mischance. See *With*.
Mischefe, n. Fr. Misfortune.
Miscoveting, n. Should probably be Miscompting. Mescompter. Orig.
Mis-departe, v. To distribute wrongly.
Miserierorde, n. Fr. Mercy, pity.
Mis-ese, n. Uneasiness.
Mis-foryave, pa. t. of *Mis-foryeve*. Mis-gave.
Mis-gied, part. pa. of *Mis-gie*. Mis-guided.
Mis-gon, *Mis-go*, part. pa. of *Mis-go*. Gone wrong.
Mis-happing, part. pr. Falling amiss.
Mis-lede, v. To conduct amiss.
Mis-lived, part. pa. Having lived to a bad purpose.
Mis-metre, v. To spoil the metre of verses, by writing or reading them ill.
Mis-sate, pa. t. of *Mis-sit*. Misbecame.
Mis-sayde, part. pa. of *Mis-saye*. Ill spoken of.
Mis-sayer, n. An evil speaker.
Miss, v. Sax. To fail.
Misse-metre, v. See *Mismetre*.
Mistake, v. To take a wrong part, to transgress. Mesprendre. Orig.
Mistere, n. Fr. Trade, occupation, condition of life. What mistere men ye ben: What kind of men ye are.—Need.
Mistihede, n. Sax. Darkness.
Mistily, adv. Sax. Darkly.
Mistrist, v. for *Mistrust*.
Mis-waie, n. A wrong way.
Mis-went, part. pa. of *Mis-wende*. Gone amiss.
Mis-write, v. To write wrong.
Mitaine, n. Fr. A glove.
Mitche, n. Fr. A manchet, a loaf of fine bread.
Mite, n. Sax. A small worm.
Miven, n. Sax. A dunghill.
Mo for *Me*, which as Mr. Tyrwhitt observes is one of the most licentious corruptions of orthography, that he remembers to have observed in Chaucer. It occurs p. 70. line 3.
Mo for *More*, adj. comp.—adv. comp.
Mochel, *Moche*, adj. Sax. Great, in quantity, in number, in degree.—adv. Much, greatly.
Moder, *Modre*, n. Sax. Mother. The Matrix, or principal plate of the Astrolabe. Ast.
Moison, n. Fr. Harvest, growth.

Moist, Moisty, adj. Fr. New.

Mokel, n. May perhaps signifie size, magnitude; as Michel seems to be used in that sense in Pierce Ploughman 89. b. Of one michel and might.

Molestie, n. Fr. Trouble.

Molte, pa. t. of *Melte*, v. Sax. Melted.

Monche, v. To chew.

Mone, n. Sax. The moon, lamentation.

Moneste, v. Fr. To admonish.

Moniours, n. pl. Fr. Coiners. In the original it is Faulx Monnoyeurs.

Monstre, n. Fr. A monster, or prodigy, a pattern.

Mood, n. Sax. Anger.

Morcels, n. pl. Fr. Morsels.

More, adj. comp. Sax. Greater, in quantity, in number, in degree, adv. comp. It is usually joined to adjectives and adverbs to express the comparative degree.

Mormal, n. A cancer, or gangrene.

Morter, n. Fr. A sort of wax-light.

Mortifie, v. Fr. To kill (speaking of quicksilver.)

Mortrewes, n. Lord Bacon, in his nat. hist. i. 48. speaks of "a mortress made with the brawn of capons stamped and strained." He joins it with the cullice (coulis) of cocks. It seems to have been a rich broth, or soup, in the preparation of which the flesh was stamped, or beat, in a mortar; from whence it probably derived its name, une mortreuse; though I cannot say that I have ever met with the French word.

Morwe, n. Sax. The morning. A'morwe: In the morning, in the morning of the following day.—To-morwe, I believe, always means the following day, and it includes the whole day. To-morwe at night.

Morwening, n. Sax. The morning. *Morweninges*, pl.

Mosel, n. Fr. The muzzle, mouth of a beast.

Moste, adj. superl. Sax. Greatest, in quantity, in number, in degree, adv. superl. It is usually joined to adjectives and adverbs to express the superlative degree.

Moste, v. Sax. Must. *Mosten*, pl.

Mote, v. Sax. Must, may. *Moten*, pl.

Mote, n. Sax. An atom.

Mothes, n. pl. Sax. Moths.

Motif, n. Fr. A motive, incitement.

Mought, pa. t. of *Mowe*, v. Sax. Might.

Moule, v. Sax. To grow mouldy. *Mouled*, part. pa.

Moun, for *Mowen*, pr. t. pl. of *Mowe*, v. Sax. May.

Mountance, n. Fr. Amount, in value, in quantity. Not full the mountance of a mile. Conf. Am. 187.

Mourdant, n. Fr. The tongue of a buckle.

Mowe, v. Sax. May, to be able. *Mowen*, pl.—It is sometimes used in the inf. m. Which thou shalt not mowe suffre: Which thou shalt not be able to endure.—To mowen suche a knight done live or die: To be able to make such a knight to live or die.—She should not con ne mow attaine: She should not know nor be able to attain.

Mowe, n. Fr. A distortion of the mouth. What do I than but laugh and make a mowe? Lydg. Trag. 137.

Mowing, n. Ability. In the following passage it seems to be used as a Gerund. That shrewes weren dispoiled of mowing to don yvel.

Much, Muchel. See *Moche*.

Muckre, v. Sax. To heap.

Mue, v. Fr. To change.

Muet, adj. Fr. Dumb, mute.

Mullok, n. Sax. Dung, rubbish.

Multiplication, n. Fr. The art of making gold and silver.

Multiplie, v. Fr. To make gold and silver.

Musard, n. Fr. A muser, or dreamer.

Muse, v. Fr. To gaze.

Myself, Myselve, Myselven. See *Self*.

N.

Na sometimes for *No*.

N'adde for *Ne hadde*. Had not.

Naile, n. Sax. A nail, by nailes. By Goddes nailes, an oath, i. e. the nails with which Christ was nailed to the cross.

Nakeres, n. pl. Fr. A kind of brazen drum used in the cavalry. See Du Cange in v. Nacara.

Nale, n. Sax. An ale-house. But I am less inclined to adopt Skinner's explanation of this word, because I observe that ale alone is commonly put for an ale-house, and I cannot find that nale is ever used, except where it follows the preposition atte. In the passage quoted from P. P. 32 b. the Cotton Ms Vesp. B. xvi. has at the ale. And so in P. P. 26 b. With idle tales at the ale.—Robert of Brunne's translation of Manuel des pechés. Ms. Bodl. 2313 fol. 1.

In gamys, in festys, and at the ale—
fol. 38. Or yf thou leddest any man to the ale.

I suspect therefore that nale, in those few passages in which it is found, should be considered as merely a corruption, which has arisen from the mispronunciation and consequent miswriting of atte nale for atten ale. A similar corruption seems to have taken place in the name of that celebrated personage in our law, Mr. John a-noke, whose original appellation, I believe, was John atten oke, as that of his constant antagonist was John atte stile. Sim. atte stile is a name in P.P. 23 b. and there are many others of the same form; as, atte-cliff, atte-ley, atte-well, atte-wood, &c. That the letter n is apt to pass from the end of one word to the beginning of another, we have an instance in newt, which has certainly been formed by corruption from an ewt, or eft; and perhaps nedder, n. Sax. may have been formed in the same way from an adder. The word in the Teutonic is adder, as we write it now, without the initial n. The same corruptions have happened in other languages. See the notes of signor Redi upon his Bacco in Toscana. p. 133, 4, 5. 182, 3.

N'am for *Ne am*. Am not.

Name, pa. t. of *Nime*, v. Sax. Took.

Nappe, v. Sax. To sleep. See *Knap*.

Narcotikes, n. pl. Fr. Gr. Drugs causing sleep.

Narwe, adj. Sax. Close, narrow. When they hem narwe avise: When they closely consider their conduct.

Nas for *Ne was*. Was not.

Naso, pr. n. P. Ovidius Naso. See *Ovide*.

Nat, adv. Sax. Not.

Natal, adj. Lat. Presiding over nativity.

Nathelesse, Natheles, adv. Sax. Not the less, nevertheless.

Nation, n. Fr. 4701. Nation, family.

Naught, Nought, n. Sax. Nothing.

Naught, adv. Not, not at all. It may more properly perhaps be considered as a noun used adverbially. See *Nothing*.

Nay, adv. Sax. It seems to be used sometimes as a noun. It is no way: It cannot be denied.

Nay, v. To denie.

Ne, adv. Sax. Not. Ne had he ben holpen: Had he not been helped.

Ne, conj. Sax. Nor.

Nece, n. Fr. A niece, a cousin.

Necessarie, adj. Fr. Necessary.

Nede, n. Sax. Need, necessity.

Nede, v. is generally used as an impersonal. It nedeth thee nought teche; Nedeth hem no dwale; Neded no more to hem to go ne ride.

Ned-ful, adj. Distrest, indigent.

Nedely, adv. Necessarily.

Nedes, *Nede*, adv. Necessarily. It is usually joined with *must*.

Nedder, n. Sax. An adder. *Nedders*, pl.

Neighe, adj. Sax. Nigh.

Neighe, v. To approach, to come near.

Nekke, n. Sax. The neck. Nekkebone.

Nempne, v. Sax. To name.

Ner, adv. Sax. Near.

Nere, comp. d. Nigher. Never the nere: Never the nigher. Nere and nere: Nigher and nigher. Ferre ne nere: Later nor earlier.

N'ere for *Ne were*. Were not. N'ere it: Were it not. N'ere the friendship.

Nerfe, n. Fr. Nerve, sinew.

Nesche, adj. Sax. Soft, tender. Nesch and hard.

Nete, n. Sax. Neat-cattle.

Nether, adj. comp. Sax. Lower.

Nettle in, Dock out. See *Raket*.

Neven, v. Sax. To name.

Nevew, n. Fr. A nephew, a grandson.

Newe, adj. Sax. New, fresh.

Newe, adv. Newly. Newe and newe: Again and again. All newe, Of newe: Newly, Lately. All newe: Anew, afresh.

Newe, v. To renew.

Newed, part. pa. Renewed.

Newefangel, adj. Desirous of new things.

Newefangelness, n. Inconstancy.

Nexte, superl. d. Nighest. It generally signifies the nighest *following*; but sometimes the nighest *preceding*.

N'hath for *Ne hath*. Hath not.

Nice, adj. Fr. Foolish.

Nicetee, n. Folly. Do his nicetee. So the French use Faire folie.

Nifles, n. pl. Trifles.

Nigard, n. A stingy fellow.

Nigardie, n. Stinginess.

Nightertale. Night-time.

Night-spel, n. Sax. A night-charm.

N'ill for *Ne will*. Will not.

N'is for *Ne is*. Is not.

N'iste for *Ne wiste*. Knew not. sing. *N'isten* for *Ne wisten*: Knew not. pl.

Nobledest, pa. t. 2. pers. sing. of *Noble*, v. Fr. Ennobledest.

Noblesse, n. Fr. Dignity, splendour.

Nobley, n. as *Noblesse*.

Nocked, part. pa. Notched.

Noie, n. Fr. Hurt, trouble.

Noie, v. Fr. To hurt, to trouble.

Noise, v. Fr. To make a noise.

N'olde for *Ne wolde*. Would not.

Nombre, n. Fr. Number.

Nomen, *Nome*, part. pa. of *Nime*, v. Sax. Taken.

Nompere, n. An arbitrator. The sense of this word is established by the Prompt. Parv. "*Nowmper* or *owmper*. Arbiter. Sequester." If the etymology of it were as clear, we might be able to determine, which of the two methods of writing it is the best. Custom has long declared for the latter. The modern word is umpire; and in Pierce Ploughman 25 b. the Editt. read an umper; but the Cotton MS. Vesp. B. xvi. has—a numper. I cannot find that any such word is used, in the same sense, in any other of the Gothic or romance languages. It has been supposed by some to be a corruption of *un pere*, Fr. which I can hardly believe; and perhaps the reader will be as backward to admit of a derivation of it from the Fr. nonpair; an odd, or third person; which an arbitrator generally is. This however is the most probable etymology that has occurred to me; and I see that the compiler of the statutes for the university of Oxford (whoever he was) had the same idea, for he expresses the word umpire, in his Latin, by impar. Tit. xv. §. 14. Index, *Impar*, aut Arbitrator, in quâcunque causâ electus.

Non, adj. Sax. Not one, none.

Non, adv. Fr. Not. Absent or non. Whether ye wol or non.

None, n. Fr. The ninth hour of the natural day; nine o'clock in the morning; the hour of dinner.

Nones. For the nones, i. e. for the occasion.

Nonne, n. Fr. A nun.

Norice, n. Fr. A nurse. In some passages, it is printed by mistake, I suppose, for *Norie*, n. A foster-child. Alumnus.

Nortelrie, n. Nurture, education.

Nosethirles, n. pl. Sax. Nostrils.

N'ot for *Ne wot*. Know not.

Notabilitee, n. Fr. A thing worthy of observation.

Note, n. Sax. Need, business.

Note, n. Fr. A musical note. To cry by note: To cry aloud, in a high tone.

Notemuge, n. Nutmeg.

Notes, n. pl. Sax. Nuts.

Not-hed. A head like a nut, from the hair probably being cut short.

Nother, conj. Sax. Nor, neither.

N'other, adj. Sax. for *Ne other*. Neither n'other: Nor one nor other. He n'is in neither n'other habite; Neutro est habitu. Orig.

Nothing, adv. Sax. Not, not at all.

Nouches, n. pl. or *Ouches*. It is probable, I think, that Nouche is the true word, and that Ouche has been introduced by a corruption, the reverse of that which has been taken notice of in *Nale*. See Du Cange, in v. Nochia, and Fusca; and Schilter, Gloss. Teut. in v. Nuosci; from whence it appears that Nuschin, *Teut.* signifies Fibula; a clasp, or buckle. As these were some of the most useful instruments of dress, they were probably some of the first that were ornamented with jewels; by which means the name by degrees may have been extended, so as to include several other sorts of jewels. The same thing may have happened in the case of the word *Broche* (see above); which indeed seems, originally, to have been a French expression for Nouche.

Novelries, n. pl. Fr. Novelties.

Nought, n. and adv. Sax. See *Naught*.
Nouthe, adv. Sax. Now.
Now, adv. Sax. Now and now: Once and again. Now adayes: In these days.
Nowel, n. Fr. Christmas. From Noël in French.
Noysaunce, n. Fr. Offence, trespass.

O.

O for *Ho*. See *Ho*.
O, adj. for *On*. One. In the curious old ballad on the battle of Lewes (Ant. Poet. v. ii. p. 4.) l. 10. oferlyng should be written, I believe, o ferlyng, i. e. one farthing.
Obeysance, n. Fr. Obedience. *Obeysing*.
Obeysant, part. pr. Fr. Obedient. *Obeysing*.
Obsequies, n. pl. Fr. Funeral rites.
Observance, n. Fr. Respect.
Observe, v. Fr. To respect, to pay regard to.
Occident, n. Fr. The West.
Octavien, pr. n. I do not suppose that Augustus is meant, but rather the fabulous emperour, who is a subject of a romance entitled "Octavian imperator." MS. Cotton. Calig. A. ii. See Percy's Catalogue, n. 18. and MS. Reg. 17. C. viii. The same Octavian, I apprehend, was celebrated in a piece of Arras hangings, which made part of the furniture of Henry V. and is thus described in the inventory. Rot. Part. 2 Hen. VI. Item 1 autre pece d arras D or q comence en L estorie "Le Octavion Roy de Rome."
Ocy, Ocy. The nightingale's note.
Oerthrow for *Overthrow*, part. pa. Sax. Overthrown.
Oetus, pr. n. Æetes.
Of, adv. Sax. Off.
Offended, part. pa. Fr. Hurt.
Offensioun, n. Offence, damage.
Offertorie, n. Fr. A part of the Mass.
Offring, n. Fr. Offering at Mass.
Oft, Ofte, adv. Sax. Often. *Oftensith*: Oftentimes.
Oinement, n. Fr. Ointment.
Olifaunt, n. Fr. Elephant.
Oliveres, n. pl. Fr. Olive-trees.
Omer, pr. n. Homer.
On, prep. Sax. In. On live: In life, alive. On twelve: In twelve. On hunting; On hawking. See *A*. prep.—Upon. On to see: To look upon. Lycurgus daughter, fairer on to sene—So this line is written in MS. Bodl.
On, adj. Sax. One. After on: Alike. They were at on: They were agreed. Ever in on: Continually. I mine on: I single, I by myself. And thus I went widewher walking mine one. PiercePloughman, 40 b. Non saw but he one. All him one. Conf. Am. 175.
Onde, n. Sax. Zeal, malice. Ny the and onde.
Oned, part. pa. Sax. Made one, united.
Ones, pl. of *On*. We three ben alle ones. We three are all one.
Ones, adv. Sax. Once. At ones: At once, at the same time.
Onhed, n. Sax. Unity.
Only, adv. Sax. Al only: Solely.
Ony, adj. Sax. Any.
Open-ers, n. Sax. The fruit of the medlar-tree.
Open-heded, adj. Bare-headed.
Opie, n. Fr. Opium.
Oppresse, v. Fr. To ravish.
Oppressed, part. pa.
Oppression, n. Rape.
Or, adv. Sax. Er, before.
Oratorie, n. Fr. A chapple, a closet.
Ordal, n. Sax. Judicial trial. See Kilian, in v. *Oor-deel*, and Hickes. Dissert. Epist. p. 149. It is possible however that Chaucer may have used this word in its more confined sense, for a trial by fire, or water, without considering whether such trials were practised at Troy.
Orde, n. Sax. A point.
Ordered, part. pa. Ordained, in holy orders.
Orders four. The four orders of mendicant friars.
Ordinaunce, n. Fr. Orderly disposition.
Ordinat, part. pa. Lat. Orderly, regular.
Ore, n. Sax. Grace, favour.
Orewell, pr. n. A sea-port in Essex.
Orfrays, n. Fr. Gold-embroidery. See Du Cange in v. *Aurifrigia*.
Orient, n. Fr. The east.
Origenes, pr. n. In the list of Chaucer's works in the Legende of Good Women, ver. 427, he says of himself, that

> He made also, gon is a grete while,
> Origenes upon the Maudeleine.——

meaning, I suppose, a translation, into prose or verse, of the homily de Mariâ Magdalenâ, which has been commonly, though falsely, attributed to Origin, v. Opp. Origenis. T. ii. p. 291. Ed. Paris, 1604. I cannot believe that the poem, entitled, The Lamentation of Marie Magdaleine, which is in all the editions of Chaucer, is really that work of his. It can hardly be considered as a translation, or even imitation, of the homily; and the composition, in every respect, is infinitely meaner than the worst of his genuine pieces.
Orisont, n. Fr. The horizon.
Orloge, n. Fr. A clock, or dial.
Orpiment, pr. n. A mineral so called.
Other, adj. Sax. Alter. Lat. The other of two. *Others*, gen. ca.
Other, adj. Sax. Alius, Lat.
Other, conj. Sax. Or, either.
Ouche, n. See *Nouche*.
Over, prep. Sax. Above. Over all: In every case, on every side.
Over, adj. Sax. Upper.
Overest, superl. d. Uppermost.
Over-gret, adj. Sax. Too great.
Over-ladde, part. pa. Overborn. Do not the people oppresse, nor overlede. Lydg. Trag. 104.
Over-live, v. Sax. To out-live.
Over-merily, adv. Sax. Too merrily.
Over-moche, adj. Sax. Too great.
Over-nome, part. pa. of *Over-nime*, v. Sax. Overtaken.
Over-spradde, pa. t. Sax. Over-spread.
Overte, adj. Fr. Open.
Overthrew, pa. t. of *Overthrow*, v. neut. Sax. Fell down.
Overthrowing, part. pr. Sax. Falling headlong. By overthrowing way. Præcipiti viâ. Orig.
Over-thwart, adv. Sax. Across, over against.
Over-timeliche, adv. Sax. Too early.
Ought, n. Sax. Ophr. Any thing, adv. See *Aught*. The difference has arisen merely from the different usages of writing *A* or *O* for *One*.
Ought, pa. t. of *Owe*.
Oughten, Oughte, pl. From hence, as it seems, has

been formed a new verb *ought*, which is very commonly used in the present tense, for *owe*, in both numbers.

Ought is also used as an impers. in the pr. and pa. t. Wel ought us werke: Well behoveth it us to work. Hem oughte have gret repentance: It behoved them to have g. r.

Ovide, pr. n. Our author seems to have been well acquainted with the best part of Ovid's works. Most of the histories in his Legende of Good Women are taken from the Epistolæ Heroidum, or the Metamorphoses. That of Lucrece shows that he had read the Fasti.

Ounding, n. Fr. Waving, imitating waves.

Ounes, pr. poss. Sax. Ours.

Out, interj. Sax. Away!

—— adv. Sax. Out and out: Throughout.

Outhees, n. Lat. Barb. Outcry. And born to London brigge full hie outheus.

Outrage, n. Fr. Violence.

Outraie, v. Fr. To fly out, to be outrageous.

Out-rede, v. Sax. To surpass in counsel.

Outrely, adv. Fr. Utterly.

Out-renne, v. Sax. To out-run.

Out-straught, pa. t. of *Out-stretch*, v. Sax. Stretched out.

Out-taken, part. pa. Taken out, excepted. Out-taken Crist on loft: Christ in heaven being excepted. Out-take Carleon, that was in Arthure tyme.

Owe, v. Sax. Deheo. *Owen*, pl.

Owen, *Owne*, part. pa.

Owhere, adv. Sax. Anywhere.

Owndie, adj. Fr. Waving.

Oxenforde, pr. n. Oxford.

Oyse, pr. n. A river in Picardie.

P.

Pace, v. Fr. To pass away, to surpass.

Page, n. Fr. A boy-child, a boy-servant.

Paie, n. Fr. Liking, satisfaction.

—— v. Fr. To please, to satisfie, to pay.

Paide, part. pa. Pleased, payed.

Paillet, n. Fr. A couch (properly of straw).

Paindemaine. A sort of white bread. Skinner derives it from *Panis matutinus*, *Pain de matin*. Mr. Tyrwhitt thinks it derived from the province of Maine, where it was perhaps made in the greatest perfection.

Paire, v. Fr. To impair. If I speke ought to paire her loos, i. e. to impair their credit or reputation. So this line is written in Edit. 1542, and MS. Hunter.

Palamedes, pr. n. Not the son of Nauplius, one of the Grecian commanders at the war of Troy, but a knight of the round table, called Palomides in Mort d'Arthur; the unsuccessful rival of Tristan for the love of la belle Isoude. See Mort d'Arthur, B. ii. which seems to be compiled chiefly from the Roman de Tristan.

Palasins, n. pl. Fr. Ladies Palasins: Ladies of the court. In the Orig. Palatines. See Du Cange, in v. *Palatini*.

Palatie, pr. n. Palathia in Anatolia.

Pale, n. A perpendicular stripe, in Heraldry.

Pale, v. Fr. To make pale.

Paleis, n. Fr. A palace.

Palfreis, n. pl. Fr. Horses for the road, where stedes are horses for battle. Ne large palfrey, esy for the nones.

Paling, n. Fr. Imitating pales.

Palladion, n. Gr. The image of Pallas at Troy.

Palled, part. pa. Fr. Made pale.

Palmeres, n. pl. Pilgrims.

Palmerie, pr. n. Palmyra in Syria.

Pamphilus, pr. n. The author of a Latin poem on the amour of Pamphilus and Galatea.

Pampred, part. pa. Pampered, made plump. See Jun. Etymol. who derives it from the Fr. Pampre; a vine-branch, full of leaves.

Pan, pr. n. The heathen deity.

Pan, n. Sax. The skull, the head.

Panter, n. Fr. A net.

Papelard, n. Fr. A hypocrite.

Papelardie, n. Fr. Hypocrisie.

Paper-white, adj. White as paper.

Par, prep. Fr. Par amour: With love. Par compagnie: For company. Par chance: By chance. Par cuere: By heart; memoriter: So this line should be written.

Paraboles, n. pl. Fr. Parables; the Proverbs of Solomon.

Parage, n. Fr. Kindred.

Paraille, n. Fr. Apparel.

Paramour, *Paramours*, n. Fr. Love, gallantry, a lover, of either sex.

Peraventure, adv. Fr. Haply, by chance.

Paraunter, corruption of Peradventure.

Parcæ, n. pl. Lat. The Fates.

Parcel-mele, adv. By parcels, or parts.

Parde, *Pardieux*. A common Fr. oath, which most of the personages in Chaucer express very frequently in English, with as little ceremony as the Greeks used their νη Δια, and with as little meaning too.

Pardoner, n. Fr. A seller of pardons, or indulgences.

Paraments, n. pl. Fr. Ornamental furniture, or clothes. *Chambre de parement* is translated by Cotgreve, the presence chamber, and *Lit de parement*, a bed of state.

Parentele, n. Fr. Kindred.

Parfay, Fr. Par foy: By my faith.

Parfei, as *Parfay*.

Parfit, adj. Fr. Perfect.

Parfitly, adv. Perfectly.

Parfourme, v. Fr. To perform.

Parishens, n. pl. Fr. Parishioners.

Paritorie, n. Fr. Lat. The herb parietaria, or pellitory of the wall.

Parlement, n. Fr. An assembly for consultation, a consultation.

Parten, inf. m. F. To take part.

Partie, n. Fr. A part, a party, in a dispute.

Parvis, n. Fr. A portico before a church. Du Cange in v. *Paradisus*, 1. It appears that books were commonly sold Au parvis devant Notre Dame at Paris. At London, the Parvis was frequented by serjeants at law. See Fortescue de laud. leg. Ang. c. 51. Post meridiem curiæ non tenentur; sed placitantes tunc se divertunt ad Pervisum et alibi, consulentes cum servientibus ad Legem et aliis consiliariis suis. There is a difference of opinion where the Parvis at London, to which the lawyers resorted, was situated. Somner supposes it to have been in Old Palace-yard, before Westminster-hall. Gloss. in x Script. v. Triforium. But others, with more probability, think it was what Dugdale calls the Pervyse of Pawles. See the notes upon Fortescue, loc. cit.

When the serjeants had dined in any of the inns of court, St. Paul's lay much more conveniently for an afternoon consultation than Westminster-hall.

Pas, n. Fr. A foot-pace.

Pass, v. Fr. To surpass, to excel, to judge, to pass sentence.

Passant, Passing, part. pr. Excelling.

Patren, inf. m. To pray, properly, to repeat the pater-noster.

Pavade, n. Some weapon of offence, of what sort is not known.

Paumes, n. pl. Fr. The palms of the hands.

Pax. To kisse the Pax. For an account of this ceremeny see Du Cange, in v.

Payen, adj. Fr. Pagan.

Payenes, n. pl. Heathens.

Paysaunce, n. "Pausing or stopping, Gloss. Ur." q.?

Pecunial, adj. Pecuniary, paid in money.

Pees, n. Fr. Peace. When used as an interjection, it signifies the same as *Hold* thy pees: Be silent.

Peine, n. Fr. Penalty. Up peine of deth. See *Up*. Grief, torment, labour.

Peine, v. Fr. To torture, to put to pain. She peined hire: She took great pains.

Peise, v. Fr. To poize, to weigh.

Pell, n. "A house, a cell. *Sp.* and *Sk.* f. a palace. Gloss. *Ur.*" q.?

Pellet, n. Fr. Pelotte. A ball.

Penance, n. Fr. Repentance. Pains to be undergone by way of satisfaction for sin, pain, sorrow.

Penant, n. Fr. A person doing penance.

Pencell, n. Fr. Pennoncel. A small streamer.

Penible, adj. Fr. Industrious, pains-taking.

Penetencer, n. Fr. A priest, who enjoins penance in extraordinary cases.

Penmark, pr. n. A place in Bretagne.

Penner, n. A pen-case. In the inventory of the goods of Henry V. Rot. Parl. 2 H. 6. n. 15. m. 13. is the following article: "Un penner' et 1 ynkhorn d' arg' dorrez." And again, m. 20. "1 pennere et 1 corne covert du velvet bloy."

Penon, n. Fr. A streamer, or ensign.

Pens, n. pl. Sax. Pennies.

Pensell, n. as *Pencell*.

Pensifeled, n. Pensiveness.

Peper, n. Lat. Pepper. To brewe peper, seems to be an expression for the preparation of a hot, pungent liquour, which should burn the throats of the drinkers. In the Orig. it is—Dames les brasseront tel poivre.

Peple, n. Fr. People.

Peplish, adj. Vulgar.

Perche, n. Fr. A perch for birds.

Percel, adv. r. Parcel. Ed. By parcels, or parts.

Perde, as *Parde*.

Pere, v. To appear.

Pere, n. Fr. A peer, an equal.

Peregal, adj. Equal.

Peregrine, adj. Fr. Wandering.

Pereles, adj. Without an equal.

Perjenete, n. A young pear.

Pernaso, pr. n. Mount Parnassus.

Perrie, n. Fr. Jewels, precious stones.

Persaunt, part. pr. Fr. Piercing.

Perse, pr. n. Persia.

Perse, adj. Fr. Sky-coloured, of a blueish grey.

Perselee, n. Sax. Lat. Parsely.

Persone, n. Barb. Lat. A man; generally, a man of dignity; a parson, or rector of a church. *Personer*.

Pertelote, pr. n. of a hen.

Perturbe, v. Fr. To trouble.

Perturbing, n. Disturbance.

Pervinke, n. Sax. Lat. The herb periwinkle.

Pery, n. Fr. A pear-tree.

Pese, n. Fr. as *Pees*.

Pesen, n. pl. Sax. Peas.

Pesible, adj. Peaceable.

Peter Alfonse, Piers Alfonse, author of Dialogus contra Judæos, and a work on Clerical Discipline.

Petrark, pr. n. Our author has inserted a translation of the 10th Sonnet of Petrarch into his Troilus and Creseide. It is not in the Filostrato. There seems to be no sufficient reason for believing that Chaucer had ever seen Petrarch.

Peytrel, n. Fr. The breast-plate of a horse.

Phisike, n. Fr. Medicine. Doctour of Phisike. See his Character, 413—446, p. 6.

Phisiologus, pr. n. an allusion to a book, entitled Physiologus de Naturis xii Animalium, by one Theobaldus, whose age is not known; there was a larger work, with the same title, in prose, which is frequently quoted by Vincent of Beauvais.

Philon, pr. n. The serpent Python.

Philonesse, n. Barb. Lat. A witch.

Pie, n. Fr. A mag-pie, a prating gossip, or tell-tale.

Pierrie, n. Fr. Jewels, precious stones.

Piggesnie. A term of endearment.

Pight, pa. t. of *Pike*, v. Sax. Pitched.

Pike, v. Sax. To pitch, to pick, as a hawk does his feathers, to steal, to peep.

Pike, n. Sax. A fish so called.

Pikerel, n. Sax. A young pike.

Pilche, n. Sax. A coat or cloak, of skins. Prov. A. Toga pellicea. Junius in v.

Piler, n. Fr. A pillar.

Pille, v. Fr. Piller. To rob, to plunder.

Pilled, rather *Piled*, part. pa. Fr. Pelé.

Pillours, n. pl. Fr. Plunderers.

Pilwe, n. Sax. A pillow.

Pilwe-bere, n. Sax. The covering of a pillow.

Piment, n. Barb. Lat. Spiced wine, wine mixed with honey. See *Clarre*.

Pinche, v. Fr. To squeeze. Ther coude no wight pinche at his writing: Not one could lay hold of any flaw in his writings.

Pine, n. Sax. Pain, grief.

Pine, v. Sax. To torment.

Pined, part. pa. Tortured.

Pipe, v. Sax. To play on a pipe. To pipe in an ivy lefe, is put for any useless employment; as it is now said of a disappointed man, He may go whistle. See *Buckes horn*.

Pistell, n. Sax. Lat. An epistle, a short lesson.

Pitance, n. Fr. A mess of victuals. It properly means an extraordinary allowance of victuals, given to monastics, in addition to their usual commons. See Du Cange, in v. *Pictantia*.

Pith, n. Sax. Marrow, strength.

Pitous, adj. Fr. Merciful, compassionate, exciting compassion.

Pitously, adv. Pitifully.

Plage, n. Lat. The plague.

Plages, n. pl. Lat. The divisions of the globe. The plages of the north: The northern regions.

Plain, n. Fr. A plain.
——, adj. Simple, clear. It is often used as an adverb. See *Plat*.
——, v. To make plain.
Plaine, v. Fr. To complain.
Plainliche, adv. Plainly.
Plat, Platte, adj. Fr. Flat, plain, the flat of a sword, it is often used as an adverb. All plat, i. e. flatly. Ful plat and eke ful plain.
Plate, n. A flat piece of metal. A brest-plate: Armour for the breast. A pair of plates: Armour for the breast and back.
Play, n. Sax. Sport, pleasure.
——, v. To sport, to take pleasure, to act upon a stage, to play upon musical instruments. To play a pilgrimage: To withdraw upon pretence of going on a pilgrimage.
Ple, n. Fr. An argument, or pleading.
Plein, adj. Fr. Full, perfect.
Plenere, adj. Fr. Complete.
Plesance, n. Fr. Pleasure.
Pleinges, n. pl. Pleasures.
Plete, v. Fr. To plead.
Pleting, n. Pleading.
Plie, v. Fr. To bend, or mold.
Plight, n. Condition.
Plight, pa. t. and part. of *Pluck*, v. Sax. Pulled, plucked.
Plighte, v. Sax. To engage, to promise.
Plighte, pa. t. *Plighten*, pl.
Plite, v. To plait, or fold. See *Plie*.
Plite, n. Condition, form. See *Plight*.
Plungy, adj. Fr. Wet, rainy.
Poilets, adj. Fr. Of Apulia, antiently called Poile.
Point, n. Fr. The principal business, a stop, or full point. In good point: In good case, or condition. At point devise: With the greatest exactness. At point to brest, In point for to brast: Ready to burst.
Pointel, n. Fr. A style, or pencil, for writing.
Pointen, inf. m. v. Fr. To prick with any thing pointed.
Poke, n. Fr. A pocket, a bag. See *Pouche*.
Poke, v. Fr. To thrust.
Polive, n. A pullie.
Pollax, n. Sax. A halberd.
Pomel, n. Fr. Any ball, or round thing, the top of the head.
Pomelee, adj. Fr. Spotted with round spots like apples, dappled. Pomelee gris: Of a dapple-grey colour.
Popelot, n. This word may either be considered as a diminutive from Poupée, a puppet; or as a corruption of Papillot, a young butterfly.
Popet, n. Fr. A puppet.
Popingay, n. A parrot. Papegaut, Fr. Papegaey, Belg. Papagallo, Ital.
Popped, adj. Fr. Nicely dressed.
Popper, n. A bodkin.
Pore, v. To look earnestly.
Popen, pr. t. pl.
Pore, adj. for *Poure*.
Porisme, n. Gr. is used in the sense of—a corollary, a theorem deduced from another.
Porphurie, pr. n. of a species of marble, porphyrie.
Port, n. Fr. Carriage, behaviour.
Portecolisse, n. Fr. A falling gate, a portcullis.
Portos, n. a Breviary, Portiforium.
Pose, n. A rheum, or defluxion, obstructing the voice.

Pose, v. Fr. To suppose. I pose, I had sinned so.
Posse, v. Fr. To push.
Possed, part. pa.
Possessioners, n. pl. Lat. An invidious name for such religious communities, as were endowed with lands, &c. The mendicant orders professed to live entirely upon alms.
Post, n. Sax. A prop, or support.
Poste, n. Fr. Power.
Potecary, n. Fr. An apothecary.
Potent, n. Fr. A crutch, a walking-stick.
Potential, adj. Fr. Strong, powerful.
Potestat, n. Fr. A principal magistrate.
Pouche, n. Fr. Pocket, pouch.
Poudre, n. Fr. Powder.
Poudres, pl.
Poverte, n. Fr. Poverty. It is to be pronounced Povérte; the final *e* being considered as an *e* feminine.
Poulce, n. Fr. The pulse.
Poule, pr. n. St. Paul.
Pounsoned, part. pa. Fr. Punched with a bodkin.
Poupe, v. To make a noise with a horn.
Pourchace, n. Fr. To buy, to provide.
Pourchas, n. Fr. Acquisition, purchase.
Poure, v. as *Pore*.
Poure, adj. Fr. Poor.
Pourtraie, v. Fr. To draw a picture.
Pourtraiour, n. A drawer of pictures.
Pourtraiture, n. A picture, or drawing.
Practike, n. Fr. Practice.
Preamble, n. Fr. Preface.
Preambulatioun, n. Preamble.
Precious, adj. Fr. Over-nice.
Predestine, n. Fr. Predestination.
Predication, n. Fr. *Preaching*, a sermon.
Prees, n. Fr. A press, or crowd.
Prefe, Preve, n. Fr. Proof, trial. At preve: Upon trial. With evil prefe: Evil may it prove! See *With*.
Prefect, n. Fr. Lat. A governour, or principal magistrate.
Preise, n. Fr. Commendation.
Preise, v. Fr. To commend, to value.
Prentise, n. Fr. An apprentice.
Prentishode, n. Apprenticeship.
Preparat, part. pa. Lat. Prepared.
Pres, adv. Fr. Near. Of près, i. e. at hand; close. De près, Fr. Or perhaps Of près may be put for In a prees. See *Prees*.
Prese, v. Fr. To press, or crowd.
Present, v. Fr. To offer, to make a present of. And with the wine she gan hem to present. And smote his hed of, his fader to present.
Presentarie, adj. Lat. Present.
Prest, adj. Fr. Ready.
Pretend, v. Fr. To lay claim to.
Preterit, adj. Fr. Passed.
Preve, v. Fr. To try, to demonstrate by trial.
——, v. neut. To turn out upon trial.
Prick, n. Sax. A point, a pointed weapon.
Prick, Prike, v. Sax. To wound, to spur a horse, to ride hard.
Prickasour, n. A hard rider.
Pricking, n. Hard riding.
Prideles, adj. Sax. Without pride.
Prie, v. To look curiously.
Prikke, n. See *Prick*.
Prime, adj. Fr. Lat. First. At prime temps: At

the first time. At prime face: At first appearance.

Prime, n. The first quarter of the artificial day. Half way prime: Prime half spent. Prime large: Prime far advanced. In ver. 10387, it seems to be used metaphorically for the season of action or business.

Primerole, n. Fr. A primrose.

Primetemps, n. Fr. Spring.

Pris, n. Fr. Price, praise. Or it be prys, or it be blame. Conf. Am. 165.

Prive, adj. Fr. Private. Privé and apert: Private and publick. Privé man: A man entrusted with private business.

Prively, adv. Privately.

Privetee, n. Private business.

Procesee, n. Lat. Progress.

Profession, n. Fr. The monastic profession.

Proheme, n. Fr. Gr. A preface.

Proine, v. Fr. Provigner. It seems to have signified originally, to take cuttings from vines, in order to plant them out. From hence it has been used for the cutting away of the superfluous shoots of all trees; which we now call pruning; and for that operation, which birds, and particularly hawks, perform upon themselves, of picking out their superfluous or damaged feathers. In allusion to this last sense, Damian is said to proine and pike himself. Gower, speaking of an eagle, says,

For there he pruneth him and pikoth,
As doth an hauke, whan him wel liketh.

Conf. Am. 139.

Prolle, v. To go about in search of a thing.

Provable, adj. Fr. Capable of being demonstrated.

Provinde, n. Fr. Præbenda. Lat. A prebend; a daily or annual allowance or stipend. See Du Cange, in v. Præbenda.

Provendre, n. A prebendary.

Proverbe, n. Fr. Lat. A prudential maxim.

Proverbe, v. To speak proverbially.

Provostry, n. Fr. The office of provost, or prefect. Præfectura.

Prow, n. Fr. Profit, advantage.

Prowesse, n. Fr. Integrity.

Pruce, pr. n. Prussia.

Pruce, adj. Prussian.

Pruned, pa. t. as *Proined*.

Ptholomee, pr. n.

Puella and *Rubeus*. "The names of two figures in geomancie, representing two constellations in heaven: Puella signifieth Mars retrograde, and *Rubeus* Mars direct." Sp.

Pulchritude, n. Lat. Beauty.

Pullaile, n. Fr. Poultry.

Pulled hen. I have been told that a hen whose feathers are pulled, or plucked off, will not lay any eggs. If that be true, there is more force in the epithet than I apprehended.

Punice, v. Fr. To punish.

Pure, adj. Fr. Mere, very.

Pured, part. pa. Purified.

Purfiled, part. pa. Guarded or fringed.

Purpos, n. Fr. Purpose, design, proposition in discourse.

Purprise, n. Fr. An inclosure.

Purveyance, n. Fr. Foresight, providence, provision.

Purveye, v. To foresee, to provide.

Puterie, n. Fr. Whoredom.

Putiours, n. pl. Whoremongers.

Pythagoras, pr. n. See the passage quoted in v. *Aurora*.

Q.

Quad, *Quade*, adj. Teut. Bad. None quad: Nothing evil.

Quaile-pipe, n. A pipe used to call quails.

Quaire, n. Fr. A quire of paper, a book.

Quakke, n. seems to be put for an inarticulate noise, occasioned by any obstruction in the throat.

Qualme, n. Sax. Sickness, the noise made by a raven.

Quappe, v. To tremble, to quake.

Quarels, n. pl. Fr. Square arrows.

Queint, n. See Junii Etymolog. in v.

Queinte, adj. Fr. Strange. I made of that lefe full queint. He made it *strange*.—Cunning, artful, trim, neat.

Queinte, pa. t. and part. of *Quench*, v. Sax. Quenched.

Queintise, n. Trimness, neatness, excessive trimness, cunning.

Quelle, v. Sax. To kill, to destroy.

Queme, v. Sax. To please. Wel me quemeth. Conf. Am. 68.

Quene, n. Sax. A queen, a harlot.

Querne, n. Sax. A hand-mill.

Querrour, n. Fr. One that works in a stone-quarry.

Queste, n. Fr. A prayer or demand.

Quest-mongers, n. pl. Packers of inquests, or juries.

Quethe, v. Sax. To say, to declare. I quethe him quite, is a translation of an old technical term in the law; Clamo illi quietum. The original Fr. has only Je quitte.

Quik, adj. Sax. Alive.

Quikkest, superl. d. Speediest. The quikkest strete: The most expeditious way.

Quiken, v. Sax. To make alive.

Quiked, part. pa. Made alive.

Quiked, pa. t. of the same v. used in a neutral sense. Became alive.

Quinible, n. is the instrument, I suppose, which is called in Barb. Lat. Quinterna and Quintaria. See Du Cange, and Carpentier, in v. Quinternizare; and Mehus, Vita d'Ambr. Camald, p. 325. Lyrâ, limbutâ, quintariâ, ribebâ, avenâ, tibiisque.

Quishen, n. Fr. A cushion.

Quistron, n. A beggar. Gl. Ur. I rather believe it signifies a scullion; un garçon de cuisine.

Quite, adj. Fr. Free, quiet.

Quite, v. Fr. To requite, to pay for, to acquit.

Quitte, part. pa. Requited.

Quitely, adv. Freely, at liberty.

Quod, pa. t. of *Quethe*. Said.

Quoke, pa. t. of *Quake*, v. Sax. Trembled, shook.

R.

Ra, n. Sax. A roe-deer.

Racine, n. Fr. A root.

Rad, *Radde*, pa. t. of *Rede*, v. Sax. Advised, explained.

Radevore. Tapestry. "Ras in Fr. signifies any stuff, as Ras de Chalons, Ras de Gennes, Ras de Vore, or Vaur, may be a stuff made at such a place. Gloss. Ur." There is a town in Languedoc, called La Vaur; but I know not that it was ever famous for tapestry.

Raflus, n. pl. Fr. Plays with dice.

Raste, pa. t. of *Reve*, v. Sax. Took away.
Reze, v. Fr. To toy wantonly.
Regerie, n. Wantonness.
Regounces. Should probably be Jagonces, as in the orig. Fr. The precious stones called jacinths, or hyacinths.
Raines, pr. n. The city of Rennes in Bretagne.
Rek-stele, n. Sax. The handle of a rake.
Rekel, adj. Hasty, rash.
Rekelnesse, n. Rashness.
Raket. To play raket, nettle in, dock out, seems to be used as a proverbial expression, signifying, to be inconstant. What the original of the phrase may have been is not so clear.
Ramage, adj. Fr. Wild.
Rammish, adj. Sax. Rank; like a ram.
Rampe, v. Fr. To climb. She rampeth in my face: She rises against me, flies in my face.
Ran, pa. t. of *Renne*, *Rennen*, pl.
Rape, adv. Quickly, speedily.
—, n. Haste.
—, v. Sax. To take captive. To rape and renne: To seize and plunder. See *Renne*.
Rasis, pr. n. 434. An Arabian physician of the xth century. See Fabric. Bibl. Gr. t. XIII. p. 46. in v. Albubecar.
Raskaile, n. A pack of rascals.
Rated, part. pa. Chidden.
Rathe, adv. Sax. Soon, early, speedily.
Rather, comp. d. Sooner.
Rathest, superl. d. Soonest.
Rather, adj. Sax. comp. d. Former.
Ratouns, n. pl. Fr. Rats.
Raught, pa. t. of Ræcan, v. Sax. Reached. On his way he raught: He sprang forth on his way.
Raught, pa. of Reccan, v. Sax. Cared, rekked.
Raveners, (Ravinours), n. pl. Plunderers.
Ravine, n. Fr. Rapine. Foules of ravine: Birds of prey.
Ravisable, adj. Fr. Ravenous.
Ravishing, part. pr. Fr. Rapid. With a ravishing sweigh. Rapido turbine. Orig. See *Swegh*.
Raunson, n. Fr. Ransom.
Rayed, part. pa. Fr. Streaked, or striped.
Real, adj. Fr. Royal.
Realler, comp. d. More royal.
Reallich, adv. Royally.
Realtee, n. Royalty.
Rebekke, pr. n. Rebeccah.
Rebekke, n. Fr. A musical instrument.
Rechased, pa. t. Fr. A term in hunting.
Recche, *Rekke*, v. Sax. To care.
Recheles adj. Careless.
Recchelesnesse, n. Carelessness.
Reclaime, v. Fr. A term in falconry, for bringing the hawk to the fist, by a certain call.
Reclaiming, n. Calling, in the sense of *Reclaime*.
Recomfort, v. Fr. To comfort.
Record, n. Fr. Witness, testimony.
Recorde, v. Fr. To remember. In ver. 1747, it seems to be used in a technical legal sense, for what is called to enter upon record in judicial proceedings.
Recreandise, n. Fr. signifies fear, cowardice, desertion of principal.
Recreant, adj. One who yields himself to his adversary to single combat. For the full import of these two words see Du Cange, in v. Recredentia.
Recure, n. Fr. Recovery.
Recured, part. pa. Fr. Recovered.
Redde, *Red*, pa. t. of *Rede*, v. Sax.
Reddour, n. Fr. Strength, violence.
Rede, n. Sax. Advice, counsel, a reed.
Rede, v. Sax. To advise, to read, to explain.
Rede, adj. Sax. Red.
Redoute, v. Fr. To fear.
Redouting, n. Reverence.
Redresse, v. Fr. To recover, to make amends for.
Refect, part. pa. Lat. Recovered.
Refiguring, part. pr. Fr. Figuring again.
Refrain, n. Fr. The burthen of a song.
Refraining, n. The singing of the burthen of a song.
Refreide, v. Fr. To cool.
Refrete, n. The same as *Refrain*.
Refte, *Riftc*, n. Sax. A chink, or crevice.
Refute, n. Fr. Refuge.
Regals, n. pl. Fr. Royalties.
Regard, n. Fr. At regard of, with respect to, in comparison of.
Regne, n. Fr. A kingdom.
Rehete, v. Fr. Rehaiter. To revive, to cheer.
Reheting, n. According to several Mss. "And all the reheting of his sikes sore." "Some Mss. and most of the printed editions read richesse instead of reheting. Gloss. Ur." Richesse, though almost as aukward an expression as the other, is more agreeable to the corresponding passage in the Filostrato—

"E sospir che gli avea a gran dovicia"—

and one can hardly conceive that it could come from any hand but that of the author. I can make no sense of reheting; but at the same time I must allow that it is not likely to have been inserted by way of a gloss.
Reile, v. neut. To roll. Reileth diversly. Vagatur. Orig.
Reines, pr. n. See *Raines*.
Rejoie, v. Fr. To rejoice.
Reke, v. Sax. To exhale.
Reken, v. Sax. To recken, to come to a reckoning.
Rekes, n. pl. Sax. Ricks (of corn).
Relaies, n. pl. Fr. Fresh sets of hounds.
Relefe, n. Sax. What is left.
Relees, n. Fr. Release.
Religiousite, n. Fr. Persons of a religious profession, the clergy.
Relike, n. Fr. A relick. *Relikes*, pl.
Remenant, n. Fr. A remnant, a remaining part.
Remes, n. pl. Fr. Realms.
Remissails, n. pl. Fr. Orts, leavings.
Remorde, v. Fr. To cause remorse, to afflict.
Remuable, adj. Fr. Moveable, inconstant.
Remue, *Remewe*, *Remeve*, v. Fr. To remove. *Remued*, pa. t.
Renably, adv. Fr. Reasonably.
Renegate, n. Fr. An apostate from christianity.
Reneie, v. Fr. To renounce, to abjure.
Renges, n. pl. Ranks, the steps of a ladder.
Renne, v. Sax. To run, to rend. q?
Renomee, n. Fr. Renown.
Renovelaunce, n. Fr. A renewing.
Renovelle, v. Fr. To renew.
Rent, v. Sax. To tear, or rend.
Repaire, n. Fr. Resort.
Repaire, v. Fr. To return.
Repentant, part. pr. Fr. Repenting.
Reprefe, *Repreve*, n. Fr. Reproof.

Repression, n. Seems to be put for power of repressing.
Requere, v. Fr. To require.
Rere, v. Sax. To raise.
Rescous, n. Fr. Rescue.
Rescowe, v. Fr. To rescue.
Reson, n. Fr. Reason, proportion.
Resons, n. pl. Fr. Discourses.
Respite, n. May perhaps be put for respect.
Respiten, inf. m. Fr. To grant a respite, to excuse.
Resport n. Is probably put for respect.
Reste, n. Sax. Repose.
Reste, v. Sax. To repose, to cease from labour.
Retenue, n. Fr. Retinue. At his retenue: Retained by him.
Rethor, n. Fr. Lat. An orator, or rhetorician.
Reve, n. Sax. A steward, or bailif.
Reve, v. Sax. To take away.
Revel, n. Fr. Entertainment, properly during the night; sport, festivity.
Revelour, n. A reveller.
Revelrie, n. Pleasure.
Revers, adj. Fr. Contrary.
Reverse, v. Fr. To overturn.
Revert, v. Fr. To turn back.
Revest, v. Fr. To cloath again.
Rew, n. A row, or line. On a rew: In a line. All by rew. See *A'row.*
Rewake, v. Sax. To waken again.
Reward, n. Fr. Regard, respect. Take reward of thine owen value: Have regard to t. o. v. In reward of: In comparison with. See *Regard.*
Rewe, v. Sax. To have compassion, to suffer, to have cause to repent.
Reyes, n. pl. Dances, in use among the Dutch. Reye. Belg. Chorea celerior, chorea in longam seriem. Kilian.
Reysed. Journeyed. "Les Gandois firent une rese sur les marches, de Haynault, et dedans le pays pillerent, bruslerent, et firent moult de maux." Mem. de la Marche, p. 384. Where a note in the margin says, "Reyse en bas Alemand signifie un voyage ou course."
Ribaninges, n. pl. Seems to signifie borders.
Ribaude, n. A poor labourer. But the word generally implies profligacy of manners as well as meanness of condition. See Du Cange in v. Ribaldus.
Ribaudrie, n. Ribaldry, indecent words, or actions.
R bibe, n. The same as *Rebekke.*
Ribible, n. A small ribibe.
Richard, pr. n. I. king of England.
Richesse, n. Fr. Wealth. *Richesses*, pl. Riches.
Riddeled, part. pa. Plaited. Gl. Ur. In one place the French orig. has—Et fut si bien cueillie et jointe,—which Chaucer has translated—Lorde! it was riddeled fetisly.
Ridden, part. pa. of *Ride.* He is ridden. They ben ridden. He had ridden.
Ride, v. Sax. He rideth him.
Rife, *Rive*, v. Sax. To thrust through.
Right, n. Sax. A right, or due. At alle rightes: At all points.
Right, adj. Good, true.
Right, adv. Truely, rightly, exactly, completely. It is frequently joined to adjectives, as the adverbs, well and full are, to augment their force.
Rime, n. Fr. A composition in rime. Hence the title of The Rime of Sire Thopas. Rime-dogerel. See *Dogerel.*
Rimeyed, part. pa. Fr. Composed in rime or verse.
Rimpled, part. pa. Sax. Wrinkled.
Ring, v. Sax. To make to sound.
——, v. neut. To sound.
Rise, n. Sax. Small twigs of trees or bushes.
Rishe, n. Sax. A rush.
Rist for *Riseth.*
Rit for *Rideth.*
Rivage. See *Arivage.*
Rive, v. neut. Sax. To split, to fall asunder.
Riveling, part. pr. Sax. Wrinkling. Ruyffelen. Belg. Rugare. Kilian.
River, n. Fr. Fro river, or fro the river, i. e. from hawking at water-fowl.
Roche, n. Fr. A rock. *Roches*, pl.
Rode, n. Sax. The cross. Rode-beem. It is also called the Rode-tree; from its being made of wood.
Rode, n. Sax. Complexion.
Rody, adj. Sax. Ruddy.
Rof, pa. t. of *Rife*. *Rofte* should probably be *Rofe.*
Rogge, v. Sax. To shake. Roggyn or mevyn. Agito. Prompt. Parv.
Roigne, n. Fr. A scab, mange, &c.
Roignous adj. Fr. Scabby, rough.
Rokette, n. Fr. A loose upper garment.
Roking, part. pr. of *Rokke*, or *Rogge*, v. neut. Sax. Shaking, trembling. Roggyn or waveryn. Vacillo. Prompt. Parv.
Romances, reales. Royal romances.
Rombel, n. A rumbling noise, rumour.
Rome, v. Sax. To walk about.
Rondel, n. Fr. "A rime or sonnet which ends as it begins." Cotgrave.
Rone, pr. n. Rouen in Normandy.
Rone, pa. t. of *Rain*, v. Sax. Rained.
Ropen, part. pa. of *Repe*, v. Sax. Reaped.
Rosalgar. Red arsenic; a preparation of orpiment. Chambers, in v. Realgar. It should rather perhaps have been written Rysalgar, with Ms. C. 1. as the Latin name is Risigallum.
Rosen, adj. Rosy.
Roser, n. Fr. A rose-bush.
Rose-red, adj. Red as a rose.
Rote, n. Sax. A root.
Rote. A root, in astrology. See *Expans yeres.*
Rote, n. A musical instrument. See Du Cange, in v. Rocta. Notker, who lived in the xth century, says, that it was the ancient Psalterium, but altered in its shape and with an additional number of strings. Schilter, in v. Rotta.
Rote, n. Fr. Practice. By rote: By heart. Par rotine. Cotg.
Rote, v. Sax. To rot.
Roten, part. pa.
Rother, n. Sax. The rudder of a ship.
Rought for *Raught*, pa. t. of *Reche.*
Rouke, v. Sax. To lie close. But now they rucken in her nest. Conf. Am. 72.
Roule, v. neut. Sax. To roll, to run easily. In verse 6235 some copies have *royle.* See *Reile.*
Roume, n. Sax. Room, space.
Roume, adj. Wide, spacious.
Roumer, comp. d. Wider.
Rounecvall, pr. n. Perhaps the name of some fraternity now unknown.

Rouncie, n. Barb. Lat. A common hackney horse. See Du Cange, in v. Runcinus.

Roundel, n. Fr. A sort of song. See *Rondel*.—A circular figure.

Route, n. Fr. A company.

Route, v. To assemble in a company.

Route, v. Fr. To snore, to roar.

Routhe, n. Sax. Compassion, the object of compassion.

Routheles, adj. Without compassion.

Row, n. A line of writing. See *Rew*.

Row, adj. Sax. Rough. He loked wel rowe.

Rowne, v. Sax. To whisper.

Rubens. See *Puella*.

Rubins, n. pl. Fr. Rubies.

Rucking, part. pa. of *Rucke*, or *Rouke*, v. Sax. Lying close.

Rudde, n. Sax. Complexion. See *Rode*.

Ruddock, n. Sax. A bird, called robin red-breast.

Rufus, pr. n. A Greek physician, of whose works some are extant. See Fabric. Bibl. Gr. L. iv. c. 3.

Ruggy, adj. Rough.

Russel, pr. n. The fox is call Dan Russel in ver. 15340, from his red colour, I suppose.

S.

Sachelles, n. pl. Fr. Small sacks.

Sacked freres. Friars wearing a coarse upper garment called saccus. Mat. Paris, ad an. 1257. Eodem tempore novus ordo apparuit Londini de quibusdam fratribus ignotis et non prævisis, qui, quia saccis incedebant induti, Fratres Saccati vocabantur.

Sacre, n. Fr. A sacred solemnity.

Sade, adj. Sax. Grave, steady, sorrowful, repentant.

Sadly, adv. Steadily, carefully. This messager drank sadly ale and wine: This messenger applied himself to drink a. & w.

Sadness, n. Gravity, steadiness.

Saffron, v. Fr. To tinge with saffron.

Saie for *Seie*, pa. t. of *Se*, v. Sax. Saw.

Saile, v. Fr. To assail.

Sailours, n. pl. May mean dancers, from the Lat. Fr. So in Pierce Ploughman 68. For I can—neither saylen, ne saute, ne syng to the gyterne. The lines which Chaucer has here translated are not in the best edit. of the Rom. de la Rose. Paris. 1735. but they are quoted by Junius, Etym. Ling. Angl. in v. Timbestere, from an edit. of 1529.

> Apres y eut farces joyeuses,
> Et batelleurs et batelleuses,
> Qui de passe passe jouoyent,
> Et en l'air ung bassin ruoyent,
> Puis le scavoyent bien recueillir
> Sur ung doy, sans point y faillir.

Where it is plain that the author is speaking of jugglers rather than dancers.

Saine, for *Seine*, part. pa. of *Se*, v. Sax. Seen.

Saine, pr. n. The river Seine.

Salade, n. Fr. A sort of armour for the head.

Salades, n. pl. Fr. Sallads of herbs.

Saleue, *Salue*, v. Fr. To salute.

Salued, part. pa.

Saluinges, n. pl. Salutations.

Samite, n. Fr. Gr. A rich silk. See Du Cange, in v. Examitus.

Sanguin, adj. Fr. Of a blood-red colour.

Sarlinishe. Should perhaps be Sarsinishe, from the Fr. Sarrasinois; a sort of fine silk, used for veils. See Du Cange, in v. Saracenicum and Saracenum. It is still called sarcenet.

Sarpleres, n. pl. Packages of a larger size than sacks. See Du Cange, in v. Sarplerium. Sarpillére, Fr. A piece of canvas, &c. to wrap or pack up wares in. Cotgrave.

Saten, pa. t. pl. of *Sit*, v. Sax.

Satalie, pr. n. The ancient Attalia.

Save, n. Lat. The herb sage.

Sauf, adj. Fr. Safe. See *Vouche*.—Saved, or excepted.

Saufte, n. Fr. Safety.

Saule for *Soule*.

Savour, v. neut. Fr. To taste, to relish.

Savouring, n. Fr. The sense of tasting.

Savourous, adj. Sweet, pleasant.

Sauseſleme. Pimpled. But Ms. Bodl. 2463. furnishes another etymology, which I think more probable. "Unguentum contra salsum flegma, scabiem, &c." See Galen. in Hippoc. de Aliment. Comment. iii. p. 277. ὁ λαχην — γινεται απο ΦΛΕΓΜΑΤΟΣ ΑΛΜΥΡΟΥ και της ξανθης χολης. And again, ὁ αλφος—ὑπο τα ΦΛΕΓΜΑΤΟΣ ωχ ΑΛΤΚΟΥ.

Sautes, n. pl. Fr. Assaults.

Sautrie, n. Fr. Gr. A musical string-instrument. See *Rote*.

Sawe, n. Sax. Speech, discourse, a proverb, or wise saying.

Say for *Sey*, pa. t. of *Se*, v. Sax. Saw.

Scall, n. Sax. A scale or scab. Ch. words to his Scrivener. 3.

Scalled, adj. Scabby, scurfy.

Scantilone, n. Fr. A pattern, a scantling.

Scaree, adj. Fr. Sparing, stingy.

Scariot, pr. n. Judas Iscariot.

Scarmishe, n. Fr. A skirmish, a battle.

Scathe, n. Sax. Harm, damage.

Scathful, *Scathelicke*, adj. Pernicious.

Scatheles, adj. Without harm.

Sclaundre, n. Fr. Slander.

Sclendre, adj. Slender.

Scochons, n. pl. Fr. Scutcheons of arms.

Scolaie, v. Fr. To attend school, to studie.

Script, n. Fr. A writing.

Scriptures, n. pl. Fr. Writings, books.

Scriven-like. Like a scrivener, or writing-master; Comme un escrivain.

Seames, n. pl. Sax. Seames: Suturæ.

Secree, adj. Fr. Secret.

Secrenesse, n. Privacy.

Seculer, adj. Fr. Of the laity, in opposition to clerical.

Sede, v. Sax. To produce seed.

See, n. Fr. A seat. *Sees*, pl.

See, v. Sax. To see. God you see; God him see: May God keep you, or him, in his sight! On to see: To look on. That—Ye wolde sometime friendly on me see: That ye would sometimes look friendly on me.

See, n. Sax. The sea. The grete see. A learned friend has suggested to me, that the sea on the coast of Palestine is called the Great Sea in the Bible (See Numb. xxxiv. 6. 7. Josh. xv. 12.); which puts the meaning of the appellation in this passage verse 59 out of all doubt.

Sege, n. Fr. A seige.

Seie, Sey, pa. t. of *See*, v. Sax. Saw, part. pa. Seen.
Seignorie, n. Fr. Power.
Sein, part. pa. of *See*, v. Sax. Seen.
Seinde, part. pa. of *Senge*, v. Sax. Singed.
Seint, n. Fr. Ceinct. A girdle.
Seintuarie, n. Fr. Sanctuary.
Seke, v. Sax. To seek.
Seke, adj. Sax. Sick.
Selden, adv. Sax. Seldom. Selden time.
Sele, n. Fr. A seal. *Seles*, pl.
Self, Selve, adj. Sax. answering to the Belg. Self, the Fr. Même, the Lat. Ipse, and the Gr. Αυτος. —With the article prefixed it answers to the Lat. Idem, and the Goth. Samo, from whence our same. In the selve moment: In the same moment. In the selve place: In the same place.
Selle, n. Fr. Celle. Cell.
Selle for *Sille*, n. Sax. A door-sill or threshold.
Selve, adj. See *Self*.
Sely, adj. Sax. Silly, simple, harmless.
Selynesse, n. Sax. Happiness.
Semblable, adj. Fr. Like.
Semblaunt, n. Fr. Seeming, appearance.
Semeliche, Semely, adj. Sax. Seemly, comely. *Semelieste*, superl. d.
Semelyhede, n. Seemliness, comeliness.
Semisoun, n. Lat. A low, or broken tone.
Semicore, n. A half, or short, cloke.
Sen, Sene, inf. m. of *Se*.
Send for *Sendeth*.
Sendall, n. A thin silk. See Du Cange, in v, Cendalum.
Seneck, pr. n. Seneca, the philosopher. What is said of him in the Monkes, tale, ver. 14421—14436. is taken from the Rom. de la Rose, ver. 6461—6499.
Senge, v. Sax. To singe.
Senior, pr. n. Senior Zadith, a chemical writer.
Sentence, n. Fr. Sense, meaning, judgement.
Septe, pr. n. Ceuta, formerly Septa, in Africa, over-against Gibraltar.
Sepulture, n. Fr. Grave.
Serapion, pr. n. Joannes Serapion, an Arabian physician of the xith century. Fabric. Bibl. Gr. t. xiii. p. 299.
Sere, adj. Sax. Dry.
Sergeant, n. Fr. A squier, attendant upon a prince or nobleman.—*A sergeant of the lawe*. See his *Character*, ver. 311—332. His name is derived from his having been originally a servant of the king in his law-business; serviens ad legem, just as serviens ad arma. The king had formerly a serjeant in every county. Spelman, in v. *Serviens*.
Serie, n. Fr. Series.
Sermoning, n. Fr. Preaching.
Servage, n. Fr. Servitude, slavery.
Servand, part. pr. of *Serve*. Serving.
Serve, v. Fr. To serve, to behave to.
Set for *Setteth*, or for *Sette*, pa. t.
Setewale, n. Sax. The herb Valerian.
Sethe, v. Sax. To boil.
Sethe for *Sethed*, pa. t.
Sette, v. Sax. To place, to put. Setteth him doun: Placeth himself on a seat. Yet sette I cas: Yet I put the case, or suppose.—To put a a value on a thing; to rate. I n'olde sette his sorrow at a myte: I would not value h. s.—To sette a man's cappe: To make a fool of him.
Seurement, n. Fr. Security, in a legal sense.
Seuretee, n. Fr. Certainty, surety, in a legal sense.
Sewe, v. Fr. To follow.
Sewes, n. pl. Fr. Dishes.
Seye. See *Seie*.
Shadde, pa. t. of *Shede*, v. Sax. Fell in drops.
Shadde, pa. t. of *Shade*, v. Sax. Shaded, covered with shade.
Shadowy, adj. Sax. Unsubstantial.
Shaft, n. Sax. An arrow.
Shal, auxil. v. Sax. is used sometimes with an ellipsis of the infinitive mode, which ought to follow it. Beth swiche as I have ben to you and shal, i. e. shall be. First tell me whither I shal, i. e. shall go. Yet all is don or shal, i. e. shall be done.
Shale, n. Sax. A shell, or husk. But all n'is worthe a nutte shale. Conf. Am. 66.
Shalmies, n. pl. Shalms; musical string-instruments, otherwise called psalteries or sautries. See *Rote*.
Shame, n. Sax. Shames dethe: A death of shame; a shameful death. To York he did him lede, schames dede to deie.
Shamefast, adj. Sax. Modest.
Shape, n. Sax. Form, figure.
Shapelich, adj. Sax. Fit, likely.
Shapen, Shape, part. pa. of *Shape*, v. Sax. Formed, figured, prepared.
Shawe, n. Sax. A shade of trees, a grove.
Shefe, n. Sax. A bundle, a sheaf of arrowes. *Shevees*, pl. of corn.
Shefeld, pr. n. Sheffield, in Yorkshire.
Sheld, n. Sax. A shield. *Sheldes*, pl. French crowns, called in Fr. Ecus, from their having on one side the figure of a shield.
Shemering, n. Sax. A glimmering.
Shend, v. Sax. To ruin.
Shendship, n. Ruin, punishment.
Shene, adj. Sax. Bright, shining.
Shent, part. pa. of *Shend*.
Shepen, n. Sax. A stable.
Shere, v. Sax. To cut, to shave.
Sherte, n. Sax. A shirt. I hadde lever than my sherte. I would give my shirt, i. e. all that I have.—It seems to mean the linen in which a new-born child is wrapped. That shapen was my dethe erst than my sherte. Compare Troilus iii. 734.

> O fatal sustrèn, whiche or any clothe
> Me shapen was, my destinee me sponne—

and Legende of goode Women, 2618.

> Sens first that day, that shapen was my sherte,
> Or by the fatal suster had my dome.—

In Troilus iv. 96. Alas! that I ne had brought her in my sherte! it seems to be put for skirt (or lap), which perhaps was the original word.
Shete, v. Sax. To shoot.
Shetes, n. pl. Sax. Sheets.
Shette, Shet, v. Sax. To close, or shut.
Shette, Shet, pa. t. and part. So was hire herte shette in hire distresse: So was her heart overwhelmed with h. d.
Shift, v. Sax. To divide.
Shilde, Shelde, v. Sax. To shield. God shilde: God shield, or forbid!
Shipman, n. Sax. A mariner, the master of a barge. See his character, ver. 390—412.

Shiver, n. Sax. A small slice.
Shode, n. Sax. The hair of a man's head.
Shode, part. pa. of *Shoe*, v. Sax. Shod, having shoes on.
Shofe, pa. t. of *Shove*, v. Sax. Pushed.
Shonde, n. Sax. Haun.
Shope, pa. t. of *Shape*.
Shore, part. pa. of *Shere*.
Shorte, v. Sax. To make short.
Shot, part. pa. of *Shette*. Shut.
Shoter, n. Sax. A shooter. The yew-tree is called shoter, because bows are usually made of it.
Shottes, n. pl. Sax. Arrows, darts, any thing that is shot.
Shove, Showve, v. Sax. To push. *Shove*, part. pa.
Shrewe, v. Sax. To curse.
——— n. Sax. An ill-tempered, curst man, or woman. *Shrewes*, pl. Pessimi. Orig.
Shrewed, adj. Sax. Wicked. Shreude folk. Impios. Orig.
Shrewednesse, n. Sax. Ill-nature.
Shrift, n. Sax. Confession.
Shrifte-faders, n. pl. Sax. Father-confessors.
Shrive, v. Sax. To make confession.
Shriven, part. pa. I have been shriven this day of my curat; I have made my confession t. d. to my curate.
Shright for *Shricheth*. Shrieketh.
Shright, pa. t. of *Shrich*, v. Sax. Shrieked.
Shroude, v. Sax. To hide.
Shulde, pa. t. of *Shal*. Should. *Shulden*, pl.
Shullen, Shuln, Shul, ind. m. pr. t. pl. of *Shal*.
Sibbe, adj. Sax. Related, allied.
Sie for *Seie*. Saw.
Sift, v. Sax. To shake in a sive.
Sigh for *Seie*. Saw.
Sighte, pa. t. of *Sike*. Sighed.
Signe, v. Fr. To appoint.
Signifer, n. Lat. The Zodiack.
Signifiaunce, n. Fr. Signification.
Sike, adj. Sax. Sick. In ver. 5976. it seems to be used, as a noun, for sickness.
Sike, v. Sax. To sigh.
Sike, n. Sax. A sigh. *Sikes*, pl.
Siker, adj. Sax. Sure.
Sikerde, part. pa. of *Siker*, v. Sax. Assured.
Sikernesse, n. Security.
Sikerly, adv. Surely.
Simplesse, n. Fr. Simplicity.
Sin, adv. Sax. abbreviation of *Sithen*. Since.
Sinamome, n. Fr. Cinnamon.
Sip, n. Sax. Drink.
Sipher, n. A cipher or figure of o, in arithmetic. "Although a sipher in augrim have no might in signification of itselfe, yet he yeveth power in signification to other." There is another passage in the Book of the Duchesse ver. 435.—40. which seems to implie, that, in Chaucer's time, the numerals, commonly called Arabian, had not been long in use in this country.
Sire, n. Fr. Sieur, seigneur. A respectful title, given formerly to men of various descriptions, as well as to knights. Sire knight. Sire clerk. Sire monk. Sire man of lawe. It was so usually given to priests, that it has crept even into acts of parliament. Rot. Parl. 12. and 13. E. IV. n. 14. Sir James Thekeness, Preste. 1. H.VII. p.11. Sir Oliver Langton, Prest. Sir Robert Naylesthorp, Prest. Hence a Sir John came to be a nickname for a priest. Sire is sometimes put for personage. And melancholy, that angry sire.—Our sire: Our husband; our good-man; as the French in their old familiar language, use notre sire.
Sis, n. Fr. The cast of six, the highest cast upon a die.
Sit for *Sitteth*. It sit me not to lie: It doth not become me t. l. It syt a kynge wel to be chast. Conf. Am. 168. b.
Sithe for *Sithes*, n. pl. Sax. Times.
Sithen, Sith, adv. Sax. Since.
Sithes, n. pl. Sax. Seythes.
Sitte, v. Sax. To sit, to become, to suit with. See *Sit*.
Sittand, part. pr.
Sitten, part. pa.
Skaffaut, n. Fr. A scaffold, a wooden tower.
Skaffold, n. A scaffold, or stage.
Skie, n. Sax. A cloud.
Skill, n. Sax. Reason. *Skilles*, pl.
Skilful, adj. Reasonable.
Skinke, v. Sax. To pour out, to serve with drink.
Skipte, pa. t. of *Skippe* v. Sax. Leaped.
Skogan, pr. n. Author of the Jestes.
Skorcle, v. Sax. To scorch.
Skrippe, n. Fr. Escharpe. A scrip.
Slacke, adj. Sax. Slow.
Slain, part, pa. of *Sle*.
Slake, v. Sax. To appease, to make slack.
——— v. neut. To fail, to desist.
Slawe, part. pa. of *Sle*.
Sle, v. Sax. To kill, to slay.
Sleer, n. Sax. A killer.
Sleighly, adv. Sax. Cunningly.
Sleight, n. Sax. Contrivance.
Slen, pr. t. pl. of *Sle*, inf. m.
Slep, Slepe, pa. t. of *Slepe*, v. Sax. Slept.
Slete, n. Sax. Sleet, a mixture of rain and snow.
Slevelesse, adj. Seems to signifie idle, unprofitable; as it does still in vulgar language.
Slider, adj. Sax. Slippery.
Sliding, part. pr. Uncertain.
Slie, Sligh, adj. Sax. Cunning.
Slike, for *Swilke*, adj. Sax. Such.
Slit, for *Slideth*.
Slit, v. Sax. To cut through, to cleave.
Sliver, n. Sax. A small slice, or piece.
Slo, v. Sax. To slay.
Slogardie, n. Fr. Sax. Sloth.
Slomberinges, n. pl. Sax. Slumberings.
Sloppe, n. Sax. A sort of breeches.
Slow, pa. t. of *Slo*. Slew
Slowe, n. Sax. A moth. In the orig. Fr. Taigne.
Sluggy, adj. Sax. Sluggish.
Smatish, adj. Sax. Diminutive of smale, or small.
Smerte, v. Sax. To smart, to suffer pain. Sometimes it seems to be used as an adverb; Smartly.
Smit, for *Smiteth*, ind. m. 3 pers. sing.
Smiteth, imp. m. 2. pers. pl. Smite ye.
Smithe, v. Sax. To forge, as a smith.
Smitted for *Smitten*, part. pa. of *Smite*.
Smokles, adj. Sax. Without a smock.
Smoterlich, adj. Means, I suppose, smutty, dirty. But the whole passage is obscure.
Snewe, v. Sax. To snow, to be in as great abundance as snow.
Snibbe, v. Sax. To snubb, to reprove.
Snow-white, adj. Sax. White as snow.
Soden, adj. Sax. Sudden.
Soget, n. Fr. Subject.
Soigne, n. Fr. Care.

Sojour, n. Fr. Stay, abode.
Soken, n. Sax. Toll.
Sokingly, adv. Sucklingly, gently. See *Souke*.
Solas, n. Fr. Mirth, sport.
Solein, adj. Fr. One, single, sullen.
Solempne, adj. Fr. Solemn.
Solempnely, adv. Solemnly.
Soler hall. A hall with an open gallery. A solere windowe occurs for the window of a loft, or garret.
Som, adj. Sax. Some. This is all and som: This is the whole. All and some: One and all.
Somdel, adv. Sax. Somewhat, in some measure.
Somer, pr. n. In the treatise on the Astrolabe, Chaucer professes to make use of the kalenders of the reverent clerkes frere John Somer and frere Nicholas Lenne. The kalendar of John Somur is extant in Ms. Cotton, Vesp. E. vii. It is calculated for 140 years from 1367, the year of the birth of Richard II, and is said, in the introduction, to have been published in 1380, at the instance of Joan, mother to the king. The kalender of Nicholas Lenne, or Lynne, was calculated for 76 years from 1387. Tanner in v. Nicolaus Linensis. The story there quoted from Hakluit of a voyage made by this Nicholas in 1360 ad insulas septentrionales antehac Europæis incognitas, and of a book written by him to describe those countries a gradu 54. usque ad polum, is a mere fable; as appears from the very authorities which Hakluit has produced in support of it.
Somme. Troilus and Creseide ii. 1249. Lo! Troilus—

Came riding with his tenthe somme ifere.

So this line stands in the editt. but a Ms. quoted in Gloss. Ur. instead of tenthe has x. and Ms. I. tenteth. Perhaps the original reading was xx. With his twenty some ifere, according to the Saxon mode of expression, would signifie together with some twenty of his attendants. See Hickes, Gramm. A. S. p. 32, 3.
Somme, n. Fr. A sum.
Sommer, n. Sax. Summer.
Somone, *Sompne*, v. Lat. To summon.
Sompnour, n. An officer employed to summon delinquents to appear in ecclesiastical courts, now called an Apparitor. See his character, ver. 625—670.
Sond, n. Sax. Sand.
—— n. seems to signifie a sounding line; from the Fr. Sonde.
Sonde, n. Sax. A message. Goddes sonde: What God has sent; God's gift.
Sone, adv. Sax. Soon.
—— n. Sax. A son. *Sones*, pl.
Sonken, part. pa. of *Sink*, v. Sax. Sunk.
Sonne, n. Sax. The sun.
Sonnish, adj. Sax. Like the sun.
Sooty, adj. Sax. Foul with soot.
Sop, n. Fr. A piece of bread dipped in any sort of liquor. He toke a soppe. Conf. Am. 104.
Sophime, n. Fr. Gr. A sophism, a subtle fallacy.
Sore, v. Fr. Essorer. To soar.
Sort, n. Fr. Chance, destiny.
Sorted, pa. t. of *Sort*, v. Fr. Allotted.
Sorwe, n. Sax. Sorrow.
Sory, adj. Sax. Sorrowful. Sory grace: Misfortune. See *Grace*, and *With*.
Sote, n. Sax. Soot.
Sote, *Swote*, adj. Sax. Sweet.
Sote, n. Fr. A fool.
Soted, part. pa. Fr. Fooled, besotted.
Sotel, adj. Fr. Subtle, artfully contrived.
Soth, adj. Sax. True, certain. *Sother*, comp. d.
Soth, *Sothly*, adv. Truly.
Sothe, n. Sax. Truth.
Sothfastness, n. Sax. Truth.
Sotherne, adj. Sax. Southern.
Sothness, n. Sax. Truth, reality.
Soth-saw, n. Veracity, true-saying.
Soudan, n. A sultan, any Mahometan sovereign. See D'Herbelot, in v. Solthan.
Soudanesse, n. The wife of a sultan.
Souded, part. pa. Consolidated, fastened together. Sowde-metel. Consolidum. Prompt. Parv.
Soveraine, adj. Fr. Excellent, in high degree.
Soverainly, adv. Above all.
Souke, v. Fr. To suck.
Souked, part. pa.
Souled, part. pa. Sax. Endued with a soul.
Soun, n. Fr. Sound, noise.
Sounde, v. Sax. To make sound, to heal.—v. neut. To grow sound.
Soune, v. Fr. To sound. As fer as souneth into honestee: As far as is consonant to h. That souneth unto gentillesse of love: That is consonant to g. o. l.
Souning, part. pr.
Soupe, v. Fr. To sup, to take the evening-meal. *Soupen*, pl.
Souper, n. Supper, the evening-meal.
Soupie, adj. Fr. Supple, pliant.
Sourde, v. Fr. To rise.
Sours, n. A rise, a rapid ascent, the source of a stream of water.
Souter, n. Lat. A cobler.
Sowe, v. Lat. To sew. It was usual, and indeed necessary, formerly to sew letters, when they were written upon parchment. But the practice continued long after the invention of paper.
Sowe, v. Sax. To sow.
Sowers, n. pl. Sores, bucks in their fourth year.
Span-newe, adj. Seems to signifie quite new; but why it does so, I cannot pretend to say.
Spannishing, n. Fr. Espanouissement. The full blow of a flower.
Spare, v. Sax. To refrain.
Spareth, imp. m. 2 pers. pl.
Sparande, part. pr. Sparing, niggardly.
Sparhauk, n. Sax. A sparrow-hawk.
Sparre, n. Sax. A wooden bar.
Sparred, part. pa. Barred, bolted.
Sparthe, n. Sax. An ax, or halberd. See Du Cange, in v. Sparth, Securis Danica.
Speces, n. pl. Sorts, or kinds.
Spede, v. Fr. To dispatch.
Spedeful, adj. Effectual.
Spektakel n. Fr. Lat. A spying glass.
Spell, n. Sax. Sport, play, tale, or history.
Spance, n. Fr. Despence. A store room for wine, or victuals.
Spere, n. Fr. A sphere.
—— n. Sax. A spear.
Spered, *Sperred*, as *Sparred*.
Sperme, n. Fr. Gr. Seed.
Spiced, 528. 6017. I have meet with a passage, in which spiced, applied to conscience, seems to signifie nice, scrupulous. Beaumont and Fletcher.

Mad Lover, Act 3. When Cleanthe offers a purse, the Priestess says,

Fy! no corruption——
Cl. Take it; it is yours;
Be not so spiced; it is good gold;
And goodness is no gall to the conscience.

Spices, as *Speces*.
Spille, v. Sax. To waste, to throw away, to destroy. v. neut. To perish.
Spire, n. A stake, a corruption probably of spere, Sax.
Spired. Inquired.
Spitous, adj. Fr. Despiteux. Angry, spightful.
Spitously, adv. Angrily.
Splaie, v. Fr. Desploier. To unfold.
Spone, n. Sax. A spoon.
Sponne, pa. t. of *Spinne*, v. Sax. Spun.
Spore, n. Sax. A spur.
Sporne, v. Sax. To strike the foot against any thing.
Spousaile, n. Fr. Marriage.
Sprag, n. Sax. A twig, or sprig.
Sprent, part. pa. of *Sprenge*, v. Sax. Sprinkled.
Springolds, n. pl. Fr. Espringalle. Machines for casting stones and arrowes. See Du Cange in v. Muschetta.
Squames, n. pl. Lat. Scales.
Squier, n. Fr. A squire. See his Character, ver. 79—100.
Squirr, v. To attend as a squire.
Squierie, n. A number of squires. And alle ther squierie. And of his squierie gentille men auhtene.
Stace, pr. n. Statius, the Roman poet.
Stacke, n. Sax. A stack of wood, &c.
Stacke, pa. t. of *Stick*, v. Sax. Stuck.
Staff-sling, means, I suppose, a sling fastened to a staff. Lydgate in his Trag. 39. b. describes David as armed

With a *staffe slynge*, voyde of plate and mayle.

Staker, v. Sax. To stagger.
Stalke, v. Sax. To step slowly. Ful thefely gan he stalke. And to the bedde he stalketh stylle. Conf. Am. 32.
Stalkes, n. pl. Sax. The upright pieces of a ladder.
Stamen, *Stamin*, n. Fr. Estamine. A sort of woollen cloth.
Stant for *Standeth*.
Starfe, pa. t. of *Sterve*. Died.
Stark, adj. Sax. Stiff, stout.
Starlinges, n. pl. Pence of sterling money.
Staunche, v. Fr. To stop, to satisfie.
Stele, n. Sax. A handle.
Stellifie, v. Lat. To make a star.
Stenle, v. Sax. To cease, to desist.
Stenten, part. pa.
Stepe, adj. Seems to be used in the sense of deep; so that eyen stepe may signifie eyes sunk deep in the head.
Stere, v. Sax. To stir.
Stere, n. Sax. A young bullock, a rudder.
Stereles, adj. Sax. Without a rudder.
Steresman, n. Sax. A pilot.
Sterne, n. Sax. A rudder.
Sterne, adj. Sax. Fierce, cruel.
Sterre, n. Sax. A star.
Stert, n. Sax. A leap. At a stert: Immediately.
Sterte, pa. t. of *Sterte*, v. Sax. Leaped, escaped, ran away.
Sterting, part. pr. Leaping nimbly.
Stertling, as *Sterting*.
Sterve, v. Sax. To die, to perish.
Stevn, n. Sax. Voice, sound, a time of performing any action, previously fixed by message, order, summons, &c. At unset steven: Without any previous appointment. They setten steven: They appointed a time.
Stewe, n. Fr. A small pond for fish, a small closet.
Stewes, pl. Stews, baudy-houses.
Stye, v. Sax. To ascend.
Steyers, n. pl. Sax. Stairs.
Stibborne, adj. Stubborn.
Stike, v. Sax. To stick, pierce.
Stile, n. Sax. A set of steps, to pass from one field to another. By stile and eke by strete: Every where; in town and country.
Stillatorie, n. Fr. A still.
Stille, adj. Sax. Quiet.
Sithe, n. Sax. An anvil.
Stives, as *Stewes*.
Stoble-goos. A goose fed on stubble-grounds.
Stocked, part. pa. Confined.
Stole, n. Fr. Lat. Part of the ecclesiastical habit, worn about the neck. See Du Cange in v. Stola. 2.
Stole, n. Sax. A stool.
Stonden, part. pa. of *Stonde*, or *Stande*, v. Sax. Stood.
Stont, for *Stondeth*.
Stopen, part. pa. of *Stepe*, v. Sax. Stepped, advanced.
Store, n. Fr. To stock, or furnish.
Store, n. Any thing laid up for use. Hence the phrase, to tell no store of a thing, means, to consider it as of no use or importance.
Storial, adj. Fr. Historical, true.
Storven, pa. t. pl. of *Sterve*.
Stot, n. Sax. A stallion.
Stote, n. A species of weazle, a pole-cat.
Stound, n. Sax. A moment, a short space of time. In a stound: On a sudden. In stound, should probably be In a stound. *Stoundes*, pl. Times, seasons.
Stoundemele, adv. Momentarily, every moment.
Stoupen, should probably be Stopen.
Stoure, n. Sax. Fight, battle.
Strake, v. Sax. To proceed directly. *Stracken*, stricken. Tendere. Kilian.
Strange, adj. Fr. Foreign, uncommon. He made it strange: He made it a matter of difficulty, or nicety.
Straughte, pa. t. of *Strecche*, v. Sax. Stretched. Conf. Am. 184.
Stre, n. Sax. Straw.
Streight, part. pa. of *Strecche*, v. Sax. Stretched.
Streine, v. Fr. To constrain, to press closely.
Streite, adj. Fr. Strait. Streite swerd.
Stremed-n, pa. t. pl. of *Streme*, v. Sax. Streamed, flowed.
Stremes, n. pl. The rays of the sun.
Strene, n. Sax. Stock, race, progeny.
Strengest-faithed, adj. Endowed with the strongest faith.
Strepe, v. Fr. To strip.
Strete, n. Sax. A street.
Strike, n. Sax. A line, a streak. A strike of flax.
Stripe, n. Lat. Stirps. Race, kindred.

Stripe, v. as *Strepe*.

Strode, pr. n. The philosophical Strode, to whom, jointly with the moral Gower, Chaucer directs his Troilus, was probably Ralph Strode, of Merton College, Oxford. A. Wood, who had made the antiquities of that college a particular object of his enquiries, says only of him, "*Radul phus Strode*, de quo sic vetus noster catalogus. Poeta fuit et versificavit librum elegiacum vocat. Phantasma Rodulphi. Claruit CIↃCCCLXX." Some of his logical works are said to be extant in print. Venet. 1517. 4to. Tanner, in v. Strodæus.

Stroſ, pa. t. of *Strive*, v. Fr. Strove, contended.

Stronde, n. Sax. A shore.

Strother, pr. n. A town in the North.

Stroute, v. To strut.

Suburbes, n. pl. Lat. Suburbs.

Subfumigation, n. Lat. A species of charm by smoke.

Subget, adj. Fr. Lat. Subject.

Sublimatorie, n. Fr. Lat. A vessel used by chemists in sublimation, i. e. separating certain parts of a body, and driving them to the top of the vessel, in the form of a very fine powder.

Substance, n. Fr. The material part of a thing.

Suckiny, n. Fr. Souquenie. A loose frock, worn over their other clothes by carters, &c.

Sue, v. Fr. To follow.

Sueton, pr. n. Suetonius, the Roman historian.

Suffisance, n. Fr. Sufficiency, satisfaction.

Suffisant, adj. Sufficient.

Sugred, part. pa. Sweetened, as with sugar.

Supplie, v. Fr. To supplicate.

Surcote, n. Fr. An upper coat, or kirtle.

Surplis, n. Fr. A surplice.

Surquedrie, n. Fr. Presumption, an over-weening conceit.

Surrie, pr. n. Syria.

Sursanure, n. Fr. A wound healed outwardly only.

Surveance, n. Fr. Superintendance.

Suspect, adj. Fr. Suspected.

Suspect, n. Suspicion.

Suspection, n. Suspicion.

Suster, n. Sax. Sister. *Sustren*, pl.

Swa, adv. Sax. So.

Swale, pa. t. of *Swell*, v. Sax. Swelled.

Swappe, v. Sax. To throw down, to strike off, v. neut. to fall down.

Swart, adj. Sax. Black, of a dark colour.

Swatte, pa. t. of *Swete*, v. Sax. Sweated.

Swegh, n. Sax. A violent motion.

Swelte, v. Sax. To die, to faint. *Swelt*, pa. t.

Swerne for *Swren*, pl. n. of *Swere*, v. Sax. Swear.

Sweven, n. Sax. A dream. *Swevenes*, pl. In ver. 14927 it is written *swevenis* for the sake of the rime.

Swiche, adj. Sax. corruption of *Swilke*. Such.

Swinke, n. Sax. Labour.

Swinke, v. To labour.

Swire, n. Sax. The neck. It is more commonly written swere.

Swithe, adv. Sax. Quickly, immediately.

Swive, v. Sax. See Junii Etymolog. in v.

Swolowe, n. Sax. A whirlpool.

Swonken, part. pa. of *Swinke*.

Swough, n. Sax. Sound, noise, a swoon.

T.

Tabard, n. The sign of the inn in Southwark where Chaucer and his pilgrims met, since called the Talbot.

Tables, n. pl. Fr. A game so called.

Taboure, v. Fr. To drum.

Tache, n. Fr. A spot, or blemish.

Taillager, n. Fr. A collector of taxes.

Taille, n. Fr. A tally, an account scored on a piece of wood.

Take, v. Sax. To deliver a thing to another person.

Take for *Taken*, part. pa.

Takel, n. Sax. An arrow.

Tale, v. Sax. To tell stories. And namely when they talen longe. Conf. Am. 27 b.

Tale, n. Speech, discourse, reckoning, account. Litel tale hath he told of any dreme: He made little account of any dream.

Talent, n. Fr. Desire, affection.

Taling, n. Story-telling.

Tane for *Taken*.

Tapes, n. pl. Sax. Bands of linen.

Tapinage, n. Fr. En tapinois. Lurking, sculking about.

Tapiser, n. Fr. A maker of tapestry.

Tapite, v. Fr. To cover with tapestry.

Tappe, n. Sax. A tap, or spigot, which closes that orifice through which the liquour is drawn out of a vessel.

Tapstere, n. Sax. A woman, who has the care of the tap in a public-house. That office, formerly, was usually executed by women.

Tare, pa. t. of *Tear*, v. Sax. Tore. Magd.

Targe, n. Fr. A sort of shield.

Tars, n. Cloth of Tars; Tartarium. A sort of silk. See Du Cange, in v. Tarsicus, Tartarinus.

Tas, n. Fr. A heap.

Tasseled, part. pa. Adorned with tassels.

Taste, v. Fr. To feel, to examine.

Tatarwagges, n. pl. The Orig. is—Toutes fretelées de crotes. All bedagled with dirt.

Taverner, n. Fr. The keeper of a tavern.

Taure, pr. n. The constellation Taurus.

Tawe, n. Sax. Tow.

Teche, v. Sax. To teach.

Teine, n. seems to signifie a narrow, thin, plate of metal; perhaps from the Lat. Gr. Tænia.

Temps, n. Fr. Time.

Tene, n. Sax. Grief.

Tene, v. To grieve, to afflict.

Tercelet, *Tercell*, n. Fr. The male hawk, the male eagle.

Terins, n. pl. A sort of singing-bird, called in Fr. Tarin. See Cotgrave in v.

Termagaunt, pr. n. A Saracen deity in an old romance.

Terrestre, n. Fr. Earthly.

Tery, adj. Sax. Full of tears.

Testeres, n. pl. Fr. Head-pieces.

Testes, n. pl. Lat. Vessels for assaying metals.

Testif, adj. Fr. Head-strong.

Tetch, n. as *Tache*.

Tewell, n. Fr. A pipe, or funnel.

Textual, adj. Fr. Ready at citing texts.

Thacke, n. Sax. Thatch.

Thacke, v. To thump, to thwack.

Than, adv. Sax. Quàm. Lat.

Thank, n. Sax. Thankfulness, good will. In thanke—is taken more.—

En plus grant gre, sont receus. Orig.

So the phrases, *his thankes, hir thankes,* answer to the Fr. *son gré, leur gré.*

Thanne, Than, adv. Sax. Then.

Thar, v. Sax. impers. Behoveth.

Thatte, That pron. dem. Sax. used as a relative. Thatte Seint Peter had. So this verse should be written.—That he mighte: As much as he was able; Quod potuit.—It is sometimes put, not inelegantly, for the same. With gris, and that the finest of the lond; Of fish and flesh, and that so plenteous; Shal fall a rain, and that so wild and wood.

Thatte, That, conj. Sax. Quòd. Lat.

The, prep. art. Sax. The, when prefixed to adjectives, or adverbs, in the comparative degree, is generally to be considered as a corruption of þy, which was commonly put by the Saxons for þam, the ablative ca. sing. of the art. þæt, used as a pronoun. The merier; Eo lætiùs. The more merry; Eo lætiores. Of the same construction are the phrases—Yet fare they the werse; Yet fare I never the bet.

When the is repeated with a second comparative, either adj. or adv. the first the is to be understood in the sense of the Lat. Quo. See ver. 5955.

The more it brenneth, the more it hath desire
To consume every thing.——

——Quo magis—eo magis——And ver. 8589.

And ay the further that she was in age,
The more trewe (if that it were possible)
She was to him in love and more penible.

Sometimes the first *the* is omitted, as in the phrases, Ever lenger the werse. 3870. Ever lenger the more. 8563. For certes, if a man hadde a dedly wound, ever the lenger that he taried to warishe himself, the more wold it corrupt—and also the wound wold be the werse for to hele.

The, v. Sax. To thrive, ver. 3862. So the I, i. e. so may I the, or thrive, a very ancient phrase.

Thedome, n. Sax. Thrift, success.

Thefely, adj. Sax. Like a thief.

Themes, Thenne, adv. Sax. Thence.

Thennesforth, adv. Sax. From thennesforth: From that time forward.

Theodomas, pr. n. a famous trumpeter.

Theophrast, pr. n. Theophrastus.

Ther, adv. Sax. There, in that place; is frequently used in the sense of *Where.*

Ther, in composition, signifies *that,* without including any idea of place. See Here. Therabouten, theragain, therbeforne, therby, therfore, therfro, theragaine, therof, theron, therto, therwith, therwithall.

Thewes, n. pl. Sax. Manners, qualities.

Thider, adv. Sax. Thither, to that place.

Thiderward, adv. Sax. Toward that place.

Thilke, adj. Sax. This same, that same.

Thinke, v. Sax. To consider. It is very frequently used as an impersonal in the pr. and pa. t. in the sense of *Seemeth* or *Seemed.* Me thinketh. Him thinketh. Him thoughte. Here thoughte. How thinketh you? Hem thoughte.

Thinne, adj. Sax. Slender, small. A thinne imagination: Tenui imagine. A thinne suspicion: Tenui suspicione.

Thirle, v. Sax. To pierce through.

This, pron. demonst. Sax. is sometimes put for the prepositive article.

Thise, pl.

Tho, prep. art. pl. Da. Sax. used as a demonstrative pronoun. Those.

Tho, adv. Sax. Then.

Thole, v. Sax. To suffer. And what mischefe and male ease Christ for man tholed, Pierce Ploughman, 65 b.

Thore, is put for *There,* for the sake of the rime.

Thorpe, n. Sax. A village.

Thoughten, pa. t. pl. of *Thinke,* v. Sax.

Thrall, n. Sax. A slave, or villain.

Thraile, v. To enslave.

Thraste, pa. t. of *Threste.*

Thred-bare, adj. Sax. Having the threads bare, the nap being worn away.

Thremote, should be written, in two words, thre mote, as in the Bodl. MSS. *Mot.* n. Fr. is explained by Cotgrave to signify, among other things, "the note winded by a huntsman on his horne."

Threpe, v. Sax. To call.

Threste, v. Sax. To thrust.

Thresweold, n. Sax. A threshold.

Threte, v. Sax. To threaten.

Threttene, num. Sax. Thirteen.

Thridde, adj. Sax. Third.

Thrie, Thries, adv. Sax. Thrice.

Thrilled for *Thirled,* pa. t. of *Thirle.*

Thringe, v. Sax. To thrust.

Thriste, pa. t. of *Threste.*

Thronge, pa. t. of *Thringe.*

Thropes for *Thorpes.*

Throstel, n. Sax. A thrush.

Throw, n. Sax. Time. But a throw: But a little while. Any throw: Any space of time. Many a throw: Many times.

Thrust for *Thurst,* n. Sax. Thirst.

Thrusty for *Thursty,* adj. Sax. Thirsty.

Thurgh, prep. Sax. Through, by means of.

Thurghfare, n. Sax. A passage.

Thurghout, prep. Sax. Throughout, quite through.

Thurrok, n. Sax. The hold of a ship.

Thwitel, n. Sax. A whittle. Cultellus.

Thwitten, part. pa. Chipped with a knife, whittled. Bien dolé. Orig.

Tidde, part. pa. of *Tide,* v. Sax. Happened. Thee shulde never have tidde so faire a grace: So fair a fortune should never have happened to thee.

Tikel, adj. Sax. Uncertain.

Til, prep. Sax. To. Hire-till: To her.

Timbesterre, n. is supposed by Lye, (Etym. Ling. Angl. in v.) to mean the same with Tombestere. The Orig. French has been quoted above in v. *Sailours,* which Chaucer has thus imitated.

There was many a *timbestere*
And sailours, that, *I dare well swere,*
Ycouthe hir craft *full parfitly.*
The timbres up *full subtilly*
Thei casten, and hent hem *full oft*
Upon a finger faire and soft,
That thei ne failed never mo.

According to this description, it should rather seem, that a Timbestere was a woman, who plaid tricks with timbres, basons of some sort or other, by throwing them up into the air, and catching them upon a single finger; a kind of balance-mistress.

Timbres, n. pl. Fr. Basons. See *Timbestere*.
Tipet, n. Sax. A tippet.
Tipped, part. pa. Headed, covered at the tip, or top.
Tiptoon, n. pl. Sax. Tiptoes, the extremities of the toes.
Tire, v. Fr. To pluck, to feed upon, in the manner of birds of prey. For loke how that a goshauke tyreth. Conf. Am. 132 b.
Tissue, n. Fr. A ribband.
Tite for *Tideth*. Happeneth.
Titering, n. Sax. Courtship.
Titteles, adj. Sax. Without title.
Titus Livius, pr. n. The Roman historian.
To, adv. Sax. Too.
To, prep. Sax. To day: On this day. To morwe: On the morrow, the following day. To yere: In this year.
To, in composition with verbs, is generally augmentative. The helmes they tohewen and toshrede, i. e. hewe and cut to pieces. The bones they tobreste, i. e. break in pieces. To-brosten, To-dashed: Much bruised. To-rent: Rent in pieces. To-swinke: Labour greatly.—Sometimes the adv. All is added. Al-to-rent, All-to-share: Entirely cut to pieces. All-to-shent: Entirely ruined.
Tofore, *Toforen*, prep. Sax. Before.
Togithers, adv. Sax. Together.
Told, pa. t. of *Tell*, v. Sax. Accounted.
Tombesterre, n. Sax. A dancing-woman.
Tombesterres, pl.
Tomedes, should be written as two words. To mede, or to medes, according to the Saxon usage, signifies for reward, in return.
Tone, n. pl. Sax. Toes.
Tonne-gret, adj. Of the circumference of a tun.
Toos, n. pl. as *Tone*.
Toretes, n. pl. Fr. Rings.
Torne, v. Fr. To turn. The devil out of his skinne Him torne: May the devil turn him, inside out!
Torned, part. pa.
Tortuous, adj. Fr. Oblique, winding.
Toteler, n. A whisperer.
Totelar. Susurro. Prompt. Parv.
Totty, adj. Sax. Dizzy.
Tough, adj. Sax. Difficult. And maketh it full tough: And takes a great deal of pains. Or make it tough: Or take pains about it. And made it neither tough ne queint: Made no difficulty or strangeness.

> Al be it ye make it never sa tewche,
> To me your labour is in vane.
>
> Ms. Maitland. The mourning maiden.
>
> Will. Swane makis wonder tewche.
>
> Ibid. Peblis to the play. St. 21.

Tought, adj. Sax. Tight.
Tour, n. Fr. A tower.
Tournet, n. should be written Tourette, as in MS. Hunter. A turret, or small tower.
Tout, n. The backside.
Towail, n. Fr. A towel.
Towardes, prep. Sax. Toward.
Towel, n. is perhaps put for *Tewel*; a pipe, the fundament.
Trace, n. Fr. A track or path, a train.
Trade, pa. t. of *Tread*, v. Sax. Trod.
Tragetour, n. as *Tregetour*.
Traie, v. Fr. To betray.
Trais, n. pl. Fr. Traits. The traces by which horses draw.
Tramissene, pr. n. A kingdom in Africa.
Transmewe, v. Fr. To transform.
Trappures, n. pl. Barb. Lat. The cloths, with which horses were covered for parade. See Du Cange, in v. Trappatura.
Trashed, part. pa. Betrayed.
Trate, n. Bp. Douglas frequently uses Trat for an old woman. Æn. VII. 416. in vultus sese transformat aniles——he renders,

> And hir in schape transformyt of ane trat.

See also p. 96, 28. auld trat—and p. 122, 39. Old Trot is still used for an old woman.
Trave, n. Fr. Travail. A frame, in which farriers put unruly horses.
Tre, n. Sax. A tree, wood. Cristes tre: The Cross.
Trechour, n. Fr. A cheat.
Trede-foule, n. A treader of hens, a cock.
Tregetour, n. a juggler.
Trenchant, part. pr. Fr. Cutting.
Trental, n. A service of thirty masses, which were usually celebrated, upon as many different days, for the dead.
Trepeget, n. Fr. A military engine. See Du Cange, in v. Trebuchetum.
Tresse, n. Fr. An artificial lock, or gathering of hair. See Du Cange, in v. Trica, Trecia.
Tressed, part. pa. Gathered in a tress, or tresses.
Tressour, n. An instrument used in tressing the hair; or an ornament of it, when tressed. See Du Cange, in v. Tressorium.
Tretable, adj. Fr. Tractable.
Trete, v. Fr. To treat, to discourse.
Tretee, n. Treaty.
Tretis, n. Treaty.
Tretis, adj. Fr. Long and well proportioned.
Trewe, n. Fr. A truce.
Trewe, adj. Sax. True, faithful.
Trewe-love, n. Mr. Steevens has very obligingly suggested to me, that there is a herb called True-love, according to Gerard, in his Herbal. Ed. 1597, p. 328. "*Herba Paris*. One-berrie, or herbe Truelove——at the very top whereof come forth fower leaves, directly set one against another, in manner of a Burgunnion cross, or a true love knot; for which cause among the auncients it hath been called herbe Truelove." This herb, however, to the best of my remembrance, is rather too large to be carried conveniently under the tongue.—A trewelove, of the same or an other sort, is mentioned in the concluding stanza of the Court of Love.

> Eke eche at other threw the floures bright,
> The primerose, the violete, and the gold:
> So than as I beheld the royal sight,
> My lady gan me sodenly behold,
> And with a trewelove, plited many a fold,
> She smote me through the very heart as blive,
> And Venus yet I thanke I am alive.

Triacle, n. Fr. corruption of Theriaque. A remedy in general.
Trice, v. Sax. To thrust.
Trie, adj. f. Tried or refined. Gloss. Ur.
Trill, v. Sax. To twirl, to turn round.
—— v. neut. To roll, to trickle.

Trine, adj. Fr. Triple. Trine compas: The Trinity. See *Compas*.

Tripe, n. evidently means a small piece of cheese. Les tripes d'un fagot, in Fr. are The smallest sticks in a faggot. Cotgrave.

Triste, v. for *Trust*.

Triste, n. A post or station in hunting. Cowell. This seems to be the true meaning of the word, though the etymology is not so clear.

Trompe, n. Fr. A trumpet.

Trompour, n. A trumpeter.

Tronchoun, n. Fr. A spear, without a head.

Trone, n. Fr. A throne.

Trophee, pr. n. the reference may possibly be to the original of the Troilus and Creseide, which, according to Lydgate, was called Trophe.

Trotula, pr. n. probably the ancient physician.

Trouble, adj. Fr. Dark, gloomy.

Troubler, comp. d.

Trouandise, for *Truandise*.

Troue, v. Sax. To believe.

Truandise, n. Fr. Begging. *Truanding*.

Tulle, v. Sax. To allure.

Tullius, pr. n. M. Tullius Cicero.

Turkeis, n. Fr. A sort of precious stone.

——— adj. Fr. Turkish.

Turmentise, n. Fr. Torment.

Turves, pl. of *Turf*, n. Sax.

Twaine, *Tway*, *Twey*, *Tweine*, numer. Sax. Two.

Tweifold, adj. Sax. Double.

Twies, adv. Sax. Twice.

Twight, pa. t. and part. of *Twitch*, v. Sax. Pulled, plucked.

Twinne, v. Sax. To depart from a place, or thing.

Twinned, part. pa. Separated.

Twire, v. Twireth seems to be the translation of susurrat; spoken of a bird.

Twist, n. Sax. A twig.

Twiste, v. Sax. To twitch, to pull hard.

Twiste, pa. t. Twitched.

V.

Valence, pr. n. Valencia in Spain. Gloss. Ur.

Valerie, *Valerius*, pr. n. Valerius Maximus.

Valure, n. Fr. Value.

Varien, inf. m. v. Fr. To change, to alter.

Variaunt, part. pr. Changeable.

Vassalage, n. Fr. Valour, courage.

Vavasour, n. The precise import of this word is often as obscure as its original. Perhaps it should be understood to mean the whole class of middling landholders.

Vaunter, n. Fr. A boaster.

Vecke, n. Ital. An old woman.

Veine-blode, n. Blood drawn from a vein.

Vendable, adj. Fr. To be sold.

Venerie, n. Fr. Hunting.

Venge, v. Fr. To revenge.

Venime, n. Fr. Poison, venom.

Ventousing, n. Fr. Cupping.

Ver, n. Lat. The spring.

Verament, adv. Fr. Truly.

Veray, adj. Fr. True.

Verdegreste, n. Fr. Verd du gris. The rust of brass; so called from its colour, a grey green.

Verdite, n. Fr. Judgement, sentence.

Verger, n. Fr. A garden.

Vermeile, adj. Fr. Of a vermilion colour.

Vermelet, adj. as *Vermeile*.

Vernage. A species of wine.

Vernicle, n. diminutive of Veronike, Fr. A copy in miniature of the picture of Christ, which is supposed to have been miraculously imprinted upon a handkerchief, preserved in the church of St. Peter at Rome. Du Cange, in v. Veronica. Madox, Form. Angl. p. 428. Testam. Joh. de Nevill. an. 1386. Item Domino Archiepiscopo Eborum fratri meo i. vestimentum rubeum de velvet cum le verouike (r. veronike) in granis rosarum desuper brondata (r. broudata). It was usual for persons returning from pilgrimages to bring with them certain tokens of the several places which they had visited; and therefore the Pardoner, who is just arrived from Rome, is represented with a vernicle, sewed upon his cappe. See Pierce Ploughman, 28. b.

An hundred amples on hys hatte sette,
Sygnes of Sinay and shelles of Calice[1],
And many a crouch on his cloke and kayes of Rome,
And the vernicle before, for men should knowe
And se by hys signes, whom he sought hadde.

Vernish, v. Fr. To varnish.

Verre, n. Fr. Glass.

Versifiour, n. Fr. A maker of verses, a poet.

Vertules, adj. Without efficacy.

Vertuous, adj. Fr. Active, efficacious.

Vessell, n. Fr. Vaisselle. Plate.

Ugly, adj. Sax. Horrid, frightful.

Viage, n. Fr. A journey by sea or land.

Vicary, n. Lat. A vicar.

Vice, n. Fr. The newel, or upright centre of a winding stair-case.

Vigile, n. Fr. The eve of a festival, the wake, or watching of a dead body.

Vigilie, n. Lat. as *Vigile*.

Vilanie, n. Fr. Any thing unbecoming a gentleman.

Vinolent, adj. Lat. Full of wine.

Vireluye, n. Fr. "A round, freeman's song." Cotgrave. There is a particular description of a Virlai, in the Jardin de plaisance, fol. xii. where it makes the decima sexta species Rhetorice Gallicane.

Virgile, pr. n.

Visage, v. Fr. To front, to face a thing.

Vise, n. In MS. A. veze. Perhaps we should read rese, a Saxon word signifying violence, impetuosity.

Vitaille, n. Fr. Victuals.

Vitellon, pr. n. Author of a work on optics.

Unbetide, v. Sax. To fail to happen.

Unbodie, v. Sax. To leave the body.

Unbokel, v. Fr. To unbuckle, to open.

Unce, n. Fr. Lat. Ounce.

Uncommitted, part. pa. Office uncommitted oft anoyeth.

Unconning, part. pr. Ignorant.

——— n. Ignorance.

Uncovenable, adj. Inconvenient.

Uncouple, v. To go loose; Metaphor from hounds.

Uncouplinge, n. Letting loose.

Uncouth, part. pa. Unknown. See *Couth*.—Uncommon, not vulgar, elegant.

Uncouthly, adv. Uncommonly.

Undepartable, adj. Not capable of departing.

[1] Ms. Gales. Perhaps it should be Galice. See ver. 468.

Underfong, v. Sax. To undertake.
Undergrowe, part. pa. Undergrown, of a low stature.
Underling, n. Sax. An inferior.
Undermele, n. Sax. The time after the meal of dinner; the afternoon. *Undermele*: Postmeridies. Prompt. Parv.
Undern, n. Sax. The third hour of the artificial day; nine of the clock, A. M. Till it was underne hygh, and more. Conf. Am. 105. b.
Undernome, pa. t. of *Undernime*, v. Sax. Took up, received.
Underpight, pa. t. See *Pight*. He dranke, and wel his girdel underpight: He drank, and stuffed his girdle well.
Understore, v. Sax. To raise a thing, by putting a spere, or pole, under it.
Understonde, part. pa. Understood.
Undo, v. Sax. To unfold.
Undoubtous, adj. Undoubted. Indubitata. Orig. See *Doutous*.
Uneschuable, adj. Sax. Unavoidable. Inevitabili. Orig.
Unese, n. Uneasiness.
Un-eth, *Un-ethes*, adv. Sax. Scarcely, not easily.
Unfamous, adj. Unknown.
Unfestliche, adj. Not suitable to a feast.
Ungodely, adj. Uncivil, ungenteel. That I n'olde holde hire ungodely. Orig. Que je ne tenisse à vilaine.
Ungreable, adj. Unpleasant, disagreeable. Ingratas. Orig.
Unhele, n. Sax. Misfortune.
Unhide, v. To discover.
Unjoine, v. To separate, to disjoin.
Unkindely, adv. Unnaturally.
Unknowable, adj. Incapable of being known. Ignorabiles. Orig.
Unletted, part. pa. Undisturbed.
Unloven, v. To cease loving.
Unlust, n. Dislike.
Unmanhode, n. Cowardice.
Unmighty, adj. Unable.
Unperegal, adj. Unequal. Impar. Orig.
Unpin, v. Sax. To unlock.
Unpitous, adj. Cruel. Impia.
Unplite, v. To unfold.
Unrest, n. Want of rest, uneasiness, trouble.
Unresty, adj. Unquiet.
Unright, n. Wrong.
Unsad, adj. Unsteady.
Unscience, n. Not-science.
Unsely, adj. Unhappy.
Unset, part. pa. Not appointed.
Unshette, pa. t. Opened.
Unskilfully, adv. Sax. Without reason. Injuriâ. Orig.
Unslekked, part. pa. Unslacked.
Unslept, part. pa. Having had no sleep.
Unsoft, adj. Hard.
Unsolempne, adj. Uncelebrated. Incelebris. Orig.
Unsperde, part. pa. Unbolted.
Unstancheable, adj. Inexhaustible. Inexhausta. Orig.
Unstanched, part. pa. Unsatisfied. Inexpletam. Orig.
Unsufficient, adj. Insufficient.
Unswell, v. To fall after swelling.
Unthank, n. No thanks, ill will.
Until, prep. Sax. To, unto.
Untime, n. An unseasonable time.
Unto, adv. Sax. Until.
Untressed, part. pa. Not tied in a tress, or tresses.
Untretable, adj. Not admitting any treaty. Bellum inexorabile. Orig. Πολεμος ακηρυκτος.
Untriste for *Untruste*, v. To mistrust.
Untrust, n. Distrust.
Unusage, n. Want of usage. Insolentia. Orig.
Unware, part. pa. Unforeseen.
Unweld, adj. Unwieldy.
Unwemmed, part. pa. Unspotted.
Unweting, part. pr. Not knowing. Unweting of this Dorigen: Dorigen not knowing of this.
Unwetingly, adv. Ignorantly.
Unwist, part. pa. Unknown. Unwist of him: It being unknown to him; not knowing.
Unwit, n. Want of wit.
Unwote, v. Sax. To be ignorant.
Unwrie, v. To uncover.
Unyolden, part. pa. Not having yielded.
Voide, v. Fr. To remove, to quit, to make empty.
Voide, v. neut. To depart, to go away.
Voided, part. pa. Removed.
Volage, adj. Fr. Light, giddy.
Volatile, n. Fr. Wild fouls, game.
Voluntee, n. Fr. Will.
Volupere, n. A woman's cap. A night-cap. *Volypere*, kercher, teristrum. Prompt. Parv. But theristrum signifies properly a veil. See Du Cange, in v.
Vouche, v. Fr. Vouchen sauf: To vouchsafe. Voucheth sauf: Vouchsafe ye. As ye have made present, the king vouches it save.
Up, prep. Sax. Upon. Ther lith on up my wombe and up myn hed: There lieth one upon my belly and upon my head. Up peine: Upon pain. Up peril: Upon peril.
Up, adv. Sax. Up on lond: Up in the country. Up so doun: Upside down. The londe was tourned up so down. Conf. Am. 37, 159. But Pandare up. An elliptical expression, of which it is not easy to give the precise meaning.
Upper, comp. d. Higher.
Uphaf, pa. t. of *Upheve*, v. Sax. Heaved up.
Upheping, n. Sax. Accumulation. Cumulum. Orig.
Upon, adv. He had upon a courtpey of grene: He had on a courtepy, &c. Or perhaps it is an elliptical expression for He had upon him.
Upperest, adj. superl. Highest.
Upright, adj. Sax. Strait. Upright as a bolt: Strait as an arrow. It is applied indifferently to persons lying, as well as standing.
Urchon, n. A hedge-hog.
Ure, n. Fr. Fortune, destiny.
Ured, adj. Fortunate. Wel ured.
Usage, n. Fr. Experience, practice.
Usant, part. pr. Fr. Using, accustomed.
Utter, comp. d. of *Out*, adv. Sax. Outward, more out.
Utter-ste, superl. d. Uttermost.
Utterly, adv. Fr. Outtréement. Thoroughly, entirely.
Uttren, inf. m. of *Utter*, v. Sax. To publish.
——— pr. t. pl. Give out, sell.

W.

Wade, pr. n. See Cambden. Brit. 907. and Charlton's Hist. of Whitby, p. 40.
Wade, v. Sax. Lat. To pass through water, without swimming, to pass, generally, q.?

Waferers, n. pl. Sellers of wafers, a sort of cakes.
Wafoures, n. pl. Wafers, a sort of cakes.
Waget, 5321. A light waget, probably means a light blue colour.
Waimenting, n. Sax. Lamentation.
Waine, n. Sax. A waggon.
Waite, v. Fr. To watch.
Wake, v. Sax. To watch.
Walachie, pr. n. Walachia.
Wala wa, or *Wa la wa*, interj. Sax. Woe! alas! Wala wa the while! Alas the time!
Walnote, n. Sax. A walnut, i. e. a French, or foreign nut.
Walwe, v. Sax. To tumble about, to wallow.
Walwing, part. pr.
Won, pa. t. of *Win*, v. Sax. Gained.
Wane, v. Sax. To decrease.
Wang, n. Sax. A cheek-tooth.
Wanger, n. Sax. A support for the cheek, a pillow.
Wanhope, n. Sax. Despair.
Wantrust, n. Sax. Distrust.
Waped, part. pa. Sax. Stupefied.
Wardecorps, n. Fr. Body-guard.
Wardein, n. Fr. A warden of a college, a guard, a keeper of a gate. *Wardeins*, pl. Guards, watchmen.
Warderere, perhaps a corruption of the Fr. Garde arriere.
Wardrope, n. Fr. Garderobe. A house of office.
Wariangl-e. Cotgrave, in v. Pie and Engroüée, explains "the wariangle to be a small woodpecker, black and white of colour, and but halfe as big as the ordinary green one."
Warice, *Warish*, v. Fr. To heal. v. neut. To recover from sickness.
Warison, n. seems to be put for reward. Son merite. Orig. *Waryson*, Donativum. Prompt. Parv.
Warne, v. Sax. To caution, to apprize, to refuse.
Warnestore, v. To furnish, to store.
Warrie, v. Sax. To abuse, to speak evil of.
Washen, part. pa. of *Wash*, v. Sax.
Wastel-brede. Cake-bread, bread made of the finest flower; from the Fr. Gasteau, a cake.
Wastour, n. Fr. A spoiler.
Wate, v. Sax. To know.
Watering of Seint Thomas. A place for watering horses, I suppose, a little out of the borough of Southwark, in the road to Canterbury. The same place, I apprehend, was afterwards called St. Thomas a Waterings, probably from some chapel dedicated to that saint. It was a place of execution in queen Elizabeth's time. Wood. Ath. Oxon. i. 229.
Watlynge strete. An old strete in London.
Wave, pa. t. of *Weave*, v. Sax. Wove.
Wawe, n. Sax. A wave.
Way, n. Sax. is often put for the time in which a certain space can be passed through. A furlong way, a mile way: Any short time. At the leste wey, seems to signifie no more than At the lest: At least. A devil way, a twenty devil way.
Way, adv. Away. Do way: Do away, put away.
Waye, v. Sax. To weigh, to press with weight.
Webbe, n. Sax. A weaver.
Wedde, n. Sax. A pawn, or pledge. To wedde for a pawn. And leyde to wedde Normandie.
Wede, n. Sax. Clothing, apparel. Under wede, seems to signifie simply In my clothing.
Wede, n. Sax. A weed, an useless herb.
Wehee. A word to express the neighing of a horse.
Weive, v. Sax. To forsake, to decline, to refuse.
——— v. neut. To depart.
Weived, part. pa. Departed.
Weke, v. Sax. To grow weak.
——— adj. Sax. Weak.
Wel, adv. Sax. Well, in a good condition. Wel was the wenche, with him mighte mete. Wel were they, that thider might twin. It is joined to other adverbs and adjectives, as full and right are; and still more frequently to verbs; in the sense of the Fr. bien.
Welde, v. Sax. To govern, to wield.
Weldy, adj. Sax. Active.
Wele, adv. for *Wel*.
——, n. Sax. Wealth, prosperity.
Welful, adj. Productive of happiness.
Welefulness, n. Sax. Happiness.
Welke, pa. t. of *Walk*, v. Sax. Walked.
Welked, part. pa. of *Welke*, v. Sax. Withered, mouldy.
Welkin, n. Sax. The sky.
Well, n. Sax. A spring. Well of vices—of perfection—of alle gentillesse.
Welle, v. Sax. To flow, as from a spring.
Welmeth, seems to be put for *Welleth*. Springeth.
Welte, pa. t. of *Welde*.
Wel-thewed, adj. Sax. Endowed with good qualities.
Welwilly, adj. Sax. Favourable, propitious.
Wemme, n. Sax. A spot, a fault. Without wemme.
Wenche, n. Sax. A young woman. It is sometimes used in an opprobrious sense. I am a gentil woman and no wenche.
Wend for *Wened*, pa. t. of *Wene*. Thought, intended. *Wenden*, pl.
Wende, v. Sax. To go.
——— n. Sax. Guess, conjecture; perhaps for *Wene*.
Wene, n. Sax. Guess, supposition. Withouten wene: Not by supposition, certainly.
——, v. Sax. To think, to suppose.
Went, part. pa. of *Wende*. Gone.
Wente, *Went*, pa. t. of *Wende*. Went at borde: Lived as a boarder. *Wenten*, pl.
Went, n. A way, a passage; a turn, in walking, in bed.
Went, v. for *Want*.
Wep, pa. t. of *Wepe*, v. Sax. Wept.
Wepely, adj. Sax. Causing tears.
Wepen, n. Sax. A weapon.
Werche, n. and v. as *Werke*.
Were for *Weren*, ind. m. pa. t. pl. of *Am*, v. Sax. It is sometimes used for *had*, according to the French custom, with reflected verbs. Thise riotoures—were set hem in a taverne for to drinke. —S'etoient mis, s'etoient assis.
Were, subj. m. pa. t. sing. As it were. If on of hem were. Whether she were. Were it. It were a game.
Were, v. Sax. To wear, to defend.
Were, n. Fr. Guerre. Confusion. His herte in such a were is set. Son cueur a mys en tel guerre. Orig. And in a were gan I wexe and with myself to dispute.
Were, n. Sax. A wear, for catching fish.
Weren, pa. t. pl. of *Am*, v. Sax. Were.
Werke, n. Sax. Work. *Werkes*, pl.
Werke, v. Sax. To work.
Werne, v. as *Warne*.

Werre, n. Fr. War, sometimes it seems to be used as *Were*.
Werreie, v. Fr. To make war against.
Werse, comp. d. of *Ill*, adv. Sax. Worse.
Werse, comp. d. of *Bad*, adj. Sax. Worse.
Werste, superl. d. of *Bad*. Worst.
Wery, adj. Sax. Weary.
Wesh, pa. t. of *Wash*, v. Sax. Washed.
Westren, inf. m. v. Sax. To tend toward the west.
Wete, adj. Sax. Wet.
——, v. Sax. To wet.
——, v. Sax. To know.
Wether, n. Sax. The weather, a castrated ram.
Weting, n. Sax. Knowledge.
Weve, v. Sax. To weave.
——, v. Sax. To put off, to prevent. See *Weive*.
Wex, pa. t. of *Waxe* or *Wexe*, v. Sax. Waxed, grew.
Wexing, part. pa. Increasing.
Weyeden, pa. t. pl. Weighed. See *Waye*.
What, pron. interrog. Sax. is often used by itself, as a sort of interjection. What? welcome be the cutte.—What? Nicholas! what how? man! What? think on God.
What, pron. indef. Something. A little what. Μικρον τι. What for love and for distress: Partly for love and partly f. d. Wete ye what: Do ye know something? Ne elles what: Nor any thing else. Ουδ' αλλως τι.
What, when joined to a n. subst. (either expressed or understood) is a mere adj. answering to qualis. Lat. quel. Fr. What they weren: What men they were.—What so; What that. Whatsoever.
Wheder, conj. Sax. Whether.
Whelm, v. Sax. To sink, to depress. Whelmyn a vessell. Supprimor. Prompt. Parv.
Whennes, adv. Sax. Whence.
Wher, conj. Sax. Whether.
Wher, adv. Sax. Where.
Wher, in composition signifies which. See *Here* and *Ther*. Wherfore. Wherin. Wherthrough, Wherwith, or What, when used interrogatively. Wherof. Wherwith.
Whether, adj. Sax. Which of two.
Whette, part. pa. of *Whet*, v. Sax. Sharpened.
Whiche, pron. rel. Sax. Who, whom. adj. what, what sort of.
While, n. Sax. Time. In this mene while: In the mean time.—How he might quite hire while: How he might requite her time, pains, &c. God can ful wel your while quite. So Ms. Hunter.
Whilere, adv. Sax. Some time before.
Whilke, adj. Sax. Which.
Whilom, adv. Sax. Once, on a time.
Whine, v. Sax. To utter a plaintive cry.
White, adj. Sax. Fair, specious.
White, v. To grow white.
Who, pron. interrog. Sax.
Whos, gen. ca. sing.
Who, pron. rel. Sax. It is generally expressed by that.
Whos, gen. ca. sing.
Who, pron. indef.

> For wel thou wost, the name as yet of her
> Amonges the people, as who sayth, halowed is.

Where as who sayth seems to be equivalent to as one should say. In Bo. iii. pr. 4. the same phrase is used to introduce a fuller explanation of a passage; as we might use—that is to say.
—Who so; Who that: Whosoever. In'ver. 4298. there is a phrase which I know not how to explain grammatically. *But sikerly she n'iste* who was who.
Wide-where, adv. Sax. Widely, far and near.
Wierdes, n. pl. Sax. The fates, or destinies; Parcæ.
Wif, n. Sax. A wife, a woman.
Wifhood, n. Sax. The state of a wife.
Wiftes, adj. Sax. Unmarried.
Wifly, adj. Sax. Becoming a wife.
Wight, n. Sax. A person, male or female, a small space of time, weight, a witch. Wytch clepyd nyght mare. Epialtes. Prompt. Parv.
Wight, adj. Sax. Active, swift. Of hem that ben deliver and wight. Conf. Am. 177 b.
Wightes, n. pl. Witches.
Wike, n. for *Weke*.
Wiket, n. Fr. A wicket.
Wikke, adj. Sax. Wicked.
William St. Amour, pr. n. A doctor of the Sorbonne in the xiiith century, who took a principal part in the dispute between the University of Paris and the Dominican Friers. See Moreri, in v.
Willy, adj. Sax. Favourable.
Wiln for *Willen*, pl. n. of *Wille*, v. Sax.
Wilne, v. Sax. To desire.
Wimple, n. Fr. A covering for the neck. It is distinguished from a veil, which covers the head also.

> Wering a vaile, instede of wimple,
> As nonnes don in hir abbey.

Windas, n. Fr. Guindal. An engine to raise stones, &c.
Winde, v. Sax. To turn round.
——, as *Wende*. To go.
Wine of ape. The same as *vin de singe* in the old Calefdrier des Bergiers, an allusion to the effects of wine upon the sanguine temperament.
Winne, v. Sax. To gain. To winne to: To attain.
Wirry, v. Sax. To worry.
Wis, adv. Sax. Certainly. See *Ywis*.
Wise, n. Sax. Manner.
Wisly, adv. Sax. Certainly.
Wisse, v. Sax. To teach, to direct. So God me wisse: So may God direct me. Wyssyn or ledyn. Dirigo. Prompt. Parv.
Wiste, pa. t. of *Wiste*, v. Sax. Knew.
Wite, v. Sax. To know, to blame, to impute to. Wite it the ale of Southwark: Impute it to the a. o. S.—or, Blame the a. o. S. for it.
Wite, n. Sax. Blame.
With, prep. Sax. is used in the sense of by. Was with the leon frette: Was devoured by the lion.—In with his thought; In with hire bosom: Within his t. Within hire b.—With meschance; With meschance and with misaventure; With sorwe and with meschance; With sorwe; are phrases of the same import as God yeve him meschance; God yeve me sorwe. They are all to be considered as parenthetical curses, used with more or less seriousness. And so are the following phrases, With evil prefe; With harde grace; With sory grace.
Withholde, v. Sax. To stop.
Withholden, *Withhold*, part. pa. Retained, detained.
Withsain, inf. m. of *Withsay*, v. Sax.
Withsaye, *Withseye*, v. Sax. To contradict, to denie.

Witerfully, adv. Sax. Evidently.
Witnesse, n. Sax. Testimony, a witness. Witnesse on Mida. Witnesse on Mathew.
Witte, n. Sax. Understanding, capacity. To my witte: In my judgment.
Wittes, n. pl. Sax. The senses of man.
Wive, n. for *Wif*.
Wivere, n. Sax. A serpent.
Wlatsom, adj. Sax. Loathsome.
Wo, n. Sax. Woe, sorrow. Wo were us, Wher me were wo, are expressions derived from the Saxon language, in which us and me are equivalent to nobis and mihi, without the addition of the prep. to.
Wo, adj. Sax. Sorrowful.
Wo-begon. Far gone in woe. See *Begon*.
Wode, Woud, adj. Sax. Mad, violent. For wode: Like any thing mad.
Wode, v. Sax. To grow mad.
Wodewale, pr. n. of a bird. Widewael. Belg. Oriolus. Kilian. According to Ray, our Witwall is a sort of wood-pecker. Synop. Av. p. 43.
Wol, v. auxil. Sax. To will. It is used sometimes by itself, the infin. v. being understood. As she to water wolde; i. e. would dissolve into w. And to the wood he wol; i. e. will go. Ful many a man hath he begiled er this, And wol; i. e. will begile.
Wolde, pa. t. Would. *Wolden*, pl. pa. t. subj. m. Wolde God; God wolde: O that God were willing. Ne wolde God: God forbid.
Wold, part. pa. Willed, been willing.
Womanhede, n. Womanhood, the virtue of a woman.
Wonde, v. Sax. Wandian. To desist through fear.
Wonde, pa. t. may perhaps be deduced from *Winde*; to turn, to bend.
Wonde, pa. t. of *Wone*. Dwelled.
Wonder, adj. Sax. Wonderful.
Wone, n. Sax. Custom, usage, habitation, a heap, an assembly.
Wone, v. Sax. To dwell.
Woneden, pa. t. pl. Dwelled.
Woned, part. pa. Wont, accustomed.
Woning, n. Sax. A dwelling.
Wonne, part. pa. of *Winne*, v. Sax. Won, conquered, begotten. L.
Wont, part. pa. of *Wone*. Accustomed.
Wood, adj. as *Wode*.
Woodness, n. Madness.
Wordles, adj. Sax. Speechless.
Worldes, gen. c. of *World*, n. Sax. is used in the sense of the adj. worldly. Every worldes sore. My worldes bliss.
Wort, n. Sax. A cabbage, new beer, in a state of fermentation.
Worth, v. Sax. To be, to go. Wo worthe: Unhappy be; or Wo be to!—To climb, to mount.
Wost for *Wotest*. Knowest.
Wote, Wot, v. Sax. To know.
Wot, pa. t. Knew.
Wowe, (rather *Woe*), v. Sax. To woo.
Woxe, pa. t. of *Waxe*, or *Wexe*, v. Sax. Grew.
Woxen, part. pa. Grown.
Wraie, v. Sax. To betray, discover.
Wrathen, inf. m. v. Sax. To make angry.
Wrawe, adj. Sax. Peevish, angry. *Wrawe*. Froward, ongoodly. Perversus. Bilosus, Prompt. Parv.
Wrawness, n. Peevishness.
Way, v. as *Wraie*.

Wreche, n. Sax. Revenge.
Wrenches, n. pl. Sax. Frauds, stratagems.
Wrest, v. Sax. To twist. The nightingale with so great might hire voice began out wrest. To turn forcibly.
Wretches, should probably be *Wretched*.
Wrethen, part. pa. of *Writhe*. Wrethen in fere: Twisted together. In Urry's Edit. it is printed —Within in fere.
Wreye, v. as *Wraie*.
Wrie, v. Sax. To cover, to turn, to incline.
Wright, n. Sax. A workman.
Wrine, for *Wrien*, inf. m. of *Wrie*.
Wring, v. Sax. To squeeze so as to express moisture.
Writhe, v. Sax. To twist, to turn aside.
Writhing, n. A turning.
Wronge, part. pa. of *Wring*. His hondes wronge. Later writers have used the same expression of distress. I suppose it means to clasp the hands, and squeeze them strongly one against the other. I do not recollect a similar expression in any other language.
Wrote, v. Sax. To dig with the snout, as swine do. Or like a worm, that wroteth in a tree.
Wrought, part. pa. of *Worke*, v. Sax. Made.

Y

Y at the beginning of many words, especially verbs and participles, is merely a corruption of the Saxon Ge, which has remained uncorrupted in the other collateral branches of the Gothic language. What the power of it may have been originally, it is impossible, I apprehend, now to determine. In Chaucer it does not appear to have any effect upon the sense of a word; so that there seems to be no necessity for inserting in a Glossary such words as yblessed, ygranted, &c. which differ not in signification from blessed, granted, &c. Some however of this sort are inserted, which may serve at least to show more clearly the extent of this practice in Chaucer's time. Several other words are shortly explained under this letter, of which a more full explanation may be found under their respective second letters.

Ya, adv. Sax. Yea. It is used emphatically with both. Ya, bothe yonge and olde. Ye, bothe faire and good.
Yaf, pa. t. of *Yeve*, v. Sax. Gave.
Yalte for *Yelte*. Yalte him. Yieldeth himself. Se rend, Orig.
Yare, adj. Sax. Ready.
Yate, n. Sax. A gate.
Yave, pa. t. of *Yeve*. Gave.
Y-be, part. pa. Been.
Y-beried, part. pa. Buried.
Y-bete. Probably stamped.
Y-blent, part. pa. of *Blend*. Blinded.
Y-blent, part. pa. of *Blenche*. Shrunk, started aside.
Y-blint, part. pa. Blinded.
Y-bore, part. pa. of *Bere*. Born, carried.
Y-bourded, part. pa. Jested.
Y-brent, part. pa. of *Brenne*. Burned.
Y-chaped, part. pa. Furnished with chapes. From chappe, Fr.
Y-clouted, part. pa. Wrapped in clouts, or rags.
Y-corven, part. pa. Cut. See *Corven*.
Y-coupled, part. pa.

Y-crased, part. pa. Broken.
Y-deled, part. pa. Distributed.
Y-dight, part. pa. Adorned.
Y-do part. pa. Done, finished.
Y-drawe, part. pa. Drawn.
Ye, adv. Sax. as *Ya*. Ye wis: Yea certainly.
Yeddinges. The Prompt. Parv. makes yedding to be the same as geste, which it explains thus. Geest or romawnce. Gestio. So that of yeddinges may perhaps mean of story-telling.
Yede, part. pa. of *Yede*, v. Sax. Went.
Yefte, n. Sax. A gift. *Yeftes*, pl.
Yelde, v. Sax. To yield, to give, to pay. God yelde you: God reward you.
Yelleden, pa. t. pl. of *Yelle*, v. Sax.
Yelpe, v. Sax. To prate, to boast.
Yelte, for *Yeldeth*.
Yeman, n. Sax. A servant of middling rank, a bailif.—The Knightes Yeman. See his Character, ver. 101—17.—The Chanones Yeman. See his Prologue, ver. 16022—16187. *Yemen*, pl.
Yemanrie, n., The rank of Yeoman.
Yerde, n. Sax. A rod, or staff. Under the yerde: properly said of children under discipline.
Yere for *Yeres*, n. pl. Sax. Years.
Yerne, adj. Sax. Brisk, eager.
Yerne, adv. Briskly, eagerly, early. As yerne: Soon, immediately.
Yerne, v. To desire, to seek eagerly.
Yerning, n. Activity, diligence. Esveil. Orig.
Yeten, part. pa. Gotten.
Yeve, v. Sax. To give.
Yeven, *Yeve*, part. pa. Given.
Y-falle, part. pa. Fallen.
Y-feined part. pa. Lordes hestes may not ben y-feined: The commands of sovereigns may not be executed with a feigned, pretended zeal; they must be executed strictly and fully.
Y-fette, part. pa. Fetched.
Y-fonden, part. pa. Found.
Y-fostered, part. pa. Educated.
Y-freten, part. pa. Devoured.
Y-geten, part. pa. Gotten.
Y-glosed, part. pa. Flattered.
Y-glued, part. pa. Glewed, fastened with glew.
Y-go part. pa. Gone.
Y-grave, part. pa. Buried.
Y-halȝed, part. pa. Kept holy.
Y-herd, part. pa. Covered with hair.
Y-hold, part. pa. Beholden.
Y-japed, part. pa. Tricked, deceived.
Y-lessed, part. pa. Relieved. See *Lissed*.
Y-liche, *Y-like* adj. Sax. Resembling, equal.
Y-lich, *Y-like*, adv. Sax. Equally, alike.
Y-limed, part. pa. Limed, caught as with bird-lime.
Y-logged, part. pa. Lodged.
Y-masked, part. pa. Mashed, or meshed. Masche. Belg. Macula retis. Kilian.
Y-meint, part. pa. Mingled.
Y-mell, prep. Sax. Among.
Ymeneus, pr. n. Hymenæus.
Ynough, *Ynow*, adv. Sax. Enough.
Yolden, part. pa. of *Yelde*. Given, yielded, repaid.
Yonghede, n. Sax Youth.
Yore, adv. Sax. Of a long time, a little before.—Yore agon: Long ago. In olde times yore. Of time yore.
Yove, p. t. of *Yeve*. Gave.
Youre, pron. poss. Sax. Is used for *Youres*.
Youres, pron. poss. Sax. used generally, when the noun, to which it belongs, is understood, or placed before it. He was an old felaw of youres: He was an old companion of yours, i. e. of, or among, your companions.
Yothede, n. Sax. Youth.
Yoxe, v. Sax. To hickup. Yyxyn. Singultio. Prompt. Parv.
Y-piked, part. pa. Picked, spruce.
Y-queint, part. pa. Quenched.
Y-reight, pa. t. Reached.
Y-reken, seems to be put for the old part. pr. *Y-rekend*. Reeking.
Yren, n. Sax. Iron.
Y-rent, part pa. Torn.
Y-ronne, *Yronnen*, part. pa. Run.
Y-sateled, part. pa. Settled, established.
Yse, n. Sax. Ice.
Y-served, part. pa. Treated.
Y-sette, part. pa. Set, placed, appointed.
Y-shent, part. pa. Damaged.
Y-shove, part. pa. Pushed forwards.
Y-slawe, part. pa. Slain.
Ysope, pr. n. So the name of the fabulist was commonly written, notwithstanding the distinction pointed out by the following technical verse.

Ysopus est herba, sed Æsopus dat bona verba.

In this and many other passages, which are quoted from Æsop by writers of the middle ages, it is not easy to say what author they mean. The Greek collections of fables, which are now current under the name of Æsop, were unknown, I apprehend, in this part of the world, at the time that *Melibee* was written. Phædrus too had disappeared. *Avienus* indeed was very generally read. He is quoted as Æsop by John of Salisbury, Polycrat. L. vii. Ut Æsopo, vel Avieno credas.

But the name of Æsop was chiefly appropriated to the anonymous[1] author of 60 fables, in elegiac

[1] Several improbable conjectures, which have been made with respect to the real name and age of this writer, may be seen in the Menagiana, vol. i. p. 172. and in Fabric. Bibl. Lat. vol. i. p. 376. Ed. Patav. In the edition of these fables in 1503, the commentator, of no great authority, I confess, mentions an opinion of some people, that "Galterus Angelicus fecit hunc librum sub nomine Esopi." I suppose the person meant was Gualterus Anglicus, who had been tutor to William II. king of Sicily, and was archbishop of Palermo about the year 1170. I cannot believe that they were much older than his time; and in the beginning of the next century they seem to be mentioned under the name of Æsopus, among the books commonly read in schools, by Eberhardus Bethuniensis in his Labyrinthus, Tract. iii. de Versificatione, v. ii. See Leyser, Hist. Poet. Med. Ævi. p. 826. About the middle of the same century (the XIIIth) Vincent of Beauvais in his Speculum Histor. L. iii. c. 2. gives an account of Æsop, and a large specimen of his fables, "quas Romulus quidam de Græco in Latinum transtulit, et ad filium suum Tyberinum dirigit." They are all as I remember in the printed Romulus.

Soon after the invention of printing, a larger collection of the fables of Æsop was made and

metre, which are printed in Nevelet's collection under the title of Anonymi fabulæ Æsopicæ. I have seen an edition of them in 1503, by Wynkyn de Worde, in which they are entitled simply Esopi fabulæ. The subjects are for the most part plainly taken from Phædrus; but it may be doubted whether the author copied from the original work of Phædrus, or from some version of it into Latin prose. Several versions of this kind are still extant in Ms. One of very considerable antiquity has been published by Nilant, Ludg. Bat. 1709, under the title of Fabulæ Antiquæ, together with another of a later date, which is pretended to have been made from the Greek by an emperour Romulus, for the use of his son Tiberinus. They all show evident marks of being derived from one common origin, like what has been observed of the several Greek collections of Æsopean fables in prose (Dissert. de Babrio, Lond. 1776.); like them too they differ very much, one from another, in style, order of fables, and many little particulars; and, what is most material, each of them generally contains a few fables, either invented or stolen by its respective compiler, which are not to be found in the other collections; so that it is often impracticable to verify a quotation from Æsop in the writers of Chaucer's time, unless we happen to light upon the identical book of fables which the writer who quotes had before him.

A fable of the Cock and the Fox, from the French Esope of Marie, which is not to be found in any other collection that I have seen, I suppose, furnished Chaucer with the subject of his Nonnes Preestes tale. In the same French Æsop, and in a Latin Ms. Bibl. Reg. 15 A. vii. there is a fable, which, I think, might have given the hint for Prior's Ladle. "A country fellow one day laid hold of a fuery (un folet. Fr.) who, in order to be set at liberty, gave him three wishes. The man goes home, and gives two of them to his wife. Soon after, as they are dining upon a chine of mutton, the wife feels a longing for the marrow, and not being able to get at it, she wishes that her husband had an iron beak (long comme li witecocs. Fr. long as the woodcock) to extract this marrow for her. An excrescence being immediately formed accordingly, the husband angrily wishes it off from his own face upon his wife's."—And here the story is unluckily defective in both copies; but it is easy to suppose, that the third and last remaining wish was employed by the wife for her own relief.

A fable upon a similar idea, in French verse, may be seen in Ms. Bodl. 1687; the same, as I apprehend, with one in the king's library at Paris (Ms. n. 7989. fol. 189.) which is entitled Les quatre souhaits de Sainz Martin. See Fabliaux, &c. T. iii. p. 311. The vanity of human wishes is there exposed with more pleasantry than in the story just cited, but, as it often happens, with much less decency.

published in Germany. It is divided into six books, to which is prefixed a life of Æsop e Græco-Latina per Rimicium facta. The three first are composed of the sixty Elegiac fables of the metrical Æsopus, with a few trifling variations; and to each of them is subjoined a fable on the same subject in prose from Romulus. Book iv. contains the remaining fables of Romulus in prose only. The vth Book has not more than one or two fables which had ever appeared before under the name of Æsop. The rest are taken from the Gesta Romanorum, the Calilah u Damnah, and other obscurer authors. The vnth and last Book contains seventeen fables with the following title: Sequuntur fabulæ novæ Esopi ex translatione Remicii. There has been a great diversity of opinion among learned men concerning this Remicius or Rimicius (see Præf. Nilant.) while some have confounded him with the fictitious Romulus, and others have considered him as the editor of this collection. I have no doubt but the person meant is that Rinucius, who translated the life of Æsop by Planudes and ninety-six of his fables, from the Greek into Latin, about the middle of the fifteenth century. See Fabric. Bibl. Med. Æt. in v. *Rimicius*. In his translation of the Epistles of Hippocrates, Ms. Harl. 3527. he is styled in one place Verdensis, and in another Castilionensis. All the fables from Remicius which compose this vith Book, as well as the Life of Æsop, which is professedly taken from Rimicius, are to be found in this translation by Rinucius. There is an edition of it printed at Milan about 1480; but it might very possibly have come into the hands of the German collector in Ms. some years sooner, as the first translations of Greek authors were eagerly sought after and circulated through Europe at that time, when very few persons were capable of reading the original.

Y-sowe, part. pa. Sown.
Y-spreint, part. pa. Sprinkled.
Y-sticked, part. pa. Sticked, thrust.
Y-storven, part. pa. Dead.
Y-take, part. pa. Taken.
Y-teyed, part. pa. Tied.
Y-tresposed, part. pa. Trespassed.
Y-vanish-d, part. pa.
Yvel, adj. Sax. Bad, unfortunate.
Yvel, adv. Sax. Ill.
Yvoire, n. Fr. Ivory.
Y-wimpled, part. pa. Covered with a wimple.
Y-wis, adv. Sax. Certainly.
Y-wrake, pa. t. Wreaked, revenged.
Y-wrie, part. pa. Covered.

Z.

Zeux, pr. n. A Grecian painter.

WORDS AND PHRASES NOT UNDERSTOOD.

Afere, Romaunt of the Rose, 4073.
Agathon, p. n. Legend of Good Women, 526.
Blakeberied, 12340.
Brokon harm, 9299.
Clankedort, Troilus and Creseide, b. ii. 1752.
Carrenare, Book of the Duchesse, 1029.
Consite, Chaucer's Dreme, 1238.
Cost, 1480.
Countour, 361.
Cuppes. To turnen c. 3926.
Cytherus, pr. n. House of Fame, b. iii. 137.
Douced, House of Fame, iii. 131.
Dulcarnon, Troilus and Creseide, b. iii. 933, 5.
Durense, Chaucer's Dreme, 1199.
Eclympasteire, pr. n. Book of the Duchesse, 167.
Farewell feldefare, Romaunt of the Rose, 5510. Troilus and Creseide, b. iii. 863.
Fortenid crese, Romaunt of the Rose, 4875.
Frape, Troilus and Creseide, b. iii. 411.
Ga tothed, 470, 6185.
Gn offe, 3188.
Hawebake, 4515.
Hermes Ballenus, pr. n. House of Fame, b. iii. 183.
Hugest and Colle, Testament of Love, b. ii. p. 489. line 24.
Hyghen, House of Fame, b. iii. 1062.
Jack of Dover, 4345.
Kirked, Romaunt of the Rose, 3137.
Limote, pr. n. House of Fame, b. iii. 184.
Louke, 4413.
Madrian, 13898.
Parodie, Troilus and Creseide, b. v. 1547.
Pavade, 3927.
Paysaunce, Chaucer's Dreme, 1673.
Pell, House of Fame, b. iii. 220.
Popper, 3929.
Pouder marchant, 383.
Proserus, pr. n. House of Fame, b. iii. 138.
Radevore, Legende of Good Women, 2341.
Raket, Troilus and Creseide, b. iv. 461.
Rewel bone, 13807.
Sereel poketes, or *pottes*, 16270.
Span-newe, Troilus and Creseide, b. iii. 1671.
Squaimous, 3337.
Temen, House of Fame, b. iii. 654.
Tidife, 10962.
Trippe, 7529.
Virelote, 3768.
Vitremite, 14378.
Vounde stone, Romaunt of the Rose, 7113.
Wades bote, 9298.
Whipul-tree, 2925.
Winder, Wintred, Romaunt of the Rose, 1018, 20.
Zanis, pr. n. Troilus and Creseide, b. iv. 414.
Zedeuries, pr. n. Testament of Love, b. i. p. 474. line 42.

END OF VOL. I.

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